‘See sincerity sparkle in thy practice’: Antidotes to Hypocrisy in British Print Sermons, 1640–95

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Seventeenth-century British preachers persistently defined hypocrisy in contrast to its divine antidote: sincerity. This article looks at four such case studies from across the ‘puritan’-‘Anglican’ divide, analysing the sermons of the Independent Nicholas Lockyer, the Presbyterian Christopher Love, the Church of England clergyman James Oldfield, and the archbishop of Canterbury John Tillotson. It considers to what extent Protestant instruction on sincerity and hypocrisy shifted according to religious affiliation and socio-political context, arguing that although these sermons possessed considerable continuities in their theological underpinnings, they also exhibited divergences in focus and instruction that are sometimes, but not always, predictable along denominational lines. These differences held weighty implications for the individual receiving spiritual guidance on how to forswear hypocrisy and live a truly sincere life, particularly throughout the period of instability and contention that marked Britain from the Civil Wars to the Glorious Revolution.

In a sermon first printed in 1640, the Independent minister Nicolas Lockyer preached that ‘NO grace, how glorious soever in the eye of man, goes for good weight in the eye of God, without sincerity.’[1] Over a decade later, the Presbyterian martyr Christopher Love assured his readers: ‘If you have sincerity in you, the Lord accounts

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[1] Nicholas Lockyer, *A Divine Discovery of Sincerity According to Its Proper and Peculiar Nature* (London, 1640), 1.

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of you as if you had attained perfection.'[2] These ideas remained in fashion after the Restoration. First at the pulpit after the Great Fire of London in 1666, and again in print a year before the Glorious Revolution, the provincial clergyman James Oldfield asserted: 'sincerity is the highest pitch that a Christian is able to attain unto in this life'.[3] Finally in the 1690s, the archbishop of Canterbury John Tillotson maintained that 'sincerity is the very heart and substance of Religion'.[4]

Regardless of differences in time, place and belief, these preachers positioned sincerity as the antidote to hypocrisy in all its forms. Yet they also continually addressed how difficult it was to define and identify sincerity, and all agreed that they lived in an especially hypocritical and deceitful age. With immortal souls on the line, the stakes were high: the specifics of what these preachers were telling their audiences about sincerity's nature and its real-life applications in opposition to hypocrisy mattered greatly. By reading these sermons alongside one another, one can tease out to what extent Protestant instruction on sincerity and hypocrisy shifted according to religious affiliation and socio-political context. I argue that although these sermons exhibited considerable continuities in their theological underpinnings, they also bear out divergences in focus and instruction that are sometimes, though not always, predictable along denominational lines. These differences held weighty implications for the individuals receiving spiritual guidance on how to forswear hypocrisy and live a truly sincere life, particularly throughout the period of instability and contention that marked Britain from the Civil Wars and Commonwealth, to the years following the Restoration and Glorious Revolution.

In a useful summary of sincerity's conceptualization in early modern England, Scott L. Newstok writes that 'sincerity was posed as the antithesis to hypocrisy, "flattering and fauning," or "deceitfull" speech'.[5] He and others have considered the prevalence of Protestant ideas about sincerity in opposition to hypocrisy, defining the

[2] Christopher Love, 'The True Israelite', in idem, *The Mortified Christian Shewing the Nature, Signes, Necessity, and Difficulty of True Mortification* (London, 1654), 29.
[3] James Oldfield, *Sincerity, Or, the Upright Mans Walk to Heaven* (London, 1687), 12.
[4] John Tillotson, *Of Sincerity and Constancy in the Faith and Profession of the True Religion* (London, 1695), 4.
[5] Scott L. Newstok, '"Here Lies": Sincerity and Insincerity in Early Modern Epitaphs Onstage', *Christianity & Literature* 67 (2017), 50–68, at 50.

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Reformed sincere ideal as the 'rigorous alignment' between 'internal feelings and external expression'.[6] This characterization is undoubtedly broadly true, but scholars have applied it interchangeably to groups identified as Protestant, Calvinist or – perhaps most often – puritan, seldom exploring points of divergence between or within these categories, or amongst particular sects and ministers. This critical tendency to treat doctrines of sincerity under a broad umbrella covering either Protestantism, Calvinism or puritanism can be useful in determining overarching theological belief on these topics. However, it can also lead to the overlooking of more nuanced differences, particularly when groupings such as 'Protestant' and 'puritan' are either collapsed or conflated.

For instance, Lockyer's *A Divine Discovery of Sincerity* (1640) has been used as a representative example of puritan belief on sincerity as contrasted with hypocrisy.[7] This makes sense, as Lockyer was a prominent Parliamentarian and puritan figure during the seventeenth century. However, if we consider him alongside another 'young Puritaine' such as Love, it becomes apparent that their differing religious beliefs, political orientations and preaching contexts greatly influenced their guidance on how to counteract hypocrisy and practice sincerity.[8] Nonetheless, it is important not to downplay their similarities or fully reject the concept of puritan 'brands' of sincerity and hypocrisy. In his work on puritan rhetoric about sincerity, David Parry has demonstrated how 'puritan' can still be a useful categorization for those preaching in the tradition of practical divinity.[9] I follow this approach in part, recognizing that individuals like Lockyer and Love adhered to a broad set of puritan beliefs and practices, while stressing the significance of acknowledging their theological and

[6] Ibid. 51. See also Jonas Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA, 1985); Jennifer Clement, 'The Art of Feeling in Seventeenth-Century English Sermons', *English Studies* 98 (2017), 675–88; Charles Lindholm, 'The Rise of Expressive Authenticity', *Anthropological Quarterly* 86 (2013), 361–95; Ana Schwartz, *Unmoored: The Search for Sincerity in Colonial America* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2023); Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Cambridge, MA, 1972).

[7] Newstok, 'Sincerity', 50–1.

[8] Elliot Vernon, 'Love, Christopher (1618–1651), clergyman', *ODNB*, online edn (2004), at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/17038>, accessed 13 January 2024.

[9] David Parry, '"A Divine Kind of Rhetoric": Rhetorical Strategy and Spirit-Wrought Sincerity in English Puritan Writing', *Christianity & Literature* 67 (2017), 113–38. See also Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation England* (Oxford, 2013), 6–9.

political differences as men on opposite sides of the Civil War-era Independent-Presbyterian divide.[10]

These differences were also affected by social contexts, from audience to time and place, and were not limited solely to puritan preachers. Historians have largely overlooked non-puritan or non-Calvinist Protestants' theological treatments of sincerity and hypocrisy post-1640, and I attempt to bridge this gap by considering Oldfield and Tillotson. I have selected these four preachers due to their range of belief and experience, offering two 'puritan' and two 'Anglican' perspectives at times when these classifications were theoretically aligned with 'establishment' theology. In turn, I seek to interrogate these classifications with an eye to commonality, as well as divergence. Not only are these four ministers' works representative examples of the extent to which print sermons discussed sincerity and hypocrisy throughout the period, but they were amongst a small number that explicitly signposted their attention to sincerity in their titles, intentionally advertising their practical guidance on what was an increasingly significant religious ideal during the latter half of the seventeenth century. This can be seen, for example, in one 1654 collected edition of Love's sermons, which included 'Sincerity in Opposition to Hypocrisie' in its title (Figure 1).[11] My aim in analysing these case studies is twofold: first, to explore their similarities and differences by situating these doctrines of sincerity and hypocrisy in their wider religious and socio-political cultural contexts; and second, to discover what practical instruction about sincerity and hypocrisy these sermons dispensed to their audiences.

'*Personall*, *domesticall*, *sociall*, or *nationall*': Sincerity and Hypocrisy in Context

Scholars have highlighted preoccupations with hypocrisy and deceit in early modern society, demonstrating how the religious dimension of this debate was inextricably intertwined with social, cultural and

[10] See Tim Cooper, 'Congregationalists', in John Coffey, ed., *The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions,* 1: *The Post-Reformation Era, 1559–1689* (Oxford, 2020), 88–111.

[11] Christopher Love, *The True Doctrine of Mortification: and Sincerity in Opposition to Hypocrisie* (London, 1654). For sincerity and hypocrisy in manuscript sermons, see David Parry's article in this volume: 'The Problems of Performing Piety in some Exeter Dissenting Sermons *c.*1660–1745'.

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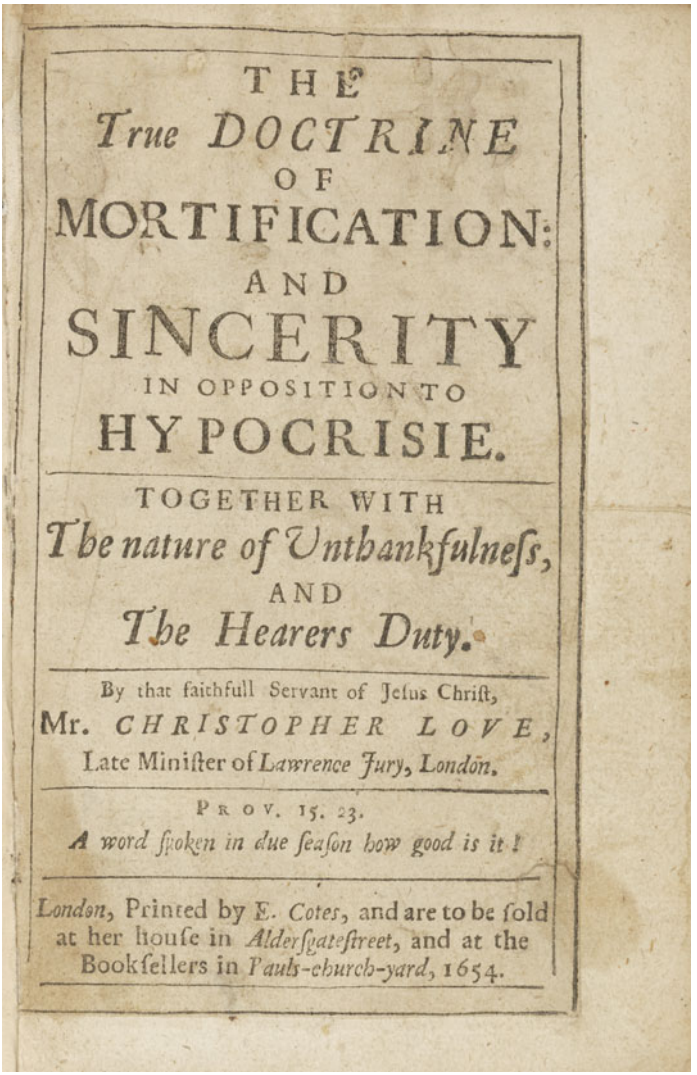

THE
True DOCTRINE
OF
MORTIFICATION:
AND
SINCERITY
IN OPPOSITION TO
HYPOCRISIE.

TOGETHER WITH
The nature of Unthankfulneſs,
AND
The Hearers Duty.

By that faithfull Servant of Jeſus Chriſt,
Mr. CHRISTOPHER LOVE,
Late Miniſter of Lawrence Jury, London.

PROV. 15. 23.
A word ſpoken in due ſeaſon how good is it!

London, Printed by E. Cotes, and are to be ſold at her houſe in Alderſgateſtreet, and at the Bookſellers in Pauls-church-yard, 1654.

Figure 1. Title page of one edition of the sermon collection that included Love's preaching on sincerity and hypocrisy, 1654. Reproduced by permission of Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru / National Library of Wales.

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political issues. Hypocrisy, or the absence of sincerity, is often at the forefront of these studies, as scholars have convincingly argued that anxieties surrounding hypocrisy were heightened during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries due to contemporary cultural developments and conflicts in religious and political life.[12] Indeed, Carys Brown notes that 'the charge of hypocrisy was flung from all sides', while Mark Knights has discussed the often partisan nature of such accusations.[13] One reason for its increased polemical usage was the widespread backlash against the stereotype of the zealous puritan who justified his fanaticism as sincerity while accusing his opponents of hypocrisy. Lawrence Klein and others have linked this idea to the late seventeenth-century rise of politeness, as '[s]ociability and manners in religion were urged as alternatives to enthusiasm and fanaticism'.[14] More recently, Brown has argued that many saw politeness as 'a means to promote truth and virtue as well as social ease', a view that 'could be used to interpret the supposed ill-manners of Dissenters as symptomatic of hypocrisy'.[15] But there was another side to this coin, since polite social ceremony could all too easily bleed into hypocrisy. Endorsements of hypocrisy might masquerade as defences of politeness and civility, an anxiety that became increasingly prevalent at the turn of the eighteenth century.[16] The passage of the Toleration Act in 1689 did little to ameliorate these concerns, obfuscating as it did previously clear-cut delineations between conformity and nonconformity, friendship and enmity, hypocrisy and sincerity.[17]

[12] See, for instance, Carys Brown, *Friends, Neighbours, Sinners: Religious Difference and English Society, 1689–1750* (Cambridge, 2022), 120; Tobias Hug, *Impostures in Early Modern England: Representations and Perceptions of Fraudulent Identities* (Manchester, 2013), 1–11; Mark Knights, *The Devil in Disguise: Deception, Delusion, and Fanaticism in the Early English Enlightenment* (Oxford, 2011), 7; Kate Loveman, *Reading Fictions, 1660–1740: Deception in English Literary and Political Culture* (Aldershot, 2008), 3.

[13] Brown, *Friends, Neighbours, Sinners*, 121; Mark Knights, 'Occasional Conformity and the Representation of Dissent: Hypocrisy, Sincerity, Moderation, and Zeal', *PH* 24 (2005), 41–57.

[14] Lawrence Klein, 'Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century', *HistJ* 45 (2002), 869–98, at 889.

[15] Brown, *Friends, Neighbours, Sinners*, 112. See also Peter Lake, 'Anti-Puritanism: The Structure of a Prejudice', in Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake, eds, *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England* (Woodbridge, 2006), 80–97.

[16] See, for example, Knights, *Devil in Disguise*, 163–4; Soile Ylivuori, *Women and Politeness in Eighteenth-Century England: Bodies, Identities, and Power* (New York, 2018), 67–101.

[17] See Brown, *Friends, Neighbours, Sinners*, 2–3; Knights, *Devil in Disguise*, 98–9.

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Figure 2. Frequency of 'sincerity' and 'hypocrisy' proportional to total print output, 1540–1699.

This heightened preoccupation with hypocrisy is borne out by the frequency with which the word itself appeared in print over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Figure 2).[18] This data also visualizes the marked and rapid rise of 'sincerity' during this period. Although 'hypocrisy' appeared in the English language earlier, 'sincerity' became increasingly prominent as the early modern era progressed. This trend is still more pronounced in print sermons, with 'sincerity' being used in nearly half of all texts in this genre throughout the early modern period (Figure 3). As Figure 2 shows, the frequency with which 'sincerity' appeared in print came to equal, and eventually overtake, that of 'hypocrisy' during the

[18] The Text Creation Partnership (TCP) has transcribed over 44,000 pre-1700 texts, all of which have been uploaded to the CQPweb database, online at: <https://cqpweb.lancs.ac.uk/>, accessed 13 January 2024. CQPweb can determine a term's 'frequency' proportional to total print output in a timeframe or genre, considering fluctuations in quantity. See Andrew Hardie, 'CQPweb: Combining Power, Flexibility and Usability in a Corpus Analysis Tool', *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* 17 (2012), 380–409. Figures 2 and 3 visualize results for 's[i,y]ncerit[y,ie]' and 'h[i,y]pocris[y,ie]'.

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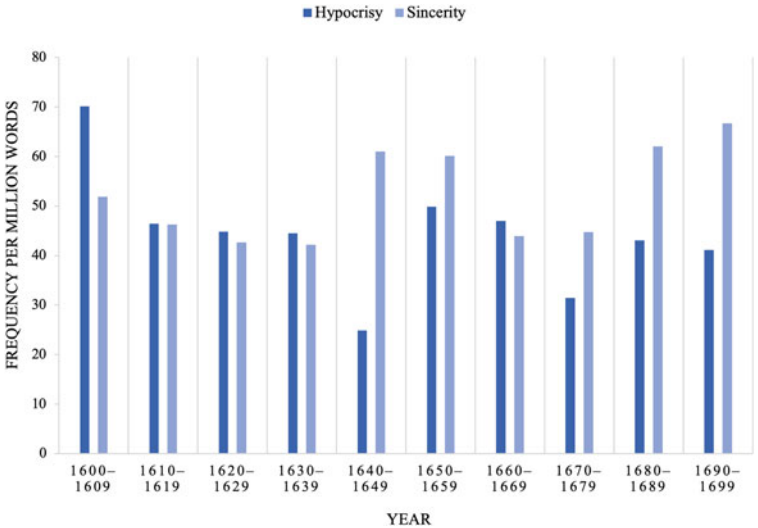

Figure 3. Frequency of 'sincerity' and 'hypocrisy' in print sermons, 1600–99.

seventeenth century. These data indicate the necessity of looking at seventeenth-century hypocrisy through the lens of sincerity, particularly in religious texts, such as the sermons considered here, which understood hypocrisy as a diabolical corruption that could only be rooted out by the divine ideal of sincerity. Furthermore, the broader cultural picture painted by Figure 2 underscores the importance of considering the socio-political contexts that surrounded religious instruction on how not to be a hypocrite, an issue these sermons approached via the controversial question of what it meant to be truly sincere.

The first of the four ministers considered here, Nicholas Lockyer (1611–85), was an Independent and an ardent Cromwellian to his death. After the Restoration, he refused to conform, was ejected from the ministry, and spent the rest of his life as a dissenting, incendiary preacher.[19] He first printed his *Divine Discovery of Sincerity* in 1640, a collection of four sequential sermons. It enjoyed success, with

[19] Elliot Vernon, 'Lockyer, Nicholas (1611–1685), Independent minister', *ODNB*, online edn (2004), at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/16914>, accessed 13 January 2024.

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reprints in 1643, 1644, 1645 and 1649. It is regrettably unclear when and where Lockyer first preached these sermons, but it was possibly in one of the university environments he inhabited during the 1630s.[20] In these sermons, Lockyer preached that there were 'special times and occasions' during which individuals needed to 'declare' their sincerity to counteract hypocrisy: these were '*personall, domesticall, sociall,* or *nationall*'.[21] Lockyer's national example was particularly telling. He argued there were appropriate times to disobey monarchs and that this was one of the finest possible demonstrations of godly sincerity, citing the biblical precedent of Moses and Pharaoh.[22] With sentiments like these, it follows that Lockyer 'counselled that patience and obedience to God's word was the key to parliamentarian success' during the Civil Wars, '[opposing] a quick settlement for the sake of an ungodly peace'.[23] That Lockyer was an unambiguous supporter of the regicide and republic is all the more significant when considering the fact that his sermons were republished in 1649, the year of Charles I's execution, and noting Lockyer's appointment as one of Oliver Cromwell's chaplains.[24]

In contrast, the Welsh Presbyterian Christopher Love (1618–51) was one of 'the most virulent critics of the new republic', and his involvement in a plot to restore the monarchy resulted in his execution in 1651.[25] Elliot Vernon argues that Love was representative of a segment of fiery, usually younger Presbyterians who moved from intense Parliamentarian support at the start of the Civil Wars, to monarchical plotting by the end, a shift brought about by the controversy surrounding Pride's Purge (1648) and the regicide.[26] Love's activities from 1649 to 1651 were overtly subversive: he was amongst those Presbyterians the government warned against 'medling with state-matters in their sermons', and he opposed Parliament's 'Engagement' (1649), which demanded declarations of loyalty to

[20] Vernon recounts that Lockyer 'matriculated from the notoriously Puritan college of New Inn Hall, Oxford, on 4 November 1631 and graduated BA on 14 May 1633. Migrating to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, where his BA was incorporated in 1635, he proceeded MA in 1636. In June 1654 he returned to Oxford to take his BTh'. Ibid.
[21] Lockyer, *Divine Discovery*, 181. Emphasis original.
[22] Ibid. 191–2.
[23] Vernon, 'Lockyer'.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Elliot Vernon, *London Presbyterians and the British Revolutions, 1638–64* (Manchester, 2021), 221. For an in-depth study on Love, see ibid. 220–36.
[26] Ibid. 10.

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the Commonwealth.[27] The two consecutive sermons that made up Love's *Discovery of Sincerity* were twice printed in posthumous collections in 1654 – part of a successful campaign by his friends and widow to cement his memory as a Presbyterian martyr – and it seems likely that he originally preached them during the 1640s at one of the parish churches in London where he ministered.[28] Though free of any explicit polemic, Love's teachings on sincerity and hypocrisy applied to what had been a very political life. In his final moments on the scaffold, he gave a widely admired speech in which he expressed his certainty that he would soon be with God. Crucially, he found comfort in the fact that he had never become a hypocrite by '[dealing] falsely in his Covenant', proving himself sincere to the end.[29]

Of the ministers discussed here, the Restoration-era clergyman James Oldfield (*fl.* 1655–81) was the most obscure.[30] In the only reference I have found to Oldfield in the scholarly literature, David Stoker groups him with an assortment of Presbyterian writers whose work was printed by the nonconformist Norwich publisher Edward Giles.[31] While Oldfield does appear to have subscribed to a Calvinist worldview, which could have extended to Presbyterian leanings or sympathies, he was, for all intents and purposes, one of the 'conciliatory or friendly' Church of England clergy that, as Stoker notes, also featured in Giles's publication output.[32] From 1661 until his death twenty years later, Oldfield was the rector of Stratton St Michael, a small parish about ten miles outside

[27] Quoted in ibid. 221–3.

[28] Vernon, 'Love'. The *Discovery of Sincerity* title is taken from the sermon collection entitled *The Mortified Christian* (1654), the edition quoted throughout this essay; the same sermons were printed in the 1654 *True Doctrine of Mortification* edition pictured in Figure 1, but I quote *The Mortified Christian* edition throughout this article as its text is more complete and features fewer typographical errors.

[29] Quoted in Vernon, *London Presbyterians*, 230.

[30] See 'James Oldfeild' (CCEd Person ID 53788), *The Clergy of the Church of England Database 1540–1835*, online at: <http://www.theclergydatabase.org.uk/>, accessed 13 January 2024. The name was spelled 'Oldfeild' in some records (hence the clergy database spelling), but in his own sermon publications it is spelled 'Oldfield', the form that is used in this article.

[31] David Stoker, 'Norwich "Publishing" in the Seventeenth Century', in John Hinks and Catherine Armstrong, eds, *Printing Places: Locations of Book Production and Distribution since 1500* (London, 2005), 31–46.

[32] Ibid. See also John D. Ramsbottom, 'Presbyterians and "Partial Conformity" in the Restoration Church of England', *JEH* 43 (1992), 249–70.

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Norwich, a city which boasted a particularly fervent culture of dissent.[33] Much to Oldfield's chagrin, this nonconformist bent did not confine itself to the city limits, and his sermons are littered with references to religious strife in his community. He frequently came into conflict with local nonconformists who were hostile towards his presence, viewing him first and foremost as a conforming clergyman. Oldfield's tone often reads as long-suffering exasperation, but his sermons were undeniably intent on smoothing over any interpersonal disputes brought on by religious difference. He chose to preach on sincerity as the antidote to hypocrisy precisely because of the ongoing strife in his parish, and England as a whole. It was in late 1666 that he originally preached his sermons, in the shadow of the Plague and the Great Fire. Contemporaries interpreted these catastrophes as signs of God's wrath and, for Oldfield, they were evidence of how important it was to tend to the sincerity of one's own soul, rather than fanatically combatting the hypocrisy of others. When his sermons were posthumously published over twenty years later on the eve of the Glorious Revolution, Oldfield's promotion of a civil, tolerant form of sincerity remained a socially, politically and religiously relevant rejection of sectarian conflict in the spiritual battle against hypocrisy.

The archbishop of Canterbury John Tillotson (1630–94) dealt with similar issues to Oldfield, albeit on a far more prominent stage as London's 'most celebrated preacher'.[34] Tillotson's was a position of latitudinarian tolerance, and Ralph Stevens has shown how he was at the forefront of a moderate contingent that sought 'to revise the liturgy in pursuit of Protestant unity' prior to the Toleration Act.[35] The religious and socio-political strife that marked the Restoration period greatly informed this stance, compounded by the intolerant, reactionary and conspiratorialist atmosphere that char-

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ralph Stevens, *Protestant Pluralism: The Reception of the Toleration Act, 1689–1720* (London, 2018), 15.

[35] Ibid. See also Isabel Rivers, 'Tillotson, John (1630–1694), archbishop of Canterbury', *ODNB*, online edn (2004), at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/27449>, accessed 13 January 2024; Julius J. Kim, 'Archbishop John Tillotson and the Seventeenth-Century Latitudinarian Defense of Christianity, Part I', *Torch Trinity Journal* 11 (2008), 130–46; idem, 'Archbishop John Tillotson and the Seventeenth-Century Latitudinarian Defense of Christianity, Part II', *Torch Trinity Journal* 12 (2009), 127–48.

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acterized the 1670s and 1680s.[36] So, too, did the memory of the Civil Wars and Commonwealth, still fresh in the cultural imagination and effective in provoking calls for moderation in opposition to zeal.[37] After 1689, toleration brought about further dilemmas, as nonconformists' newfound legal rights introduced an uncertain social order. How could conformists practice tolerance without being hypocritical? How could conscientious dissenters practice civility while staying sincere to their own beliefs?[38] It was in this cultural climate that Tillotson preached his *Of Sincerity Towards God and Man* at Kingston (London) in 1694. It was the last sermon he gave before his death, and his publishers promoted it as such in a larger 1695 collection. Tellingly, it was preoccupied with how to avoid causing offence without being a hypocrite. Coupled with this concern, however, was Tillotson's discussion of the inherent conflict between sincerity and politeness. Though Tillotson felt dissenting zealots such as Lockyer had pushed sincerity too far in the past, he also feared that late seventeenth-century English society was overcorrecting, veering into a different, but equally pernicious form of widespread hypocrisy. While tensions between sincerity, politeness, hypocrisy and toleration had been relevant throughout the seventeenth century, they were given new meaning in Tillotson's England.

Contemporaries viewed sincerity and hypocrisy as theological concepts applicable to nearly every aspect of real-world experience, from the consequential to the everyday. Yet the problem was that such a notion might be put into practice in a huge variety of ways. Considering this, it should perhaps be unsurprising that, throughout these sermons, we find the recurring idea that the most common and insidious form of hypocrisy was the self-deluding kind.[39] As will be seen from the discussion of Lockyer and Love's sermons in the following section, this idea was inextricably intertwined with the ambiguous nature of conscience, but it was also born of the very subjective interpretations that abstract concepts such as sincerity and hypocrisy could invite. Overall, core theological understandings of sincerity and hypocrisy did not change hugely across these sermons. Rather, the

[36] See, for instance, John Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England, 1646–1689* (New Haven, CT, 1991).
[37] Knights, 'Occasional Conformity', 47–9.
[38] Brown, *Friends, Neighbours, Sinners*, 11–13.
[39] Clement, 'Art of Feeling', 680.

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differing social, political, cultural and religious backgrounds of the preachers navigating these ideas were what changed. As a result, practical understandings about the nature of hypocrisy and how sincerity should be employed as its antidote shifted. With this contextual awareness, we can better explore the practical implications of these shared beliefs and their divergent applications.

Two Puritans Define Religious Sincerity during the Civil Wars and Commonwealth

Lockyer and Love both emphasized concepts such as conscience and scriptural knowledge as central to sincerity, but they also exhibited differences. The most important of these differences was this: for Love, sincerity could exist on a spectrum, improved by education, but not negated by ignorance. For Lockyer, however, sincerity operated in a binary fashion: you either had it or you did not. Lockyer divided sincerity into two types: 'godly' or 'theological' sincerity, and 'moral' sincerity. Moral sincerity was the incorrect sort, for it was 'close hypocrisie', making the morally sincere man 'but an out-side holy man'.[40] In Lockyer's sermons, moral sincerity was equivalent to hypocrisy, an external, 'counterfeit' performance not indicative of true godly sincerity, which was '*a speciall work of God upon the soule of man, making him laborious, to walke according to Gods Will*'.[41]

Godly sincerity was unique. It necessitated prayer as it did not occur naturally, in accordance with the Calvinist understanding of the heart as inherently dishonest due to original sin.[42] Capable of cleansing the deceitful heart, godly sincerity made 'a man see a transcendant worth in the will of God; and worth begets love … and love begets labour, to attaine the thing beloved'.[43] A truly sincere soul was thus capable of comprehending God's supreme perfection; this comprehension inspired love, which in turn incentivized the continual labour necessary to retain that love. Lockyer continually highlighted the emotional benefits of godly sincerity, insisting that the joy and

[40] Lockyer, *Divine Discovery*, 12–13.
[41] Ibid. 13. Emphasis original.
[42] Ibid. 14. See also Clement, 'Art of Feeling', 678.
[43] Lockyer, *Divine Discovery*, 16–17.

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spiritual bliss it inspired made the required labour worthwhile, offering comfort to the godly in times of trouble and persecution.[44]

But sincerity remained hard work. Lockyer hammered this point home, reminding his audience that labour was required '*alwaies*'.[45] Hypocrisy was never fully 'extirpated', and one had to 'grub up' these 'rootes of bitternesse' regularly.[46] He admitted that '[s]trong trials may make a sincere heart give backe for a time', but argued that 'they never prevaile, to make a sincere heart give off his labour to obey God'.[47] Lockyer spoke at length of how much self-reflection was necessary to be assured of godly sincerity, and this was at the heart of what made it a potentially anxiety-inducing subject.[48] Conscience, Lockyer claimed, was the most crucial tool in this self-examination, the key to living a life free from sin for the right reasons and avoiding mere 'moral' sincerity or hypocrisy. One had to understand God's will by understanding God's word (i.e., Scripture), thus awakening conscience and enabling it to function properly.[49] Unlike sincerity, conscience was a natural, inborn tool. It could be used to identify the true state of the heart and soul, and forsake iniquity.[50] Yet this, too, was difficult. Conscience, Lockyer admitted, was 'better felt then defined'.[51] It was supposed to be the solution to sincerity's evasive unwieldiness, yet Lockyer recognized that theologians did not agree on its exact nature or definition.[52] Despite this, he insisted that conscience was necessary to the attainment of godly sincerity, and although he stressed the high level of spiritual understanding required to activate conscience and uproot hypocrisy, he did not design his sermons to provide that extensive education.[53]

If we can identify the key points of significance for Lockyer as sincerity's intensely inward nature, dependent upon the mechanisms of conscience, then how did this compare with Love's understanding?

[44] Ibid. 111–76.
[45] Ibid. 18. Emphasis original.
[46] Ibid. 61.
[47] Ibid. 20.
[48] See, for instance, Clement, 'Art of Feeling', 676–80; Lindholm, 'Expressive Authenticity', 366–7.
[49] Lockyer, *Divine Discovery*, 77.
[50] On the Protestant conscience, see W. B. Patterson, *William Perkins and the Making of a Protestant England* (Oxford, 2014), 90–113.
[51] Lockyer, *Divine Discovery*, 69.
[52] Ibid. 70.
[53] Ibid. 76–8.

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Love spoke about the absence of 'guile' or 'hypocrisie', and the inward, heart-based nature of sincerity in similar terms to Lockyer. However, he clarified that sincerity did not necessarily equate to a lack of ignorance. Love insisted that one could be well-intentioned but sinful, and therefore free from hypocrisy but ignorant.[54] This proposition would have been problematic for Lockyer, whose understanding of conscience meant that ignorance and sincerity were in direct opposition. Love also felt that ignorance was a problem, saying: 'If you are ignorant, and yet do not desire and labor after knowledg, this is inconsistent with sincerity'.[55] Love, though, qualified this in a way Lockyer never did:

> You that are sincere … do not conclude against your selves, that because you have some ignorance, therefore you have no truth and sincerity in you … I beseech you that you would not pass hard censures upon your own Souls; do not say, you have no truth in your hearts, because you have little understanding in your heads.[56]

Lockyer's sermon was devoid of this more lenient, flexible attitude. Though Lockyer had encouraged constant self-improvement and self-reflection, he was only ever hostile towards the limits arising from ignorance. Ignorance and sincerity were mutually exclusive for Lockyer, due to the 'understanding' fundamental to a functioning conscience. Even such understanding was limited, Lockyer warned: '*We know but in part,* though God *know all things;* and knowing but in part, conscience yet can doe his office but in part'.[57]

One can imagine the anxiety this uncertainty might inspire.[58] Conscience was difficult to define, required extensive learning and was impossible to be sure of until the day of judgment. There existed the very real possibility that one's efforts would not prove enough. Love acknowledged this concern in his comforting entreaties to his audience not to 'conclude against' themselves or 'pass hard censure' on their souls. Love was able to offer this comfort because he did not place sincerity and ignorance in absolute opposition, quite possibly because his Presbyterian brand of Calvinism was not as rigid as

[54] Love, 'True Israelite', 7–14.
[55] Ibid. 10.
[56] Ibid. 13.
[57] Lockyer, *Divine Discovery*, 84. Emphasis original.
[58] For Calvinist despair, see, for example, Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 27–48.

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Lockyer's Independent position. Love preached that 'sincerity of heart is consistent, not onely with ignorance in the minde, but also with many infirmities in the practice'.[59] Love's reference to 'infirmities in the practice' was important, since those who had little theological learning were unlikely to have ideally functioning consciences. As long as such people were well-intentioned, vigilant against hypocrisy and determined to learn, Love was ever indulgent: 'Know, for your Comfort, all you true … men without guile, that the Lord looks upon you as perfect men and women'.[60]

None of this is to say that these sermons did not possess profound similarities, or to suggest that theological tenets such as conscience were significant for Lockyer, but insignificant for Love. Love also spoke incessantly of conscience, and he especially disapproved of those who only forsook iniquity because their consciences 'accused' them. Such people were textbook hypocrites who would return to their sinful ways once conscience fell silent again.[61] Lockyer shared this notion, but Love's concern for educating the 'ignorant' resulted in a different approach. Vernon notes that Love required his parishioners to be 'conversant with the fundamentals of Reformed Christianity before they attended holy communion', a policy in line with 'the presbyterians' insistence that communicants should be able to examine their consciences'.[62] In Love's view, it was the responsibility of church government to educate parishioners towards these ends.[63]

Lockyer had other priorities. As an Independent, he was not interested in the Presbyterians' uniformly educated national church. His sermons were preoccupied with different issues, such as the 'trialls' faced by the theologically sincere. This, too, can be understood in light of the backlash Congregationalists faced as they established themselves during the tumultuous 1640s.[64] Although Lockyer was

[59] Love, 'True Israelite', 13.
[60] Ibid. 29.
[61] Ibid. 23.
[62] Vernon, 'Love'.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Lockyer, *Divine Discovery*, 111–63. See also Joel Halcomb, 'Godly Order and the Trumpet of Defiance: The Politics of Congregational Church Life during the English Revolution', in Michael Davies, Anne Dunan-Page and Joel Halcomb, eds, *Church Life: Pastors, Congregations, and the Experience of Dissent in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 2019), 25–44.

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not representative of some broad category of 'Independents' any more than Love was of Presbyterianism, teasing out these differences helps nuance our understanding of puritan conceptualizations of sincerity and hypocrisy in seventeenth-century England. It also demonstrates how different audiences would have been receiving different practical guidance regarding sincerity and hypocrisy, depending on whose sermons they heard or read. As such, the potential influence of these sermons' disparate understandings and treatments of sincerity and hypocrisy should not be underestimated.

Plain Country Sincerity: Audience, Time and Place

Who, then, was hearing these ideas, and how did these listeners influence what preachers emphasized about sincerity and hypocrisy? This question is crucial to Oldfield's later sermons, which focused on educating lay audiences practically about sin in order to help them on the path towards sincerity. Accordingly, Oldfield's work proves especially useful in thinking about how listeners and congregations shaped homiletic communications of sincerity and hypocrisy. As Arnold Hunt reminds us: 'Sermons were not preached in a vacuum, and to treat them simply as literary artefacts, without considering the time and place of delivery and the persons to whom they were addressed, is to miss much of their significance'.[65] Indeed, religious ideas about sincerity and hypocrisy were communicated to very different audiences, from learned urban listeners to provincial congregations.

Oldfield's overarching ideas about sincerity aligned with those established by Lockyer and Love. He declared sincerity the ultimate Christian grace and instructed his flock: 'your Consciences witness with you, your simplicity of heart and sincerity towards God'.[66] Perhaps most importantly, he addressed the problem that many individuals were hypocrites without themselves realizing it.[67] Oldfield warned: 'if you live in sin and your consciences smite you not, do not rejoyce, all such rejoycing is vain.'[68] Once again, we encounter the problem of the silent conscience. Lockyer and Love had insisted

[65] Arnold Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and Their Audiences, 1590–1640* (Cambridge, 2010), 292.
[66] Oldfield, *Sincerity*, 205.
[67] Ibid. 54–5.
[68] Ibid. 205.

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that a thorough understanding of God's word was the solution, and scriptural understanding was certainly crucial for Oldfield too. But like Love, he differed from Lockyer in his approach to the ignorant. Of all the preachers discussed in this article, Oldfield spent the most time attempting to define iniquity for his provincial congregation: '[T]his is the nearest way to sincerity,' he preached, 'for a man to keep himself from his Iniquity.'[69]

The first part of Oldfield's sermon was a lengthy, often repetitive lecture on sin. We can identify it with what Ian Green calls 'plain country divinity', 'a suitably plain expression of a body of doctrine that was strong on moral exhortation … that even "the simplest and rudest people" could grasp'.[70] This categorization sheds some light on Oldfield's treatment of conscience, which he implied was sometimes too unreliable to rely upon. He pushed this idea further than Lockyer or Love, for whom conscience worked effectively with enough learning. Oldfield never rejected this approach to conscience, as he, too, prized its theological consequence. Yet the fact remained that it was a tricky concept to explain. Congregants might struggle with the prospect of grappling with such an intangible construct in what must have felt like a fruitless effort to detect some equally elusive inward sincerity. Or, worse still, they might wrongly think themselves sincere, simply because their consciences were silent.[71]

Recognising this, Oldfield focused on doing the work of activating his parishioners' consciences. It was better to familiarize oneself with the nature of sin, he insisted, to consult Scripture and receive liturgical instruction, to denounce hypocrisy for the *right* reasons, and consequently live a sincere, upright life inspired by Christ's sacrificial love. This, he assured his congregants, was the path to sincerity, the 'Upright Man's *Walk to Heaven*', and it was a walk which did not retain the looming unknowability as seen with Lockyer.[72] Lockyer had warned that it was impossible to be certain about one's own sincerity until conscience gave its full report in the afterlife. This doubt fell by the wayside with Oldfield, who insisted that

[69] Ibid. 12.
[70] Ian Green, 'Preaching in the Parishes', in Hugh Adlington, Peter McCullough and Emma Rhatigan, eds, *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon* (Oxford, 2012), 138–54, at 139.
[71] Oldfield, *Sincerity*, 204–5.
[72] Ibid., title page. Emphasis original.

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scriptural education and repudiation of sin would get the job done. Towards the end of his sermon, he told his congregants, in a characteristically no-nonsense fashion, that he was going to review some points on iniquity 'as plainly and as practically' as he could. 'So', he said, 'if after all this you still retain your own Iniquities and go to Hell, you shall thank your selves for it.'[73]

Oldfield understood this more concrete, less theoretical guidance to be of greater use to his congregation, and therefore more likely to have an actual impact on their behaviour and the fate of their immortal souls. Oldfield reflected on this when he considered the role of the preacher and his duty to his congregation:

> General Preaching is as good as no Preaching at all; Ministers must not only tell People of sin, but of their sins. Should a Physician come to a sick man, and discourse learnedly before him of the nature and causes of sickness in general, and not tell him what is his disease and sickness, and tell him what means he must use against it, this would do him no good … He is not to be accounted for a good Preacher, that can make a quaint Sermon or a Learned discourse; but if we would do good by our Preaching, we must tell every one of his own Iniquities; *we must not Preach against the sins of the Court in the Country, nor against the sins of the Country at Court; we must not set men against other mens sins, but every man against his own sins*.[74]

Oldfield's denouncement of 'General Preaching' was a frank acknowledgment of the preacher's need to adapt to his audience if he hoped to make opaque concepts, such as sincerity and hypocrisy, useful to non-theologians. This assertion was in the long-established tradition of practical divinity.[75] Oldfield unambiguously situated himself in the camp of 'plain style', rather than 'metaphysical', preaching, an adherence common to all four preachers discussed in this article, despite their differences.[76]

A consideration of liturgical context illuminates the differences in practical instruction on sincerity and hypocrisy found in these sermons. Genuine theological difference was undoubtedly significant,

[73] Ibid. 289.
[74] Ibid. 50–1. Emphasis mine.
[75] See Michael P. Winship, 'Weak Christians, Backsliders, and Carnal Gospelers: Assurance of Salvation and the Pastoral Origins of Puritan Practical Divinity in the 1580s', *ChH* 70 (2001), 462–81.
[76] Green, 'Preaching', 151–2.

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but the question of audience was critical. Unfortunately, it is also frequently elusive. Unlike Oldfield, who was preaching in his parish church, we cannot be certain of Lockyer's and Love's original audiences. While it is possible that Lockyer might have brushed aside practicalities such as lecturing on sin because of the more elite context in which he potentially preached his sermons, this is speculative.[77] Nevertheless, something can be said about the nature of these works as print publications. Lockyer's published collection included only his sincerity sermons, which he dedicated to his genteel aunt, Lady Bridget Lyddell, in what reads like a traditional letter to a patron.[78] In contrast, Love's sermons on sincerity were sandwiched between a series of sermons on the mortification of sin, and a final work devoted to the question of how to listen to sermons properly. Love's publishers positively construed the broad usefulness of these 'old', 'common', 'plain Doctrines', claiming they had intentionally collected and arranged the sermons for this reason.[79] Readers were consequently provided with ten sermons on the mortification of sin before they came to Love's material on sincerity, furnishing them with the extensive education on iniquity that Oldfield had also offered his congregation. With what is known of Love's ministerial style, he probably preached them in a similar manner originally, and Love and Oldfield were undeniably alike in their efforts to educate the ignorant amongst their flocks. Though Oldfield's sermons offer particularly valuable insight into what religious guidance non-elite, rural people heard regarding sincerity and hypocrisy, he was not alone in considering the importance of audience when preaching about these theologically weighty topics.

Sincerity's Limits: Hypocrisy vs Social Harmony

What was the relationship between sincerity, hypocrisy and social life in these sermons? Audiences clearly influenced the focus, style and dogma of such texts, but what did this mean for the actual practice of sincerity and hypocrisy? Did preachers acknowledge real-world limits to the religious idealization of sincerity and demonization of hypocrisy? These questions were all relevant to Oldfield, for whom

[77] Lockyer's movements *c.*1635 to 1640 are unclear: see Vernon, 'Lockyer'.
[78] Lockyer, *Divine Discovery*, front matter.
[79] Love, 'True Israelite', front matter.

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the issue of how to navigate living in a religiously diverse community was a very real one. Was it possible to be tolerant of beliefs and behaviours one opposed without being hypocritical? While Oldfield never posed this question explicitly, it permeated his sermons. Although, in one instance, he maligned some 'lately turned' Quakers who had said 'they got no good by hearing of me,' he also said that even if the church were comprised of each and every heretical sect, 'I am persuaded we should all agree in this, that every man ought to keep himself from his own Iniquity.'[80] In another instance, he preached:

> Hell is the place that God hath prepared on purpose for Hypocrites, and all those (be they what they will of this or that opinion of this or that Sect, Conformists or Nonconformists) that have not kept themselves from their own Iniquities, this great sin are but Hypocrites in the sight of God.[81]

As far as Oldfield was concerned, it was the battle against sin that mattered most, suggesting that nonconformists could be truly sincere, so long as they properly combated iniquity and hypocrisy within their own souls. How, then, did he want his congregants to conduct themselves amongst those with whom they disagreed? Certainly not combatively: ''Tis our selves we must judge and censure … but we must not go abroad … 'tis dangerous medling'.[82] Likewise, he continually railed against any individuals more concerned with the behaviour of others than their own:

> [Y]ou wonder at your neighbours that they are no better, why, wonder at your selves that you are no better; you say all the good that comes by Sermons is practise, why then if you would get good by hearing Sermons follow your own directions. Do not give away all your counsel to others and take none your selves.[83]

For Oldfield, hypocrisy lay not in failing to declare one's sincerity in opposition to others, but in sectarian belligerence that relished in pointing fingers, yet failed to address insincerity in one's own heart. In his pursuit of social harmony, Oldfield demonstrated an inclination towards moderation and civility that was absent from Lockyer's sermons and inconsistent in Love's.

[80] Ibid. 283, 282.
[81] Ibid. 42.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid. 290–1.

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Back in the 1640s, Lockyer had argued that a truly sincere heart served as a model for others, claiming that the theologically sincere were beholden to declare themselves in opposition to hypocrisy in themselves, their family, their community, and the state. He was evidently unconcerned about the interpersonal strife this might cause or the divisions it could sow on a larger scale.[84] Love similarly stressed the importance of the individual's behaviour in relation to others, claiming the sincere man was 'the same man in all companies … If he be in bad company, he will shew a dislike of their ways, and labor to make them better; if in good company, he will commend and approve of their doings.'[85] Such a prospect was not exactly conducive to polite conduct or civil discourse. Yet Love's further reflections on the sincere individual's external behaviour distanced his doctrine from Lockyer's and, in the process, complicated his own teachings. He preached:

> A man without guile discovers his sincerity in his carriage amongst men, in that he orders his conversation so, as not to give offence to any man where he lives, neither to the *Jew* or *Gentile,* or to the Church of God … those that are sincere, it is their continual endevour to walk without offence to any.[86]

Lockyer was not particularly worried about the possibility of causing offence; on the contrary, he encouraged it when righteously done. While Love agreed that the sincere individual should serve as a model for others and 'shew a dislike' for the ways of 'bad company,' this was at odds with the more civil bent of his rhetoric and belief. Love associated polite concepts like '[walking] without offence' *with* sincerity, instead of making them mutually exclusive.

This brings us to John Tillotson in 1695. Though his basic theological understanding of sincerity and hypocrisy did not differ from Lockyer, Love or Oldfield in any obvious way, he was the least concerned with the theological trappings of these concepts. The tangled web of sincerity, conscience and iniquity that we see in earlier sermons has all but disappeared; in its place, we find a consideration of sincerity's everyday applications in contexts of social interaction. Tillotson preached: 'we must not so fix our eye upon Heaven, as to

[84] Lockyer, *Divine Discovery*, 181.
[85] Love, 'True Israelite', 26–7.
[86] Ibid. 28. Emphasis original.

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forget that we walk upon the Earth, and to neglect the ordering of our steps and Conversation among Men'.[87] He continually prized inoffensive behaviour, promoting a moderate, tolerant civility over what he called 'A fierce … ill governed … ignorant and injudicious Zeal for the Honour of God,' which 'hath made many Men do many unreasonable, immoral and impious things'.[88] He argued that the real hypocrites were those who used religion as an excuse to be:

> very unpeaceable … as if their profession of Godliness did exempt them from the care and practice of Christian Vertues … as if it were the priviledge of great Devotion, to give a license to Men to be … sower and morose, supercilious and censorious in their behaviour towards others.[89]

One can assume it was the likes of Lockyer to whom Tillotson referred in his allusion to the archetype of the zealous, hypocritical puritan. The 'Moral Duties' Lockyer had all but equated with hypocrisy were, for Tillotson, 'Christian Vertues', evidence of truly 'sincere Piety.'[90]

But how could one avoid causing offence without being a hypocrite? Tillotson advised: 'Not that we are obliged to tell every Man all our mind, but we are never to declare any thing contrary to it'.[91] He encouraged a delicate balance which effectively resolved the conflict between sincerity and civility present in Love's sermon, but which one suspects would not have been satisfying to that earlier preacher, and would certainly have been odious to the more rigid Lockyer. Tillotson's prudent instruction never to express insincere sentiments but to keep some thoughts to oneself set him apart from these puritan ministers. Yet there was not as great a distance between Tillotson and Love as one might expect. The Presbyterian Love had opposed toleration on the grounds that it 'would encourage religious libertinism and lead to social turbulence', but, crucially, this stance was in pursuit of the 'peace, union, and brotherly love' he envisioned in the national church.[92] This can be linked to Tillotson's own pursuit of unity in his support for the 'comprehension' of nonconformists into the Church of England prior to the Glorious

[87] Tillotson, *Of Sincerity*, 11.
[88] Ibid. 13.
[89] Ibid. 10–12.
[90] Ibid. 11, 9.
[91] Ibid. 16.
[92] Quoted in Vernon, 'Love'.

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Revolution.[93] Alternatively, the Independent Lockyer would have supported some form of tolerance, but Congregationalist ideas about toleration were complicated and not always compatible with social harmony.[94] Toleration, civility and politeness were not necessarily congruous values, nor were the roles sincerity and hypocrisy played in their dynamic constant. Furthermore, despite any visions of religious unity that the later archbishop of Canterbury might have shared with Presbyterians such as Love, Tillotson was a very different minister and, by 1695, he was preaching in a very different context. Presiding over a now officially divided country in terms of religion in the wake of the Toleration Act's authorization of Protestant religious diversity, it is evident that Tillotson attempted to bring cohesion to ideals such as toleration, politeness and sincerity in his final work.

Moreover, Tillotson's belief in civility and social harmony did not prevent him from acknowledging and condemning the hypocrisies of polite society for the remainder of his sermon. He argued that overly performative incarnations of social ceremony were a threat to godly sincerity and that the pursuit of inoffensiveness could go too far, morphing into 'Dissimulation'. This was 'contrary to Sincerity, because it consists in a vain shew of what we are not'.[95] What Tillotson saw as prevalent displays of ostentatious social ceremony were, he argued, no better than ungodly hypocrisy. Worse still, he complained, was the fact that:

> falsehood, and fraud, and perfidiousness, and infinite little Crafts and arts of deceit, which Men practise upon one another in their ordinary conversation … are look'd upon by many, as signs of great depth and shrewdness, admirable instruments of business, and necessary means for the compassing our own ends and designs.[96]

There is copious evidence of Tillotson's influence on those who felt similarly distressed by the hypocritical direction society was taking at the turn of the century. Indeed, the famously successful early eighteenth-century periodical the *Spectator* quoted this Tillotson sermon three times from 1711 to 1714, in issues discussing the dearth of

[93] See Kim, 'Tillotson, Part II', 128–34; Rivers, 'Tillotson'.
[94] See Cooper, 'Congregationalists', 101–2; Halcomb, 'Godly Order', 27–8.
[95] Tillotson, *Of Sincerity*, 18.
[96] Ibid.

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candid and honest behaviour in fashionable society, a fact which should be unsurprising to anyone familiar with the *Spectator*'s frequent ridicule of ostentatious, hypocritical social conduct.[97] Personal examples exist as well, such as the prolific diarist Sarah, Lady Cowper, who copied the passage from Tillotson quoted above into her commonplace book nearly word for word in 1711.[98] This sermon was one of Tillotson's numerous best-sellers throughout the eighteenth century and, thanks to periodicals like the *Spectator*, held particular cultural influence. Its success was not solely due to contemporaries' desire to receive spiritual instruction from the most famous preacher of the seventeenth century; rather, it was also because many, looking at the world around them, felt they recognized the truth in Tillotson's claims. This perception would only intensify in both religious and socio-political spheres going into the eighteenth century, as newly prominent issues such as occasional conformity took centre stage.[99]

Conclusion: Paradigms of Sincerity and Hypocrisy?

Towards the end of his sermon, Tillotson claimed hypocrisy was both contemporaneously ascendant and pervasive in English society:

> Amongst too many other Instances of the great corruption and degeneracy of the Age wherein we live, the great and general want of sincerity in Conversation is none of the least; the World is grown so full of Dissimulation and Complement, that Mens words are hardly any signification of their thoughts … *The old English plainness and sincerity … is in a great measure lost amongst us.*[100]

Lockyer, Love and Oldfield would have all agreed with him on this point. It was clear to each of these preachers that the world was 'full of Dissimulation', and it is implausible that any of them would have claimed Tillotson's ideal period of 'old *English* plainness and sincerity' had occurred either thirty, forty or fifty years earlier.[101] Questions of sincerity and hypocrisy were as relevant in the 1690s as they had

[97] Christina Lupton, 'Sincere Performances: Franklin, Tillotson, and Steele on the Plain Style', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 40 (2007), 177–92, at 181.
[98] Knights, *Devil in Disguise*, 163.
[99] See, for instance, Knights, 'Occasional Conformity', 47.
[100] Tillotson, *Of Sincerity*, 23. Emphasis mine.
[101] Emphasis in the original.

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been in the earlier decades of the Restoration era, or during the Commonwealth and Civil War periods. Yet while their relevance was constant, their socio-political significance and cultural conceptualization was not. Like Lockyer, Love and Oldfield before him, Tillotson's sermon shows that homiletic communications of sincerity and hypocrisy shifted according to these societal contexts, rather than being congruous expressions of theological doctrine. These shifts were, to some extent, denominationally explicable, but they were also underpinned by social, political and cultural factors that were intertwined with religious belief, yet not solely beholden to it.

In this article, I have identified both similarities and differences between these sermons, paying needed attention to conceptions of sincerity and hypocrisy across the 'puritan'-'Anglican' divide. I have also sought to demonstrate the merit in considering dynamics within these groupings, as well as the significance of audience, approaches which could be extended to other sects mired in debates about sincerity and hypocrisy, such as Quakers and Baptists. These methods would assist in determining to what extent there were 'puritan' and 'Anglican', or 'Calvinist' and 'Arminian' brands of sincerity and hypocrisy after 1640. Peter Lake has warned that 'the contemporary binary opposition between puritanism and what has since become known as Anglicanism … or of that between Calvinism and Arminianism … leads us not so much through as into … circularities and anachronisms'.[102] By staying attuned to the potential pitfalls of these paradigms, we can gain better awareness of both continuity and divergence. Sometimes, differences and subtleties reared their heads in surprising places; at others, commonalities and complexities popped up in similarly unexpected spots. We should expect and welcome these messy inconsistencies with ideas as perennially important, yet conceptually abstract and malleable, as sincerity and hypocrisy. Matthew J. Smith and Caleb D. Spencer acknowledge this in their work on sincerity's literary history, noting that 'with respect to its Christian roots, the idea of sincerity has long been a discourse of struggle.'[103] The same was naturally true for hypocrisy, which time and again proved itself inseparable from its divine antidote, sincerity, throughout the revolutionary second half of the seventeenth century.

[102] Peter Lake, 'Anti-Puritanism', 90.
[103] Matthew J. Smith and Caleb D. Spencer, 'Preface', *Christianity & Literature* 67 (2017), 3–7, at 6–7.

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