

DEVOTION AND PIETY OF ENGLISH WOMEN, 1480-1620

By

SOPHIE MAIA REGALADO, B.A.

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DEVOTION AND PIETY OF ENGLISH WOMEN, 1480-1620

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AUTHOR: Sophie Maia Regalado, B.A. (McMaster University)

SUPERVISOR: Professor J.D. Alsop

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Abstract

With the Reformation the female centres of worship, such as convents and beguine communities, disappeared in England; consequently focus was placed upon the household as an integral centre for the expression of early modern English women's devotion and piety. Primary sources categorize the manifestation of Tudor and early Stuart women's piety into public and private faces. Devotional, conduct, commemorative literature and their representations stress the inherent necessity of being pious. Employing examples of virtuous contemporary women and biblical figures, writers and clergy emphasised the necessary qualities for imitation. Diaries, autobiographical journals and godly correspondence underlined the virtues lauded in the prescriptive literature. Recording their godly regimes, women such as Lady Margaret Hoby stressed the inseparability between domestic/household responsibilities and acts of piety. A regime of piety furnished women with a legitimate means of expressing their religiosity. While personal meditations provided and individualised rendering of women's expressions of spirituality. These very personal invocations to God were self-reflective and pensive, capturing some early modern English women's desire and need to comprehend the intrinsic complexities of their intimate relationship with God. John Foxe's Act and Monuments, on the other side of the spectrum, affords a more active rendering of women's spirituality. His accounts portray obstinate, yet constant Protestant women willing to suffer the pains of martyrdom for their zealous devotion to God. Although sources are not

representative of all early modern English women, they do allow historians a glimpse into the spiritual world of Tudor and early Stuart women, a growing field of interest.

Preface

Original spelling has been preserved wherever possible. Please note the use of the following abbreviations:

DNB	<u>Dictionary of National Biography</u>
PRO	Public Record Office

I would like to thank Sacha Dubois for his unending sense of hope and his constant faith in my abilities, for his sense of humour and incredible patience during the last two years, thanks my love. My sincerest thanks to Gerrie Loveys and Liza Regalado for their kindness and faith in me; and, to the Regalado and Dubois families for their helpful support. Thanks are also due to J. A. for her strength and inspiration. I would like to extend a special thanks to Dr. K. Garay (McMaster University) for her continual guidance, positive outlook and support throughout my academic career at McMaster. And, I would like to extend particular thanks to my advisor Dr. J.D. Alsop (McMaster University) for his willingness to take on this thesis, as well as his encouragement, enthusiasm and invaluable guidance which saw this study to its completion.

Sophie Regalado
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Chapter 1: Introduction

It was at this time that our Lord showed me spiritually how intimately he loves us. I saw that he is everything that we know to be good and helpful. In his love he clothes us, enfolds and embraces us; that tender love completely surrounds us, never to leave us. As I saw it he is everything that is good.

Julian of Norwich, Revelations of Divine Love

God is love and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him....., God dwelleth in us and his love is perfect in us.¹

Lady Grace Mildmay, Extract from Spiritual Meditations

The first quotation is from a fifteenth-century mystical text, Revelations of Divine Love, written by Julian of Norwich an anchoress and mystic who lived in a cell attached to the church of St. Julian and St. Edward at Conisford; according to legend, Julian was a popular spiritual counsellor, assisting those with ailments of the soul.² Within this short but telling excerpt, Julian poignantly conveys personal perceptions and feelings about her intimate spiritual relation. The medieval female's desire to understand her relationship with God is similar to the sixteenth-century Protestant woman's need to comprehend the intricacies of her own religious liaison with God. Although, Julian's words were written at the close of the Middle Ages, she successfully captures a spiritual universality which transcends the confines of time. Read alongside an extract from Lady Grace Mildmay's spiritual meditations, a late sixteenth-century text written by a wealthy Protestant married

¹Julian of Norwich, Revelations of Divine Love, trans.CliftonWolters ed. Betty Radice (London: Penguin Books, 1966), 68; Lady Grace Mildmay, With Faith and Physic the Life of a Tudor Gentlewoman Lady Grace Mildmay 1552-1620, ed. Linda Pollock (New York: St Martin's Press, 1995),79.

²Betty Radices, unpaginated.

woman, we find similar apprehensions of God. Mildmay comprehended her spirituality in similar terms. Julian of Norwich and Lady Mildmay relay their thoughts through a meaningful language, displaying their confidence in God's love, a confidence which provides them with a sense of comfort and support. Although chronologically and theologically distinct, each spiritual expression can be associated with a feminine approach to God. Although the Reformation altered many features of religious life, we shall see that it did not transform the need for women to have a relationship with God.

Venues for female spiritual expression during the High Middle Ages were varied, and not limited to institutional settings. Late medieval Europe saw the flowering of female mysticism, the flourishing of the monasteries as spiritual centres, and the emergence of *Beguines*, unstructured religious communities wherein women were able to express their own religiosity. Catherine of Siena and other women attached themselves to the Franciscan and Dominican orders as tertiaries living with their families but committing themselves wholly to their faith. While women such as Julian of Norwich became anchoresses, and devoted their lives to a solitary life of meditation and prayer. As mystics, Margery Kempe, Catherine of Genoa and Gertrude of Hefta communicated and created a female, personal means of communing with God. Indeed, the High Middle Ages witnessed a spiritual revolution in which women were full participants, endeavouring to understand the nature of their personal relationship with God.³ The Protestant and Catholic Reformations witnessed a desire to develop "grass roots" religion within the populations of Europe. Women constituted a central component of this movement, both

³Female mystics, in particular flourished in great numbers throughout Europe.

as audience and, in some cases, as actors. Countries which embraced Protestantism sought to recover the basic founding principles of the early church. "The priesthood of all believers," signalled the inclusion of all worshippers within the Protestant community, a religious community where household spirituality was central to the devotion and piety of the family and the individual. Within the varied private and public spheres of devotion, both Catholic and Protestant women of the sixteenth century and early seventeenth centuries expressed their spirituality and commitment to God.

The devotion and piety of early modern English women can be examined by employing both visual and written primary source material. Some of the defining questions asked of these sources in this study are: what did it mean to be a devout and pious woman? what are some of the defining qualities as portrayed in the prescriptive, devotional and commemorative literature? do prescriptive sources and descriptions of, and evidence from actual individuals render similar depictions of female piety? how much, exactly can we learn about female piety in this period from a wide range of published and unpublished evidence? Primary sources for this study are far more readily available from the mid sixteenth century than for the first half of the period under examination. Consequently, chronological coverage of this topic is to some extent uneven. Moreover, as Ralph Houlbrooke has commented on evidence employed for his study on the early modern English family, "individual visibility in historical records of this period depends a great extent upon wealth, social status and the literacy which was connected with them."⁴ This problem is evident in the primary sources utilised for this

⁴Ralph Houlbrooke, The English Family 1450-1700 (London: Longman, 1984), 2.

study. Two principal limitations arise from these restrictions. First, the bulk of evidence considered below arises from the period when England was officially Protestant in its religion, and reflects in good measure both the moralising of Protestant enthusiasts and the thoughts of individual Protestant women. None the less, sufficient evidence survives both for the earlier period of late medieval Catholicism and for individual post-Reformation female Catholics to construct an argument which emphasises important elements of continuity within a period of general religious change and upheaval. Second, we are necessarily more successful in capturing the religious experience of devout members of the social elite, and determining to what extent they shared or adopted the lessons of the prescriptive literature, than of society as a whole. This study cannot be construed as representative of the devotion and piety of all English females of this period, although it is suggestive in its conclusions.

A broad range of primary sources were employed in this investigation including: devotional and conduct literature, commemorative works, such as funeral orations, eulogies, epitaphs and the visual representations communicated in funeral monuments and monumental brasses, last wills and testaments, spiritual diaries and autobiographies, godly correspondence, personal meditations, and published engravings. Pollard and Redgrave's authoritative Short Title Catalogue of English Books 1475-1640 was used in order to identify appropriate sources.⁵ Of these, devotional and conduct literature written by male authors was plentiful; not surprisingly, considering that a mere 0.5% of books

⁵Short Title Catalogue of English Books 1475-1640. ed. A. W. Pollard and G.R. Redgrave. (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1946).

during this time were female authored,⁶ sources written by females were less numerous. Nevertheless, those which were published are very instructive. Conduct literature simplified and specified appropriated behaviour, as determined by the controlling forces of early modern English society. Devotional literature is examined in three categories: devotional literature written by male authors for a general 'Christian reader'; works written by women for other females; and texts authored by male writers for a female readership. Reading devotional works alongside the conduct literature certainly helps define early modern English women's devotion and piety. Funeral sermons, eulogies, and epitaphs, as written sources, commemorated godly females and elevated them to the heights of imitation, not altogether dissimilar from the exempla provided by medieval saints. Stressing the inherent necessity of a pious regime, commemorative works, reinforced the virtues lauded in conduct and devotional literature. These commemorative works, as we shall see, were equally reflective of what society deemed to be appropriate behaviour and therefore tended to be prescriptive rather than practical. In gauging how realistic these portraits were, we must consider them as tools for instructing female and male parishioners, as well as a means of soothing the woes of a lamenting family. Eulogies certainly create an external semblance of ideal female behaviour. Central within the visual representations of funeral monuments and brasses was the primacy of the household and the importance of this centre in a woman's godly regime. The creation of last wills and testaments in this period was very much a religious action. For this study,

⁶Kate Aughterson ed. Renaissance Women A source book (London: Routledge, 1995), 230.

wills from the pre-Reformation 1520s and post-Reformation 1580s were examined to identify the degree of continuity and change. One important finding relates to the significance of charity as a manifestation of godliness. This can be related to the prescriptive literature, and provides further testament to an early modern English woman's need to extend piety beyond the household sphere and into the community. Wills, prescriptive literature and funerary depictions are sources which provide an outward or public face for women's devotion and piety. Spiritual diaries and autobiographies, godly correspondence and devotional meditations furnish the historian with a more private and distinctively personal rendering of early modern English women's piety and devotion. Again the availability of sources has determined the nature of the results. The spiritual diary and autobiographical journal, as well as the devotional meditations, are not representative of all women. Rather, they were written by a few late Tudor and early Stuart pious, largely Puritan, females. John Foxe's Acts and Monuments and accompanying engravings, as sources, reveal another aspect of the face of women's spirituality.⁷ The Marian martyrs emerged as role models for generations of Protestant Englishwomen. But what elements within the stories of these assertive, defiant women who challenged the normative behaviour prescribed by church, state, and patriarchal family were endorsed in this age? Running throughout this investigation is a concern for two central issues: how representative, or suggestive is the evidence, in all its forms, for female piety in this period? What, precisely, can we learn about female devotion and piety from the evidence passed down through the centuries? Written sources used in

⁷John Foxe, Acts and Monuments of John Foxe ed., Rev. George Townsend, M.A. (New York: Ams Press, Inc., 1965).

conjunction with the visual representations accent the varying shades and hues of female spirituality in early modern England.

Different approaches and methods encompass the rapidly expanding field of the study of English women's devotion and piety. Recent scholarship has identified female piety and devotion as a vital area of interest. Scholars such as Patricia Crawford, Diane Willen, Mary Prior, Dorothy Meads, Linda Pollock Anne Laurence and Sara Heller Mendelson have identified women and religion as an important area of study,⁸ wherein both the public and private faces of women's devotion and piety are revealed. The work of Ruth Kelso, Kate Aughterson and Suzanne Hull has defined, via prescriptive Renaissance literature, the identity, training and options of the Renaissance women. Kelso, and Aughterson highlight the various perceptions of how a woman should be instructed and educated, stressing the options available to women. In light of these studies the external fabric of women's piety and devotion becomes more clearly defined. Renaissance women were taught to be silent and obedient, and these virtues were embedded in the message of the prescriptive conduct and devotional literature as well as in the commemorative works. Hull and Aughterson provide a detailed discussion of the literature available to women, written by both male and female authors. Ralph Houlbrooke discusses and describes the English family from the close of the Middle

⁸Sara Heller Mendelson, "Stuart Women's Diaries and Occasional Memoirs," in Women in English Society, 1500-1800 ed., Mary Prior (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1985); Diane Willen, "Women and Religion in Early Modern England," in Women in Reformation and Counter Reformation Europe ed., Sherrin Marshall (Indiana: Indiana UP, 1989); Mary Prior ed., Women in English Society 1500-1800 London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1985); Patricia Crawford, Women and Religion in England 1500-1720 (London:

Ages until the eighteenth century, stressing the role families played in the life of the individual. Merry E. Wiesner and Retha Warnicke provide an all-encompassing overview of women and gender in early modern Europe.⁹ In the chapter devoted to women's religion, Wiesner examines female spirituality through the context of the Protestant and Catholic Reformations, and comes to the conclusion that, "...the early modern period was a time when the domestic nature of women's acceptable religious activities was reinforced. The proper sphere for the expression of women's religious ideas was a household...."¹⁰

In their respective studies, Patricia Crawford and Diane Willen describe the development and changing nuances of female piety through the Reformation into the eighteenth century. Focusing upon Catholic and Protestant women, Crawford examines the role of religion in the lives of women during the Reformation and the subsequent changes which followed, "to show significance of the male/female distinction in religious belief and the significance of gender in religious history."¹¹ After an extensive study, Crawford concludes that, "Religion was of central importance in the lives of women in England in the early modern period," wherein "women found spiritual satisfaction from

Routledge, 1993); Anne Laurence, Women in England 1500-1760 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994).

⁹Suzanne Hull, Chaste, Silent and Obedient (San Marino CA: Huntington Library, 1982); Ralph Houlbrooke, The English Family 1450-1700 (London: Longman, 1984) ; Merry E. Wiesner, Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993); Retha Warnicke, Women of the English Renaissance and Reformation (Wesport CI: Greenwood Press, 1983). Kate Aughterson ed. Renaissance Women A source book (London: Routledge, 1995).

¹⁰Wiesner, 213.

¹¹Crawford, 2.

their beliefs and a meaning for life.”¹² The conclusions revealed in the present investigation help to confirm and reinforce many of Crawford’s and Willen’s conclusions; indeed, a godly regime as described in the prescriptive and practical literature was essential to early modern English women. Not only did religion provide “spiritual satisfaction,” but it gave them an important role and a sense of purpose in a patriarchally structured society in which they were not allowed to participate in the public, institutional aspects of religion. Within the self-reflective sources, diaries and devotional meditations, women, as we shall see, devoted much of their time and energy to godly activities. Admittedly, Protestant households facilitated a female’s pious routine; within the household setting women expressed their spirituality. Willen has argued that “Whatever the motive in individual cases, a great many women in all social classes justified their lives and ordered their daily activities according to their religious beliefs...restricted to the household, they dealt with options and opportunities significant but undeniably limited.”¹³ Primary sources attest to the truth of Willen’s assertion; both prescriptive literature and private literature reveal the routine, everyday nature of piety and devotion within daily life. Puritan diaries, as illustrated by that of Lady Margaret Hoby, reinforced the regimental nature of a godly routine and its relationship to the overall day-to-day life of the early modern female. Tied directly to domestic duties were acts of charity, church services and private meditation. Moreover the nature of godly correspondence between females, and with their spiritual advisors, further demonstrated

¹²Crawford, 209.

¹³Willen, 140, 156.

the inseparability between a female's world order and her religion. In Willen's terminology early modern English women were limited perhaps in comparison to the multiplex options available to women of the late medieval period, but within the household sphere women could engage in numerous private and public devotional activities. Willen has argued that the identification of separate private and public spheres is problematic: "...it is anachronistic to assume that women who acted solely within the context of household religion necessarily felt themselves oppressed or even relegated to a separate, private sphere."¹⁴ This is an important observation; as historians we should not impose our twentieth-century perceptions, standards or language onto sixteenth-century texts and the societal values they reflect. Certainly, early modern English women lived within a patriarchal society. Nevertheless, as we shall see, women continued to participate and express their piety and devotion within a distinctly female context.

England's transition from Catholicism to Protestantism and the ensuing changes in the practice of female piety and devotion are traced in the work of Crawford and Willen. Crawford has argued that, "...expressions of religious devotion crossed religious boundaries"; indeed whether Catholic or Protestant: "Piety helped women to ... find spiritual satisfaction and to 'apprehend the divine.'"¹⁵ Despite the fact that there were inherent differences in pious expression, the ultimate goal was essentially the same: devotion to God. Willen also examined the changes in women's devotion through this

¹⁴Willen, 155.

¹⁵Crawford, 90, 97.

period of transformation. In her all-encompassing work, Willen maintains that: "...many of these patterns [pious routines] of behavior crossed Protestant and Catholic lines"¹⁶ As settings changed, a greater emphasis was placed on the household as the centre of pious expression. Although there were inherent changes in the ritual aspects of devotion, women continued to seek spiritual expression via a pious regime.

Twentieth-century historiography, in particular the work of Ellen Macek and Harriet Blodgett has applied the current feminist language to define the emergence of a distinctively female-oriented religiosity in their work on diaries and female martyrs. Feminist language of liberation, including terms such as 'autonomy', 'sovereignty' and 'transcending passivity' to describe early modern women, specifically female martyrs and diarists, and their search for identity and within a patriarchal society, has been resorted to by several scholars. Ellen Macek has argued that, "a close analysis... indicates that some sixteenth-century English women were equally conversant with the emancipative process that is part of a feminine spirituality."¹⁷ Indeed female martyrs were "emancipated" from an oppressor; however it was religious emancipation from what they perceived to be an illegitimate church. Feminist language sets these women within the framework of twentieth-century conceptions of women. Arguments put forth by these scholars tends to rely heavily on the theory that women living within this patriarchal society were oppressed or imprisoned by male authority. Consequently, acts of martyrdom or diary writing became a coping mechanism in the latter case, and a means

¹⁶Willen, 140.

¹⁷Ellen Macek, "The Emergence of a Feminine Spirituality in *The Book of Marytrs*," *Sixteenth Century Journal* XIX(1988):63.

of expressing religious autonomy in the former. Although Macek and Blodgett employ twentieth-century language of gender and feminism, they tend to overdo the theme. Macek and Blodgett describe oppressed women freeing themselves via religious expression through acts of diary keeping and martyrdom. In fact, a woman such as Lady Grace Mildmay used her autobiographical journal to convey her personal perceptions on the importance of religion in her own life. Macek and Blodgett's work speak of the female as a victim of a male-dominated society, oppressed and confined.

Feminist theory does prove useful in understanding some features of early modern English female spirituality in twentieth-century terms. Certainly, Foxe's female martyrs demonstrated a strong conviction and defied the patriarchal representatives of church, state, and family. However, as we shall see this defiance was directed only toward what they perceived as an illegitimate, false church. Their defiant actions were made in the name of the Protestant church rather than accomplished for the sake of all females. Blodgett has also maintained that: "Women have never been encouraged to accept, or understand their own feelings."¹⁸ In truth, the limitations placed on women restricted much of their capacity to define themselves beyond the normative standards set down by a male-dominated society. However, in Lady Mildmay's diary, we are presented with a woman who was determined to convey to her children and grandchildren her perceptions on the importance and necessity of spirituality in an individual's life. A mixture of fears, feelings and concerns all blend into this work, which does not appear in the least to communicate any sense of discomfort. In fact the reverse is true; and she was not alone.

¹⁸Harriet Blodgett, Centuries of Female Diaries and Occasional Memoirs (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1967), 23.

This study adopts a thematic approach to the topic of the devotion and piety of English women from 1480 to 1620, with the intention of determining and defining what it meant to be a pious or a devout early modern English woman. The period, 1480-1620 was chosen because it is important to determine the extent of the transition which ensued after the Reformation, a process which saw the gradual alteration from Catholicism to Protestantism. With Protestantism, the myriad of outlets once available to women, such as convents, beguine communities, and mysticism, disappeared almost overnight during the 1540s (with a brief revival, 1553-58). As the centre of worship shifted from a public to a private sphere, the household became crucial to female piety. As religious centres, Protestant households then, were perceived to be integral to the godly and pious regime of the early modern English woman. We need to examine women within the social centre of this religious experience. As will be demonstrated, both contemporary writers and individual women, demonstrated in various ways the centrality of household roles and motifs to the religious instruction and experience of English females.

Female piety and devotion is discussed within the definitions found within the prescriptive, conduct and devotional literature and similarly reflected in the visual representations. Organised to embrace and reflect a myriad of sources, Chapter Two begins with female training, education and literacy, before moving on to examine three sorts of devotional literature, and to identify what they reveal about female devotion and piety. Chapter Three investigates the public face or outward manifestation of women's devotion and piety through prescriptive funeral orations, eulogies and epitaphs written to memorialise the lives of elite gentlewomen. Limited to the wealthier segment of the female population, these sources provided a practical application of the qualities imbued

in the prescriptive literature of conduct manuals. Similarly, monumental brasses and funeral monuments sought to represent the inherent inseparability between household spirituality, the family unit and the pious regime of an early modern English woman. Further testament to some of the qualities much lauded in commemorative prose were the last wills of elite women, of which widows comprised ninety-nine per cent of the sample analysed. Chapter Four focuses on the personal and more private face of women's devotion and piety. Lady Margaret Hoby's spiritual diary and Lady Grace Mildmay's autobiographical journal offer rare glimpses into the mental spirituality of early modern English women. Godly correspondence and devotional meditations are equally illuminating, although clearly not representative of all early modern English women. These personal representations of devotion prove an interesting point of comparison from which to understand the prescriptive literature. On the other hand, Acts and Monuments, Foxe's voluminous work of the 1550s and 1560s is used in the fifth chapter as a case study of the ideals and reality of female martyrdom, wherein women's devotion and how it endowed them with the physical, spiritual and intellectual strength to defend their Protestant beliefs is analysed. In light of early modern English conduct literature and social prescriptions, Foxe's work provides an intriguing representation of Protestant women. Herein qualities such as those praised in conduct books, silence and obedience, are dispensed with and replaced by strength, and fearlessness. Viewed alongside the devotional, prescriptive and commemorative literature and representations, as we shall see, there are obvious contradictions, as well as methods employed to resolve these tensions.

Chapter 2

“Diamonds of Devotion”: Devotional Literature

This chapter examines the importance of devotional literature in the development of early modern English women’s piety. Focus is placed on the devotional literature written by male and female authors to determine what it meant to be devout and pious. Works such as Helliar’s The Talent of Devotion (1602) and others by Luca Pinelli and Richard Rowlands are representative texts of the devotional literature genre. When we consider the paucity of female writers during the Tudor and early Stuart period, we must question whether the works of Aemilia Lanyer, Anne Wheathill and other female writers included in this study are representative of female thought. Considering that women were encouraged and taught to be silent, it is not surprising that only 0.5% of the total publications in England in the early seventeenth century were produced by women.¹ There is a tendency to believe, that women’s voices, when found, were representative and typical of females at this time.² Having read a sample of early modern English women’s writings, and in light of the societal values of the early modern period, it is difficult to disagree with this observation. Women were neither encouraged to speak their minds, nor were they invited to publish their perceptions, feelings or ideas. Since women produced so few works at this time, it is difficult to say definitively

¹Aughterson, 230.

²Aughterson, 230.

that the writings of Lanyer or Wheathill, or any female author for that matter, are distinctly and uniquely female. The female writers discussed herein were chosen because they illustrate a “partial” dialogue of women’s perceptions on devotion.³ Placed next to the devotional literature written by men, the works authored by females do illustrate comparable qualities, as shall be seen in the ensuing examination. Close analysis of devotional works written by both genders will illuminate historian’s conceptions of female spirituality, piety and devotion in early modern England. Encouraging women to commit their lives to God, devotional literature, created by male and female authors alike, emphasised that worshipping God through prayer and meditation nurtured and improved the day-to-day existence of the devotee’s life. A woman’s devotion and piety was shown to be integral to her every-day existence. As works of spiritual reflection, devotional books written by a male author for a female reader underlined the inseparability between a woman’s daily routine and godly worship. Expressed in language, style, imagery and tone, the message contained within these works stressed the primacy of God within a Christian’s life. The devotional literature explored in this discussion has been organised into three categories: devotional literature produced by a male author for a general audience, that is, “The Christian Reader”; devotional works by women for other females; and, lastly works written by a male author for a female audience. Together, these three investigations will shed light on the perceived

³Aughterson, 230.

importance of devotional works in the lives of early modern English women.

Devotional literature was considered to be an important element in the education of young women during the early modern period. In fact, an early modern English woman's education, that is a "decent" education, was focused on preparing her for marriage and teaching her the essential precepts required of a dutiful wife; religious training was viewed as an essential component in a young woman's education, because they were "expected to be devout, to provide spiritual leadership in the household, and to know how to conduct themselves in a moral fashion."⁴ Lady Grace Mildmay's spiritual autobiography, for example, revealed the crucial nature of a proper education, which should "... furnish their minds with true religion and virtue..."⁵ Mildmay reported how her governess maintained that:

it [is] ever dangerous to suffer young people to read or study books wherein good and evil mingled together, for that by nature we are inclined rather to learn and retain evil than good, the Bible, Musculous's Common Places, The Imitation of Christ, Mr Foxe's Book of Martyr's were the only books she laid before me.⁶

These books which Mildmay read as a child in the mid-sixteenth century were godly and devotional in nature. In such works as Foxe's, women were presented with models of

⁴Laurence, 165;165.

⁵Lady Grace Mildmay, With Faith and Physic the Life of a Tudor Gentlewoman Lady Grace Mildmay 1552-1620 ed. Linda Pollock (New York: St Martin's Press, 1995), 25.

⁶Mildmay, 28.

constancy, providing females with appropriate models for imitation.⁷ Conduct books such as Juan Luis Vives' The Instruction of a Christian Woman (1524), Richard Brathwait's The English Gentlewoman (1631) and Thomas Becon's Catechism, (1564), *all* instructed women in the popular proverb, "a maid should be seen and not heard."⁸ Becon and Vives stressed that, "a woman shal learn the virtues of her kind altogether out of books, which she shall read herself or else hear read."⁹ Vives maintained that reading "... the gospels and the actes and the epistles of thapostles...." would, "lyfte up the mynde to god and set it in a Christian quietness."¹⁰ Of course, these virtues, as set down by Vives, Becon and Brathwait were: chastity, soberness, modesty, silence and obedience.¹¹ Women were encouraged to read

⁷See below, Chapter 5.

⁸Thomas Becon, Catechism, in Aughterson, 26.

⁹Juan Luis Vives, The Instruction of a Christian Woman in Aughterson, 70. Juan Luis Vives (1492-1540) was a renowned Spanish scholar resident in Henrician England, whose works have been translated from the original Latin into French, German, Spanish, Italian and English. When in England, Vives stayed at Oxford. Dictionary of National Biography, vol., XX eds. Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee (London: Oxford UP, 1917), 377-78.

¹⁰Vives, The Instruction of a Christian Woman (London, [1529?]), fii.

¹¹The frontispiece of Richard Brathwait's The English Gentlewoman (London, 1631) illustrates quite effectively the all-important virtues required of a gentlewoman. See Fig. 1. "Frontispiece of the English Woman" appendix I and Fig. 2 "Explanatory table for The English Gentlewoman appendix II. Richard Brathwait(1588?-1673) was a poet who and attended Cambridge University under the encouragement of Lancelot Andrewes, the noted Jacobean bishop and prolific author who was the master of the college. DNB, vol., II, 1141-42. In the frontispiece and accompanying explanatory table, Brathwait outlines the several worshipful virtues of an English gentlewoman.

conduct books, of which there were many devoted to conditioning women and illustrating to them exactly what appropriate behaviour entailed. Devotional and conduct literature established the framework for pious deportment. In early modern England, such works described the ideal female by outlining the rules to be followed.¹²

Prior to the Reformation, the gentry sent their young daughters to convents, wherein they were taught to sing, play musical instruments, and learn foreign languages; however, the dissolution of convents in the 1530s changed this.¹³ Education or training of females was the responsibility of mothers, with fathers as the overseers; at the highest level of society young girls were often educated by a governess or sent to the homes of the nobility.¹⁴ The advent of the printing press in England encouraged new vehicles for devotion and piety; Protestant women in particular were taught to read in order to understand devotional material and instruct their children in the true faith.¹⁵ Suzanne Hull has argued that, "women were educated in a kind of practical piety... to be chaste and silent, obedient to their husbands,... and to conform to appropriate religious training."¹⁶ An early Protestant, Thomas Becon, in *A Christian Upbringing* (1559), emphasised educating female Protestants in being,

¹²Aughterson, 67.

¹³Laurence, 167, 170.

¹⁴Kelso, 39.

¹⁵Hull, 103.

¹⁶Hull, 103.

“sober minded, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste,...good [and] obedient.”¹⁷ Similarly, Richard Mulcaster’s Schooling For Girls (1581) argued that, “reading if for nothing else...is very needful for religion, to read that which they must know and to perform.”¹⁸ Hence, in Protestant England the reading of devotional works became necessary for the female Christian. Fostering the religious faith and the spiritual growth of the female devotee, while guaranteeing the proper education of women, was the goal of such devotional works. As illustrated in Thomas Becon’s Catechism, it was the responsibility of godly parents to rear their children, male and female, in the knowledge of God. At a young age, “so sone as the children be able to speak plainly, let them euen from their cradles to teach them graue, sober and godly words: as God, Jesus....” Furthermore, “children maye learne these thinges more commodiously, it is the duty of parents to prepare for them not ydle and wanton, not vain and trifling bokes, but wholsm, holy and godly bokes, as the new Testament of our Sauour...”¹⁹ Suzanne Hull points out that female

¹⁷Thomas Becon, A Christian Upbringing (London, 1559) in David Cressy, Education in Tudor and Stuart England (London: Edward Arnold, 1975), 108. Thomas Becon (1512-67) was an early Protestant who was educated at Cambridge where he became a clergyman. Rosemary O’Day, The Longman Companion to The Tudor Age (London: Longman, 1995), 173.

¹⁸Richard Mulcaster Schooling for girls (London, 1581) in Cressy, 109. Richard Mulcaster (1530?-1611), was a schoolmaster and writer. A native of Carlisle, Mulcaster worked as a school-master in 1559 in London. From 1561 until 1586 he was the first headmaster for the Merchant Taylors school. Mulcaster advocated the rights of girls to obtain an appropriate education. DNB vol. XIII, 1173.

¹⁹Thomas Becon, Catechism (London, 1564) fol.ccccxviii; fol ccccxix.

literacy expanded with the emergence of a developing “middle class” culture, who was willing to send both girls and boys to elementary petty schools where they were taught to read in English.²⁰ From the introduction of printing, about 1475, through to 1640, 163 books in 500 editions were directly geared toward, or printed for, a female audience; eighteen titles in this ‘Basic List’ are designated devotional works.²¹ David Cressy’s research reveals a significant increase for both female and male literacy in Tudor-Stuart England; between 1500 and 1620 female literacy increased ten fold from approximately 1 to 2% in 1560 it rose to 9 to 10% by 1620.²² Cressy documented the ability to write; the ability to read is thought to have increased proportionately, running at perhaps double these percentages, so the reading public was sizeable and growing. Cressy demonstrates that literacy in early

²⁰Hull, 4. The “middle-class”, according to Hull, emerged with the gradual economic and social changes occurring in England during the sixteenth century. Historians prefer the concept of “the middling orders”, which included the lower gentry, yeomanry, and commercial elite.

²¹Hull, 1, 91. Hull has “established a set of criteria” which she has used to determine which books to include in her study – Basic List. These included: books specifically directed to women; books which deal with female-oriented issues; books dealing with a women’s duties or roles; famous women’s histories or biographies; and books with numerous dedications to individual women. Books which met this criteria are listed in an annotated Basic List (Hull, preface, ix-x).

²²The corresponding figures for males are: 10% in 1560; 30% in 1620. David Cressy, Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980), 177. Similarly, Margaret Spufford’s figures demonstrate that 11% of women between 1580 and 1700 could sign their names, which reinforces Cressy’s evidence. Margaret Spufford, “First Steps in Literacy: The Reading and Writing Experiences of the Humblest Seventeenth-Century Spiritual Autobiographies,” SocialHistory 4(1979):409.

modern England was very largely socially determined: with the titled nobility and gentry accounting for approximately 5% of England's population, a literacy rate of 10% suggests that most of the wives and daughters of yeoman and merchants and some of those of husbandsmen and craftsmen were literate. If by 1620 the ability to read basic English was held by upwards of 20% of the adult female population, then virtually all the middling layers of society were included. The marked increase in the literacy of females from the middle and wealthier orders of society resulted in the increase of women's attractiveness as an audience for a flourishing book trade,²³ and, at the same time, made indoctrination through printed text possible.

Having set the scene with the education of women and literacy we can now venture into an examination of the godly and devotional works. Devotional literature written by a male author for a general reader is an excellent point of reference for the analysis of the two subsequent types of devotional writings (female to female; male to female) central to this investigation. Gender neutral, both in content and message, male-authored devotional literature addressed issues of redemption and the general improvement of the reader's Christian path. As a representative example of devotional literature, a piece such as John Helliar's The Talent of Devotion (1602) is uniform, formulaic and at times devoid of

²³Hull, 7.

feeling.²⁴ These works are unconcerned with emotions or passions; their purpose is rooted in intellect. Helliard and other male authors focussed on genderless, universal, elements which could be read and digested by a general Christian audience. Language, tone, and style do not draw on gender-specific experiences. Helliard expressed issues which concerned *all* Christians, such as prayer, meditation, salvation, redemption and sin. Similarly, the anonymous A Manual or Meditation (1580-81) and Richard Day's A Booke of Christian Prayers... (1578) were books of instruction, which guided the "Christian Reader" along the journey of devotion.²⁵ Such devotional works simplified and presented prayer and meditation, as they improved the health of the Christian soul. Following a prescribed formula, these works were utilitarian in purpose. For example, A Manual of Prayers, contains a detailed index of prayers, calendars of feasts, and specification of when particular prayers should be said. The language ties prayer into the Christian's weekly cycle, but not into the personal events of daily life: "prayers to the Holy Trinity are to be saide on

²⁴John Helliard, The Talent of Devotion (London, 1602). An extensive search for biographical information on Helliard was fruitless. It appears that his book is the only testament to his existence.

²⁵Richard Day's A Booke of Christian Prayers (London, 1578) has an illustrative border surrounding each of its pages. These illustrations were surely useful to its readers as they elicited and inspired the reader's attention. Male and female figures appear in the border; some are caring for the sick. See Fig. 3. "Day's Border" appendix III. Richard Day, Daye or D'aje (1552-1607?) was the son of John Day the printer. Richard Day was a printer, translator, and divine. He was educated at Eton and King's College, Cambridge DNB, vol. V, 688-89. Manual. A Manual of Prayer, Newly Gathered out of Many Authors (London, 1602). Author is unknown, likely male.

Soundaye and prayers for the remission of sins are saide on Moundaye."²⁶ These works specified the appropriate and acceptable behaviour for every occasion of a Christian's life, but did so from an objective and prescriptive distance: "when thou art appareled, give not thy selfe presently to babling,... or to vaine thoughts or fansies: but lift up thy hart unto God in silence, and prepare thy selfe...."²⁷ Lessons on how to behave before and after eating, sleeping and dressing were outlined for the improvement of Christians willing to properly worship God. Accessing God through prayer was described in a systematic method; everything was explained, outlined and detailed according to specific instructions. The "Christian reader" could not fall astray if he or she followed these patterns and daily exercises, intended to "stirreth up our harts...to pray."²⁸ Simple images and an uncomplicated language delivered an easily digestible message: in order to be a good Christian, prayer and meditation were paramount. To ensure the general understanding of its readers, the author employed a style both inclusive and generic in content and context.

Women writing for female readers

Under a hundred works of this period were written by women; the majority of texts

²⁶Manual, 3.

²⁷Manual, 2-3.

²⁸Christian praiera and Holy meditations (London, 1570), B2. An anonymous work; likely to have been written by a male author.

intended for a female audience were written by men.²⁹ Aemilia Lanyer's Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum (1611), Anne Wheathill's A Handfull of Holesome Hearbs (1585) and the works contained within Thomas Bentley's The Monument of Matrones (1582) are illustrations of devotional works written by women for their fellow female readers, in this new but gradually growing tradition of female-authored books. Each of these female writers encouraged their readers to develop an intimate relationship with God. In assessing these female-authored texts we must consider the importance of imagery, language, style, and the author's intent to determine what constituted the female expression of devotion and piety during the Tudor and early Stuart period.

Aemilia Lanyer's Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum (1611), is an example of the female spiritual voice;³⁰ Lanyer's book, divided into four sections, encouraged its readers to devote their lives to faith in God. While the entire work was dedicated to Queen Anne of Denmark, not an untypical dedicatee, subsections honour women of the upper levels of society; for example, the section dedicated "To the Ladie Arabella," refers to Arabella Stuart (1575-1615), cousin to James I and a recognised well-educated aristocratic woman.³¹ Elaine V.

²⁹Carol Camden, The Elizabethan Woman (Houston, TX: Elsevier Press, 1952), 58. Camden states that only 85 books written by women were published in English before 1640. Hull has determined that, "men were responsible for practically all the books written for women and printed before 1640." (Hull, 16).

³⁰Aemilia Lanyer was born in 1569 and died in 1645; she was the daughter of one of Queen Elizabeth's Italian musicians.

³¹Aemilia Lanyer, Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum (London, 1611), C1.

Beilin has argued that until Lanyer's book the Renaissance tradition of glorifying women, real or fictional, was exclusively within the domain of male writers.³² In honouring Lady Arabella, Lanyer hoped to encourage support for the Protestant faith within her female audience. She encouraged her readers to pass the book on to women: "[a]nd let your noble daughter likewise reade this little booke that I present to you...."³³ In her dedications to these women (first the queen, second, seven virtuous women, and, third, the virtuous reader) Lanyer suggested the existence of a universal feminine audience, "...thus implying a whole commonwealth of women --- or city of ladies --- learned and virtuous to whom she may appeal."³⁴ Admittedly, unlike any other of the female devotional literature examined, Lanyer captures a sense of female community, a circle of learned women, who exchanged ideas, and fostered each other's spiritual growth. Indeed, Lanyer saw herself as a messenger, or better yet, a "spokesperson" who brought Protestantism to the lives of her fellow women.³⁵ In order to maintain the interest and attention of her readers, Lanyer imparted her ideas with female specific imagery. For example, she spoke of her text as, "[d]elivering the health of the soule;

³²Elaine V. Beilin, Redeeming Eve: Women Writers of the English Renaissance (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1987), 177.

³³Lanyer, C2, verso.

³⁴Beilin, 185.

³⁵Susanne Woods, ed. The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer (New York: Oxford UP, 1993) introduction, xxxi. Woods argues that it was a rare and "unusual" scenario for women to have a female spokesperson in the early seventeenth century and unique to come together as a community as suggested by Beilin and even Lanyer herself.

which is this most pretious pearle of all perfection, this rich diamond of devotion, this perfect gold growing in the veines of that excellent earth of the most blessed paradise.”³⁶

Such language used themes familiar to the wealthy women of the upper ranks of society. References to gold, diamonds and pearls on a material level maintained the reader's attention, guaranteeing a common point of reference. On a symbolic level, comparing spirituality to jewels paralleled the preciousness, richness and luxuriousness of devotion. Instead of presenting devotion in an abstract or a philosophical manner, Lanyer made the concept tangible and concrete. Emphasising the valuable, yet refined, nature of devotion, gold, diamonds and pearls figuratively reminded the reader of the invaluable qualities of piety and devotion. As objects of rarity and worth, Lanyer underlined, and equated, the importance of devotion with the great worth of material splendour. Indeed, a relationship with God was filled with the preciousness of His love, mercy and grace. Hence, what the female devotee gained from a commitment to God was on the spiritual level as valuable as the gold and pearls Lanyer referred to in her book were for the materialistic, earthly existence. Lanyer's language of pearls and gems enticed the reader into a precious relationship with God.

Keeping her audience's economic status and social position in mind, Lanyer spoke to the responsibilities and societal duties of elite women. She created scenarios whereby the

³⁶Lanyer, E1.

practical knowledge of her readers was constantly harnessed and applied. Intimately connected to her readers' social duties was the image of Christ as a guest: "when he is sweetly seated in your breast, there may your thoughts as servants to your heart give true attendance on this lovely guest."³⁷ In this excerpt, Christ is characterised as an important visitor. Here, Lanyer cleverly draws on her readers' responsibilities as hostesses and the importance of hospitality. The devotee's thoughts are servants which attend to the nourishment and management of this all-important guest. Indeed, a visitor of Christ's importance should be treated with the utmost respect and care. Lanyer connected the rapport of the hostess to the guest with the relationship between God and devotee. The penitent fostered and cared for this relationship, attending to its needs as would a generous and competent hostess. Illustrating the relationship between devotee and God in this manner brought the nature of spirituality down to a practical level. A relationship with God was neither complicated nor intangible. Simplifying this spiritual relationship, Lanyer defined the responsibility of the female devotee in feasible feminine terms, appropriate to class, interests and the female sensitivities of her readers.

Lanyer's image of Christ as both a lover and bridegroom was poignantly employed throughout her devotional work. Throughout the dedications of Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum, Lanyer invited her readers to take part in what could be construed as a spiritual love affair.

³⁷Lanyer, D2.

Rather than the mere privileges bestowed on a visitor, Christ and the future penitent participated in the joys of spiritual love. Readers and dedicatees such as Lucy, Countess of Bedford (*d.* 1620), a patroness of poets and the target of many dedications,³⁸ were called to,

unlock the closet of [her] lovely breast. Holding the key of knowledge in her hand, key of that cabbine where your selfe doth rest, to let him in, by whom her youth was blest: the true-loue of your soule, your hearts delight, faireer than all the world in your cleare sight. He that descended from celestiall glory, to taste of your infirmities and sorrowes....³⁹

In this excerpt, Lanyer details a love affair between the devoted soul and Christ, where she will “enter with the bridegroom to the feast.”⁴⁰ A feast symbolises a celebratory and happy occasion, perhaps heaven, perhaps the feast of a life devoted to Christ, or even a marriage union, where the two parties shared in the responsibility of attending to each other’s needs. To write that Christ is “fairer than all the world,”⁴¹ implied that a life dedicated to Christ was both satisfying and fulfilling. Beilin has argued that the feast imagery in Lanyer’s poem is related to the Passover feast, wherein all Lanyer’s dedicatees were symbolically united as a female community,⁴² but it probably has a wider, and more individual, application as

³⁸DNB, vol XVII, 467.

³⁹Lanyer, D2.

⁴⁰Lanyer, E3.

⁴¹Lanyer, D2, verso.

⁴²Beilin, 186-87.

well. Lanyer inferred that women were empowered with the ability to allow, or refuse, the presence of Christ in their lives. After all, they were the ones with the key which will unlock the soul's door. The phrase, "unlock the closet of [her] lovely breast" emphasised the devotee's act of 'unlocking' herself, to allow Christ into her life. "Closet" spoke to a woman's private room where she and Christ would be alone together in a spiritual dialogue. Although she spoke of "the key of knowledge," Lanyer clearly stressed emotions and sensibilities over intellect. Unlike Hellier's The Talent of Devotion which approached spirituality mechanistically, Lanyer's work was charged with meaningful metaphors and emotions. A devout soul was invited to "take this faire bridegroom in your soules pure bed,"⁴³ a subtle, but definite sexual nuance, alluding to the intimacy shared between a devoted soul and Christ. Her symbolic language implied a special and individual relationship with God. An intimate union between God and the devoted soul resonated in this marriage imagery. The devotion and love which a wife and husband vowed to one another was insinuated in a "marriage" to Christ, where the devotee also vowed her earnest commitment and obedience to Christ. "Pure bed" inferred an unadulterated, virginal paradise, where newlyweds experienced for the first time the intimacies of true love. The use of the imagery of keys and the act of unlocking all implied secrecy and privacy, and furthered the notion of precious treasures which are locked up for safe-keeping. Lanyer, thus, described a relationship with

⁴³Lanyer, C2.

God which appealed to the sensitivities of her female audience. She wished her readers to understand and appreciate in feminine terms the benefits of a spiritual relationship with Christ.

The actual poem, Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum, is Lanyer's distinctive interpretation of Christ's Passion, which follows Matthew's account of Christ's death.⁴⁴ In a "uniquely woman-centred" rendering of this central Christian event, Lanyer records the virtues of women alongside Christ's pain and suffering, which occupies 123 of the 230 stanzas.⁴⁵ Before describing Christ's mortified and desecrated body, she turns her audience's attention to the Blessed Virgin Mary and her pain at the sight of her dying son: "His woefull Mother wayting on her Sonne,/ All comfortesse in depth of sorow drowned;/ Her griefes extreame, although but new begun,/ To see his bleeding body oft she swooned;/ ... None ever lost so great a losse as shee,/ Beeing Sonne, and Father of Eternitie."⁴⁶ Lanyer, unlike conventional authors when presenting this traditional scene, relayed the sentiments of what could be deemed as subsidiary characters in this plot. She does not detract from this central theological event, but rather subtly "pushes the envelope" to include and report the reactions of noteworthy female parties. Similarly, her account of the mournful *Teares of the*

⁴⁴Woods, introduction xxxvi. Matthew 26:30-28:10.

⁴⁵Woods, introduction xxxvi; Beilin, 191.

⁴⁶Aemilia Lanyer, The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer Susanne Woods ed. (New York: Oxford UP, 1993), 94-95.

Daughters of Jerusalem, who were woefully stricken, lamenting the loss of Christ focuses upon the meaning of Christ in the lives of women: "Most blessed daughters of Jerusalem,/Who found such favour in your Saviors sight,/ To turne his face when you did pitie his eies more bright;...."⁴⁷ The account reveals the affects of Christ's death on devoted disciples, female disciples. Interspersed throughout her poem she included examples of virtuous women, such as Deborah, Hester and Judeth, all of whom she urged upon her patron, the Lady dowager of Cumberland: "Loe Madame, heere you take a view of those,/ Whose worthy steps you doe desire to tread,...."⁴⁸ These women, Mary, the Daughters of Jerusalem, and others, were chosen because they were deemed truly to exemplify the devoted Christian female, emphasising constancy and dedication as essential female Christian qualities. Unlike the male figures in her account, who are presented in a less than redeeming light,⁴⁹ the women, whether those in the life of Christ or in the course of Christian history, remained committed to their faith.

A second female-authored devotional text is Anne Wheathill's A Handfull of

⁴⁷Lanyer, 93.

⁴⁸Lanyer, 129.

⁴⁹Christ's disciples were described by Lanyer in a slightly negative light, "But now returning to thy sleeping Friends,/ That could not watch one houre for love of thee,/ Even those three Friends, which on thy Grace depends,/ Yet shut those Eies that should their Maker see;...." (Lanyer, 69). Apostles are not nearly, in fact, not at all, described like their female counterparts; they are, according to Lanyer, selfish and unaware.

Holesome Hearbs (1584).⁵⁰ Wheathill's work also attempted to inspire her readers to partake in the joys of a dedicated life to God in a uniquely feminine fashion. Expressing her intention in the frontispiece of her book, Wheathill described her text as, "[a] handful of wholesome hearbs gathered out of the goodlie garden of God's most holie word; for the common benefit and comfortable exercise of all such as are devoutlie disposed."⁵¹ Her prayers encouraged friends and strangers alike to "taste these grose hearbs with me."⁵² A Handfull of Holesome Hearbs was dedicated to, "all good ladies, gentlewomen, and others, who have a desire to invoke and call upon the name of the Lord."⁵³ Both the title and the accompanying frontispiece of Wheathill's book urged her female readership to view the text as a recipe book for spiritual health. Constructing her book in such a manner created a housewifery appeal; like the practical cookbooks and household manuals printed at this time, Wheathill drew on the tradition of "how to books," but subverted the pragmatic tradition to focus on the devotee's soul. Each prayer was a cordial which healed and purged the troubled soul. According to Wheathill, prayers were the substance to ultimate peace and spiritual contentment. To digest these "grose hearbs" was in many ways a herbal remedy to

⁵⁰ Anne Wheathill fl., 1584; little is known of her life. She may have been the daughter of Thomas Wheathill of Leicestershire. Her book, A Handfull of Holesome Hearbs (London, 1585) is the only testament to her existence.

⁵¹ Anne Wheathill, the frontispiece (unpaginated).

⁵² Wheathill, "Epistle Dedicatorie" (unpaginated).

⁵³ Wheathill, "To all Ladies..." a.ij.

the ailing spirit. Wheathill called women forward to reap the many fruits of prayer. Typically, she portrayed herself as a facilitator, as a devout individual whose help was indirect: "I praie to the holie Ghost to inspire their hearts from aboue."⁵⁴

Communicating her message in symbolic prose, Wheathill's expressions of devotion are varied and interspersed within the dedicatore of her book. Food and tasting imagery captured the sensory aspects of a relationship with God: "[t]he Lord Jesus Christ, who moisteneth all his elect with his most precious booke, give us all a sweete taste in him."⁵⁵ At the heart of Handfull of Holesome Hearbs, Wheathill encouraged women's participation in "tasting God." For example, when the soul has chosen a relationship with Christ, "then feele we thy graces sweeter than the honie and the honie combe."⁵⁶ Here, the sweetness of Christ, compared to honey, captured the inherent sensory experience within a relationship to God. Tasting Christ's sweetness provoked fond memories and invoked a pseudo-union with Christ. Tasting also implied an engulfing or consuming of Christ --- taking and incorporating Him into one's being. Historians such as Rudolph M. Bell and Caroline Walker-Bynum have written extensively about similar motifs and their importance in the context of medieval female religiosity and spirituality.⁵⁷ Here too, the sensory experience

⁵⁴Wheathill, "Epistle Dedicatore"(unpaginated).

⁵⁵Wheathill, "To all Ladies..." a.ij verso.

⁵⁶Wheathill, 11.

⁵⁷Rudolph Bell, Holy Anorexia (Chicago: UP of Chicago, 1985). Bell discusses the

of taste was central to the religious experience. For example, tasting Christ's blood was one way of merging with his physical person. Wheathill suggested union, via food and tasting metaphors, in the introductory pages to her prayers. Tasting Christ's blood was especially reminiscent of the language of female medieval mystics. Julian of Norwich and Catherine of Siena often graphically expressed their suffering with the humanity of Christ in 'blood and 'gore terms'⁵⁸ suffering with Christ's agony, is what Bynum terms "*imitatio christi*."⁵⁹ Wheathill's "Epistle Dedicatore" employs a sensory-packed language. Tasting,

imagery and importance of food and food metaphors to several female medieval saints/mystics as they parallel anorexia. Caroline Walker-Bynum wrote several works on the issue of food imagery within the lives of medieval female mystics. Particularly interesting is her book entitled, Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women (Berkeley, CA: UP of California, 1987). In this book, as the title implies, Bynum examines food, starving, fasting, thirsting and other such metaphors as they relate to and enlighten our understanding of, female mysticism and their importance to the mystical experience.

⁵⁸Julian of Norwich was a recluse at Norwich at St. Julian and St. Edward's , Conisford. She lived during the fourteenth-century; little is know of her, aside from what is conveyed in her mystical work, Revelations of Divine Love trans. Clifton Walters (London: Penguin Books, 1966) a graphic description of her mystical union with Christ. Catherine of Sienna (1347-1380) was a mystic and member of the Dominican Third Order. Her biographer, Raymond of Capua has written an extensive account of her religious life where he discusses her tendencies to mortify the flesh and practice severe deprivation, The Life of The Blessed Virgin S. Catherine of Siena ed. D. M. Rogers (London: Scolar Press, 1978). Along with multiple volumes of her letters The Letters of St. Catherine of Siena trans. Suzanne Noffke (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1989). Catherine also wrote a mystical work, The Dialogue trans. Suzanne Noffke (New York: Paulist Press, 1980) in which she expresses the process of union with God.

⁵⁹Bynum defines "*imitatio christi*", as the way of mystics and saints in "joining with" Christ, and in some instances creating a "copying of Christ's agony" on the cross. Holy Feast Holy Fast (Berkeley, CA: UP of California, 1987), 256-257.

eating and swallowing place female devotion within the context of a woman's life. But, unlike the medieval mystics, she devoted no attention to suffering and agony.

Wheathill enticed her female readers via a sensual and sensory level, where the female devotee consumed Christ, bringing Him into her. Central to this spiritual relationship of the devotee is the union with Christ. Tasting the sweetness of Christ, the female penitent was invited to involve herself in a spiritual liaison with God. A relationship between a female devotee and God was thus perceived by Wheathill, at least in the Epistle Dedicatore, in intimate terms. Expressions of familiarity in Wheathill's book played a significant role in conveying and developing female devotion. Women understood the true meaning of devout spirituality within their sensory experiences. A relationship with Christ was not restricted to the gender neutral language of religious dogma nor to the prescriptive language of the Protestant church; rather, female spirituality transcended the institution of the Church, encompassing the worldview of a woman's life. Female devotion was therefore portrayed as an exchange between devotee and God. In the world of female spirituality, devotion and piety were best conceived of as a part of every-day existence, with religion being deeply intertwined within the fabric of a woman's life.

Wheathill's "Epistle Dedicatore" filled its readers with promises of a special relationship with God. Once they delved into the substance of this devotional work, female readers were presented with a plethora of prayers and meditations which stylistically resembled the prayers written for a general Christian reader and the prayers written by a

male author for a female reader. Wheathill preserved the tradition of organising these diverse prayers according to the daily events of the devotee's life. As in the case of a general prayer and meditation book, Wheathill included prayers for the morning, prayers for the remission of sins, evening prayers, prayers for humility and patience, and the like.⁶⁰ No where in her table of contents or in the book itself does Wheathill address female-oriented concerns such as marriage, pregnancy, motherhood, or widowhood. In many ways, the prayers could be easily mistaken for those intended for a general Christian reader. In fact, as we shall see, there are male authors, who directly address the feminine life-cycle concerns in their devotional literature. Unlike Lanyer who spoke unquestionably to the needs of her female audience, Wheathill chose a more universal language to relay her prayers. It is rather intriguing why she decided not to implement a more female voice. Perhaps, in realising her subsidiary role in early modern English society ("wherevpon of the learned I may be iudged grose and unwise; in presuming, without the counsell or helpe of ainie, to take such an enterprise in hand..."⁶¹) and the value placed on female silence, Lanyer may have felt intimidated, or unable truly and comfortably to express her spirituality. On a less negative note, Lanyer might have wanted to create a more all-embracing or all-encompassing text. She does dedicate her work to "all religious ladies, gentlewomen and others;"surely,

⁶⁰See Fig. 4. "Wheathill's table of contents" appendix IV.

⁶¹Wheathill, "Epistle Dedicatore" (unpaginated).

“others,” that is devoted Christians, seems to represent the true audience of her devotional work. On the other hand, Wheathill may indeed be speaking to the needs of women, who simply required a text which outlined appropriate prayers for their appropriate time. It is difficult to surmise Wheathill’s intention, beyond what she stated in the apparatus to her work. Nonetheless, an expectation to find female-oriented concerns or themes within her work is to assume what a female voice sounded like.

While Lanyer was careful to use images which a female audience would both respond to and recognise, Wheathill exhorted her female readers in a sensory –oriented language, but communicated her prayers with a more universal voice. With such images as implemented by Lanyer, the guest or lover, and the sensory language of taste, the female was reminded of her societal responsibilities as a hostess to her guest or as wife to her husband. Women in early modern England could relate to these images and understand society’s expectations. A relationship with Christ became defined, first, in terms of the societal roles a woman played, be it hostess or wife. Women were provided with a scheme of what they were expected to do once they had committed themselves to Christ and a spiritual life as outlined in Wheathill’s book. Defined roles, such as those of wife, and hostess, became points of reference for devotional behaviour. Second, the use of jewels and herbs, as devices to simplify a spiritual relationship, brought spirituality down to a tangible level. The content of these works served as an illustration, which brought spirituality to an intimate and an approachable level for female devotees.

The Monument of Matrones, compiled by Thomas Bentley and published in 1582 and, was perhaps the ultimate religious quasi-encyclopaedia. This capacious work is all-inclusive and thoroughly organised for the hands-on usage of its intended female audience.⁶² Bentley earnestly maintains, “I haue not laboured for my selfe, but for you, and all them that seeke knowledge, feare God, [and] be devout,...”⁶³ Herein, Bentley establishes his readership --- his work is for the general consumption of those devoted to God. Again, Bentley qualified the nature of his readers, stating that these “seuerall seuen lampes”⁶⁴ contain prayers and meditations for virgins and matrons, in short, “for all estates and degrees of women.”⁶⁵ “Seuen Lampes,” or “parts,” together constitute this massive work. Bentley chose from amongst several devotional works available to him: prayers of women martyrs, Queen Katherine Parr’s Praiers and Meditations, the prayers of Frances Aburgravenney, and Lady E.T.’s prayers are included in this extensive compilation. Also included are religious hymns, poems, several accounts from the Bible, and calendars of prayers. Indeed, Bentley’s Monument is all-encompassing; each “lampe” burns brightly as it lights the way towards Christian piety.

⁶²See Fig. 5. “Frontispiece of Monument of Matrones” appendix V.

⁶³Thomas Bentley, The Monument of Matrones (London, 1582) “To the Reader,” (unpaginated).

⁶⁴Bentley, “To the Reader,” (unpaginated).

⁶⁵Bentley, “To the Reader” (unpaginated).

The “Secounde Lampe” contains the devotional works of Katherine Parr, Frances Auburgravenny, Lady E.T., and the prayers of several martyrs, revealing inherent complexities and struggles that were specific to females in a spiritual relationship with God. Comparatively more introspective in nature than Lanyer and Wheathill’s works, such texts as Parr’s and Aburgravenny’s are less audience-oriented. Aimed to encourage women to remain devout and strong in their faith, these works are self-reflective. Searching to understand their relationship with God, these devotional texts are a dialogue, a method of expressing spirituality. Learning to conform to a godly life, Frances Aburgavenny’s short poem, which used each letter of her name to begin each stanza, beseeches God to “preserue me Lord,.../Renew thy spirit in my hart.../Be thou my guider, O my God:...⁶⁶” Similarly, Anne Askew’s prayer before her martyrdom captured her desire to remain steadfast and true to her faith, urging God to protect her, “Lord, let them [enemies] never ouercome me with vaine words, but fight thou Lord on my side.”⁶⁷ Each of these women urged and pleaded with God to keep them strong in their faith and devotion; “strengthen me with thy spirite...”

⁶⁶Frances Aburgavenny, “Praier’s of Frances Aburgavenny,” 213. See Fig. 6. “Poem” appendix VI

⁶⁷“Certaine praier made by godlie women Martyrs” Anne Askew, “The praier of Anne Askue the Martyr, before her death” 214. Anne Askew (1521-46) was a learned and pious daughter of a Lincolnshire gentleman. She was married to Thomas Kyme with whom she had 2 children. In 1546 she was accused, tortured and charged for her heretical views on the sacrament and burned at Smithfield (O’Day, 170).

resonated throughout all of these works.⁶⁸ In their invocations to God for spiritual strength, there is both an intrinsic desire to remain constant and a deep fear of straying away from godliness. “Certaine godlie sentences” written by the Lady E.T. , again, asked for God’s help, but also effectively outlined essential Christian precepts:

Vse inuocation of Gods holie name.
 Thinke vpon the needie once a daie.
 The life to come forget not.
 Further the iust sute of the poore.
 Prefer Christ his kingdome.
 Offend not in euill doing.⁶⁹

Such godly precepts as giving and remembering the poor, and keeping from evil deeds, were a few of the virtues Lady E.T. recorded. Following this list of precepts would surely maintain the female Christian down the straight and narrow path of devotion, further testament to the commemorative works to be discussed in chapter three. Comparably, where Lanyer and Wheathill celebrate the senses, Aburgavenny’s poem asks that her senses be controlled in order to keep her from sinning,

A All things that pleasing be to thee,
 V Vnto mine eares, and to mine eies,
 E Euer let there a watch set bee,
 N None ill that they may heare and see,

⁶⁸Katherine Parr, *Praiers and Meditations*, 87. (Queen) Katherine Parr (1512-48) was married to Henry VIII in 1543. A learned woman who received a classical humanist education. Her life was threatened because she held Protestant views(O’Day, 210).

⁶⁹Lady E.T., “Certaine godlie sentences written by the Ladie E.T.,”137.

N No wicked deede let my hands do,
 Y Yn thy good paths let my feete go.⁷⁰

She asks that her senses, that is her eyes, ears, and sense of touch, be restrained so that she remain on the path towards godliness. Stylistically, as poems, Lady E.T.'s and Frances Aburgavenny's prayers would be easily memorised, retained and even repeated as in the case of a mantra. Perhaps, when in doubt or in trouble, a godly female could draw from the recesses of her mind and say these short prayers to herself. Particularly useful, such devotional works were universal, that is, women of all walks of life could read and appreciate the message contained within them. Being written by a queen, a martyr or a wealthy gentlewoman did not restrict their accessibility and ultimate message; constancy and devotion to God was a message also communicated, as we shall see, in the martyrdoms of female Marian martyrs. The women who wrote these devotional works were deemed to be worshipful and virtuous. Anne Askew a committed champion of the Protestant faith in a period of persecution, and Queen Katherine Parr a learned Protestant at the royal court, were all dedicated to their God. Their prayers and lives, in themselves, would inspire the devotion of all women. Bentley's inclusion of the myriad of women, from various backgrounds and social statuses, reinforced an all-embracing nature of the spiritual liaison with God.

⁷⁰Aburgavenny, 213.

Male authors writing for the female reader

Luca Pinelli's The Virgin Maries Life (1604), Richard Rowlands' Odes. In Imitation of the Seaven Penitential Psalmes (1601), Nicholas Breton's Auspicante Jehoua. Maries Exercise (1597) and C.I.'s The Euerlasting Burning Lamps of Pietie and Devotion (1619) are male-authored books written for a female audience. Each of these works explained piety through examples. Examples were drawn from both the lives of saints and the virtuous life of the Virgin Mary. Male authors adopted a method whereby piety was emphasised within the context of domestic duties, informing the reader of the inseparability of spirituality within day-to-day existence. This combination of devotional piety and social etiquette emphasised everyday female spirituality. Devotion and piety were seen to include all types of women, regardless of their social roles. Women, whether married, widowed or single, were shown by Father Luca Pinelli, Richard Rowlands and C.I. how to participate in a relationship with God. Nicholas Breton's Auspicante Jehoua. Maries Exercise is also an example of a work by a male author which shares the essential common characteristics focused upon in the following discussion.⁷¹ Rowlands and Pinelli incorporated the virtue of

⁷¹Nicholas Breton Auspicante Jehoua. Maries Exercise. (London, 1597). Nicholas Breton (1545?-1626?) was a poet descended from an ancient family that settled at Layer-Breton, Essex. His enthusiasm for the Virgin Mary which he expressed in a few works, has resulted in the belief that he was a Catholic. It is almost certain that the poem which has been attributed to him was not his. He had a close relationship with the Protestant Countess of Pembroke founded on common religious sentiments. Breton's work remained popular until the first half of the seventeenth century. DNB, vol. II, 1183-89.

their saints and martyrs with the basic realities of a woman's life. These works illustrated aspects of female spirituality which male authors perceived valuable for the female devotee. Such works are illustrative of male authors engaging their female readership in a spiritual dialogue. As examples of this genre, each author intelligently employs lives of biblical women or saints to illustrate the integral role of piety and devotion within a woman's everyday life. Illustration via these models of godliness, instructed and revealed the intrinsic value in a life devoted to God. Language, imagery and tone all fostered and encouraged early modern English women to take up a godly life.

The life of the Virgin Mary was used as a vehicle for the discussion of women's piety and devotion by many writers. Her life stages and pious practices amplified the godly life par excellence, elevating her to the heights of imitation. The Virgin Maries Life by Father Luca Pinelli was translated into English by one R.G. and published in London in 1604.⁷² It employed Mary's life in order to illustrate a truly virtuous, devotional life. Translations were not an unusual method of religious instruction within this time period; approximately 20 percent of Tudor and early Stuart books for women were translations.⁷³ The Virgin Maries Life was a biographical account of the life of the Virgin Mary which laid down appropriate religious and social behaviours for a Catholic female. The Catholic devotees

⁷²Luca Pinelli, The Virgin Maries Life (London, 1604).

⁷³Hull, 25.

were to “direct and conforme [their] liues and actions according to those of the blessed Virgin.”⁷⁴ The intention of this book was stated by Pinelli himself, who said, “I in this little booke doe laie, before thine eyes the virgin Marie, for a patterne to imitate her life and manners.”⁷⁵ Even the dedication reflected Pinelli’s intention, in that the dedicatee, Lady Joane Barkley, was an excellent example, who was said to have mirrored her life after the Virgin Mary. Pinelli asked his readers to accept, “this so perfect a patterne [Mary’s life] and a mirrour of Christian perfection....”⁷⁶

The path of devotion, therefore, was mirrored in the Virgin Mary’s life because in all her roles, whether single, married or widowed, Mary represented the epitome of the devout woman. Unlike other female saints, Mary enjoyed all the stages of a woman’s life; hence women, at these life stages (wife, widow, daughter, mother) were expected to relate to Mary’s devotional practices: “[t]o be short, she taught by her example how euerie one ought to be haue him selfe as wel in time of prosperitie as fauour, as of aduersitie and tribulation....”⁷⁷ Mary was also a realistic example of piety to the “average” early modern female. Although, she appeared unreachable in her holy status, Pinelli astutely drew on elements which were authentic to the female audience. For example, his discussion of how

⁷⁴Pinelli, “The Epistle Dedicatore” (unpaginated).

⁷⁵Pinelli, “The Epistle Dedicatore” (unpaginated).

⁷⁶Pinelli, “The Author to the Reader” (unpaginated).

⁷⁷Pinelli, “The Author to the Reader” (unpaginated).

she reared Jesus, or how she tended to the household chores, are scenes common to the lives of women of early modern Europe. Furthermore, Pinelli described Mary as wholly mild-mannered; a woman who spoke only from necessity. The following excerpt illustrates the dual nature of this practical and religious guide to female piety:

[i]n conuerstation she was affable, and gracious in speech, yet gaue and modest; her talke was litle, and not without necessitie... she was shamefast and demure, without laughing, disdaine, or anie perturbation....⁷⁸

A woman reading The Virgin Maries Life was reminded of how to lead an exemplary life in both the religious and social realms. The terms Pinelli set within the parameters of his devotional work are realised within the accepted norms --- the daily routine of a woman's day. For instance, Pinelli maintains in his discussion of Mary as a widow that she dedicated her life to prayer, holy contemplation and helping the needy while still continuing her duties within the household.⁷⁹ Certainly, Mary's life was a pattern to be followed. She was obedient to her husband,⁸⁰ knew how to maximise her time,⁸¹ took care of the poor,

⁷⁸Pinelli, "The Author to the Reader"(unpaginated).

⁷⁹Pinelli, 84-85.

⁸⁰In Pinelli's words, "...she did obey, honour and respect her spouse Joseph, with whome she liued alwaies in concord and quietnes." ("The Author to the Reader" unpaginated) This example once again reminds the reader of what is "good" behaviour for a Catholic female.

⁸¹Pinelli maintains, "she was most diligent: for she did so wel dispose and appoint her time..." ("The Author to the Reader" unpaginated) Here, the author focuses again on the issues of what a good housekeeper is; obviously, Mary embodied the necessary qualities for maintaining a good home and family.

prayed, subsisted on the alms of the charitable when she was widowed,⁸² and kept up with her familial duties.⁸³ She emerged as an example of the truly pious housewife; in Pinelli's own words: "she [is] an example...to all sorts of persons...."⁸⁴

What does The Virgin Maries Life tell us about female spirituality? Similar to Lanyer's "litle booke," Pinelli's examined female devotion and piety within gender-specific conditions. Both authors customised, so to speak, the concept of devotion, appealing to their female audience. Lanyer and Pinelli recognised the importance of defining piety and devotion in clear terms which their audience could discern. Obviously, from the title alone, Pinelli's book was not intended for a male readership; there are far too many female-oriented themes, such as widowhood, childbirth, motherhood and the inherent responsibilities of a wife to her family, for a male audience to obtain anything worthwhile. Female devotion and piety were intertwined, within a woman's life stages and daily routine in this devotional literature of Tudor and early Stuart England. A woman's devotion merged within the spectrum of the day-to-day, and became part and parcel of the duties and societal obligations

⁸²According to Pinelli, "Her prouision was smal and fit for poore folkes and doe esteeme that she, after the ascension of Christ, did liue as the Hebrew widdowes were wont to doe, of the common almes and collections, which in the primitiue Church were gathered to sustaine the poore." (Pinelli, unpaginated).

⁸³"Besides this, in the care of her house and bringing vp of her sonne Christ, she was most diligent: for she did so wel dispose and appoint her time, that neither the affaires of her house did hinder her prayers,...." (Pinelli, unpaginated)

⁸⁴Pinelli, "The Author to the Reader" (unpaginated).

of her life. Rather than focus on imagery as we saw in Aemilia Lanyer's Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum, Pinelli illustrated ideal female piety through examples. His work reads like a conventional eulogy, where the author raises his subject, in this case Mary, to the heights of perfection. This method is applied in the funeral orations and commemorative works to be examined below. Mary was viewed as embodying characteristics inherent to her sex. Whereas Pinelli was concerned with maintaining the existing religious spirit of his female audience; Lanyer focused on capturing, and to some extent persuading, her readers to take on the devotional life. Where Lanyer's book conveys a poetic quality in her language and vivid descriptions, Pinelli's language is uncomplicated, and focuses on rendering a detached account of the daily duties in both the familial and social realms. This is not to diminish the style or message of Lanyer's text; rather in light of her work it is apparent that each writer approached the issue of piety through different methods of communication. Pinelli was interested in relaying an account of a devout woman through the practical/moral story; Lanyer, on the other hand, wished to capture the seemingly romantic, emotional sensitivities of her readers.

In The Virgin Maries Life, Pinelli used various "points of meditation" to focus the reader's prayers.⁸⁵ In addition to being an example for women to follow, Mary was also the focal point of prayer. Prayer directed towards Mary encouraged women to reveal their

⁸⁵Pinelli, "The Author to the Reader" (unpaginated).

feelings, uncertainties and praises to a female intermediary. To an extent, there is a transferral --- rather than pray directly to God (who may appear intimidating or unapproachable), women could pray to Mary, a persona recognised by women who experienced female responsibilities and obligations similar to those of the early modern period. Rather than simply revere Mary's virtues and piety, Pinelli demonstrated how everyday life and religiosity were intrinsically connected, existing symbiotically. The Virgin Mary embodied the balanced existence between devotion, spirituality and daily routine. Women, looking to Mary's exemplary life, were to realise the inseparability between piety and the day-to-day; religion and spirituality relentlessly intermingled in the every-day routines of life. Whether it be caring for one's children, tending to the home, or obeying one's husband, devotion to God was the substance of a devotee's existence. Piety was formulated within a female framework. The rituals of every-day life are enhanced by the devotional or pious act. Praising both God and Mary symbolised a spiritual expression, where the female either expressed anxieties and worries, or celebrated the joys, of day-to-day living.

Richard Rowlands' Odes in Imitation of the Seaven Penitential Psalmes (1601), is another example of devotional literature written by a male author who geared his writings specifically to a female audience. As the frontispiece suggests, this work is a collection of

"sundry poemes and ditties tending to deuotion and pietie,"⁸⁶ and dedicated to "the vertuous ladies and gentlewomen readers of these ditties."⁸⁷ Uncomplicated in style, the ditty (a short song) could be set to music. The advantage of the ditties' shortness was twofold. First, they were easily memorised and repeated. Second, if set to music they could be sung by the female devotee. Passed on from one female to another, the message of the poem was communicated and preserved through the oral tradition without the requirement of literacy. Because of the short length and lyrical quality of Rowlands' *Odes*, women could use them to teach their children or their female servants. Furthermore, children were able to retain these ditties precisely because of their short length and melodious qualities. Organised by Rowlands into several thematic sections, each ditty had a specific purpose. For example, one section led the reader through a series of prayers which focused her attention on the ugliness of sin. Another section shifts into a quasi-reverential piece dedicated to the Virgin Mary and her virtuous life. Again, as in Pinelli's work, Mary was representative of the "ideal" female devotee. Rowlands chose to focus his discussion on the role of Mary both as a religious woman and as a mother, the highlight of which was "Our Blessed Ladies Lullaby." Of course, the inclusion of such a piece was intended to appeal to the maternal

⁸⁶Richard Rowlands *Odes in Imitation of the Seaven Penitential Psalmes* (Antwerp, 1601) from the frontispiece. Rowlands alias Verstegen, fl. 1565-1620 was a Catholic. He was born in the parish of St. Catherine, near the Tower of London. *DNB* vol., XVII, 352-53.

⁸⁷Rowlands, (unpaginated).

sensibilities of his female audience, reinforcing the importance of religion within the family unit. Singing Mary's Lullaby had a dual purpose: it put the child to sleep and taught them essential Catholic principles.

Rowlands' "Triumph of Feminine Saints", another illuminating section used the lives of great female saints and their courageous acts to stress the power of devotion and steadfast faith in the life of a female devotee. As in his discussion of Mary, Rowlands emphasised the importance of devotion and piety. Included in his poem are the examples of Euphemia, Anastasia, Dorothea, Erasma, and Seraphia.⁸⁸ Rowlands maintained that these odes were about:

... the sexe of womankynde, / Though not of those of yore: / With feared breasts against their foes, / That warlyke armour wore. / But such as armed were with faith, / Against foul-killing euil: / And did in combatt ouercome, / the flesh, the world, and deuill⁸⁹ --- [to] live in Christe to dye for Christe.⁹⁰

Stressing the bravery, courage and religiosity of Christian women throughout history,

⁸⁸Euphemia dedicated her virginity to God, refused to marry, and was arrested and beheaded for being Christian; Anastasia was a martyr who has been venerated at Rome since the fifth century; Dorothea died circa 313, a virgin martyr who was executed for not marrying or worshiping idols; Erasma was Euphemia's cousin who dedicated her virginity to God and was executed for being a Christian; Seraphia was Christian slave who was clubbed to death and beheaded for her Christian faith. *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, ed. David Hugh Farmer (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992), 6-7, 20, 70, 136; *A Biographical Dictionary of the Saints* ed. Rev., F.G. Holweck (St. Louis MO: B. Herder Book, Co., 1924), 339-40, 897.

⁸⁹Rowlands, 57.

⁹⁰Rowlands, 60.

Rowlands' women were warriors of piety and devotion, whose spears and armour were made of the faith which they used to battle against "foule-killing euil."⁹¹ The saints Rowlands included came from all walks of female life, including wives, mothers, daughters, virgins, and sisters. In choosing to include a variety of women's roles, Rowlands underlined Pinelli's message that a religious or devoted life is not only for the recluse, but for all women. Like Pinelli, Rowlands did not limit his examples to a particular class or role. All women could glean something from his book, and all women could join in a life devoted to Christ. Again, the emphasis was placed upon devotion to God regardless of one's position or social role. Each female had something to contribute to the family of believers. The maternal and sisterly sensibilities of the presumed female audience served as a catalyst to discuss religious conscience. Emphasising the pseudo-universality of devotion, Rowlands attempted to capture the audience's interest through the commonalties exhibited in the lives of these women saints. Concerned with the process of self-examination, and the introspective approach to the workings of the spirit, Rowlands introduced his female readers to the idea of purging one's soul in order to reason or come to terms with sin. Sinners were not alone in this process; God also was present. Sin and its ugliness were part and parcel of this therapeutic process. Rowlands, like Wheathill, emphasised the importance of comfort:

haue mercy o good God on mee/In greatnesse of thy grace/O let thy mercies

⁹¹Rowlands, 60.

manifold/My many faultes deface./Foule filthy loath-some vgly sin/Hath so defyled
me,/With streames of pittie wash me cleane/Els cleane I cannot bee.⁹²

In these few lines the female penitent was encouraged to take solace in the mercy of God.

Nicholas Breton's Auspicante Jehoua. Maries Exercise, 1597, was dedicated to Lady Mary, Countess of Pembroke. In the introduction Breton hopes that his readers will apply and acquire some comfort from these "jeweles of the soule." Breton establishes his readership and sets out the intent of his book, to comfort and guide Christian readers along the path of piety. Designed to teach by example, Breton's work draws on the scriptural passages which focus on a discussion between a woman and Christ. Proper pious behaviour is the moral. In other words, Breton chooses the biblical setting as a point of reference. "The praier upon the talke of Christe with the woman of Samaria," discusses the apparent lack of faith and devotion of this woman, who was "unworthy of thy [god's] comfort [and] could not conceive the greatness of thy kindness..."⁹³ Breton was interested in portraying a story of revelation: where once this woman did not believe, she was now transformed into a true believer, "be thou I say the husband, of my loue, the loue of my life, and the life of my soule."⁹⁴ Newly baptised, this woman of Samaria became a member of the family of

⁹²Rowlands, 9.

⁹³Breton, 13.

⁹⁴Breton, 14.

Christians. Upon her discourse with Christ. She speaks of being “dronk with thy loue.”⁹⁵ Also appealing to the sensory, Breton established a nice contrast where one woman who was thirsty became drunk with faith. Similarly, the story of the woman of Canaan addressed the issue of steadfast faith. This biblical account focused on a woman who begged Christ to cure her Satan stricken daughter. The relationship between mother and child was underlined and proved a conducive example in eliciting the readers’ maternal sensibilities as well as their general interest. Herein we have an example of a mother’s unconditional love and deep desire for her child’s betterment. The woman of Canaan had, as in the case of the woman of Samaria, rejected Christ; as she herself articulated, “Oh sweet Lord since I have by absence from attend on thy table, deserved not only to receive the least crumb of thy mercy....”⁹⁶ Breton recounts a conversion story, examining the importance of devotion. Integral to both these stories was the language Breton employed to qualify the feelings and thoughts of a female. In each instance the language of food and drink was implemented. Being thirsty or famished were integrated into the all-pervading message: the need for Christ. In addition to underlining the image of food as sustenance and as the means through which one subsists, tasting or swallowing were all acts which involve the engulfment of something into one’s body. We need food to live, just as we need faith in God in order to live. Breton

⁹⁵Breton, 19.

⁹⁶Breton, 14.

invoked the image of God as integral, intrinsic to the life of women. God and Christ was portrayed as a “husband,” and “deere love”.⁹⁷ God was not limited to one persona, but was father and husband; women were able to relate to God at the levels of wife and daughter, or both. The wide-ranging results of such portrayals of God are the creation of an all-encompassing God who is approachable. In the same manner, these known relationships serve to illustrate the commitment between the believer and their God. Breton eliminates any difficult abstractions or theological conceptions, bringing spirituality and a tangible relationship with God down to a comprehensive level. A commitment to God clearly requires steadfast devotion. As a result of such a relationship, the penitent was nourished and sustained in God’s grace and mercy.

C.I.’s The Euerburning Lamps of Pietie and Deuotion (1619) was written with an intended female readership in mind and dedicated to the “honovrable, excellently vertvovs, and truly Noble, the Ladie Villiers.”⁹⁸ According to C. I. , Lady Villiers was the inspiration for this work because she, “wisely and most Religiously, [followed those]precepts of our Sauieurs,....”⁹⁹ Amongst prayers to be said in the morning and evening, C.I. included

⁹⁷Breton, 14; 18; 20.

⁹⁸Lady Villiers was married to Sir Edward Villiers(1585?-1626) who was the second son of Sir George Villiers a descendant of a companion of William the Conqueror. Edward was knighted on 7 Sept. 1616.Lady Barbara Villiers was the eldest daughter of Sir John St. John. DNB, vol., XX, 324-25.

⁹⁹C.I. The Euerlasting Burning Lamps of Pietie and Devotion (London, 1619) “The Epistle Dedicatore” (unpaginated).

several female-oriented prayers, for example, “A Prayer for a Wife.” Herein, the early modern English precepts of the Christian estate of holy matrimony and the married parties’ duties were highlighted. Consider the following excerpt: “O Lord God, mostmightie, which hast instituted and ordained Marriage for the holy uniting and ioying together on one soule in two bodies...Grant vs, O Lord, a competent estate to maintaine our selues without ingagement to others, and to bring vp our children in thy feare, sanctifie vs with the holy Spirit,”¹⁰⁰ These types of prayers, directed to wives, were specifically written to elicit a wife’s spousal duty; in fact saying this prayer, perhaps at a difficult time in one’s marriage or even said in thanks, recalled the responsibility enjoining a married woman. Similarly, “A Prayer for the Widowes”, was written with the troubled widow in mind, who now, without the protection of her husband, was left to care for her children, home and household responsibilities: “In all these my troubles and afflictions, heauinesse of minde...Looke downe from thy high and holy place, ... upon thy carefull and comfortlesse seruant, and instruct her which way to take.”¹⁰¹ The prayer continues in a exhortation to God to bless her children and to look to give her strength: “Blesse my children, and teach them obedience...and giue me grace, O Lord, to dedicate the remainder of my dayes to thy vse and seruice,...”¹⁰² Numerous prayers for maidens were included in C.I.’s The Euerlasting

¹⁰⁰C.I., 137

¹⁰¹C.I., 134-135.

¹⁰²C.I.,135.

Burning Lampes of Pietie and Devotion; in fact, an extensive number of these prayer deal with the young maiden: “A Prayer for a Maid, to be obedient to her Parents,” “A Prayer for a Mayd against Temptation,” and “A Meditation, or a Prayer for a Mayden, not to be proud of her owne perfections.” An amusing prayer, “A Prayer for a Mayd against Temptations,” of which there are two, beseeches God for help: “Thou hast made me flourishe, spreading like a faire Vine, and my lussious and swelling fruite haue tempted vnholly hands to steale away what belongeth to thee. Strengthen mee, O Lord, against their violence, and let their subtle perswasions come to nothing,....”¹⁰³ Each of these prayers spoke to the role-specific commitments that a woman of the early modern period was expected to live within. Rather than use the lives of women, such as those implemented by Breton, Pinelli and Rowlands, C.I. employed the social roles of motherhood, widowhood and youth as his points of reference; from these points of reference, women were able to find comfort and solace during trying or happy times. “A Prayer for Womens Deliuernance” gave women a religious mode through which to express their fears and concerns during a potentially dangerous time: “Let me be comforted, O Lord, in thy promise, and the blessing that must proceed from my loynes; heartem me, patiently to endure my torments: hasten, O Lord, my deliuery, and giue the fruite of my womb an easie passage,....”¹⁰⁴ Thus, such prayers, alongside prayers for the

¹⁰³C.I. ,102.

¹⁰⁴C.I.,148.

evening and morning, rounded off, quite nicely, the whole course of a woman's life. These specifically geared prayers for pregnancy, or widowhood, recognized the changes inherent in the course of a woman's life, and spoke to her needs in each of these life stages.

Gender neutral, both in content and message, devotional works such as John Helliar's The Talent of Devotion, and even Anne Wheathill's A Handful of Holesome Hearbs were utilitarian and instructed their readers in the ways of prayer and meditation. Writings intended for a female audience, as in the case of Rowlands' Odes, communicated their message with an awareness of female particularities and sensitivities. Their mode of expression was meaningful and moved the readers toward a spiritual climax. Wheathill and Lanyer both encouraged women to take part in a life dedicated to God. Strong in their belief and confirmed in God's mercy, the writers of these devotional works advocated the benefits of prayer and meditation, and a life filled with God. Twofold in purpose, the works of Wheathill and Lanyer served to encourage fellow women to follow a life dedicated to God and acted as a vehicle for women's personal spiritual expression. Their messages, although practical and familiar for their audience, transcended the instructional nature of the generic and gender-neutral works, in an effort to bring female spirituality to all women. Female devotion was also incorporated within the narrative of women's daily routines. Clearly, the example of the Virgin Mary in Pinelli's work demonstrated Becon's principle: women should learn to be silent, chaste and obedient to their husbands. Devotional literature written by women and targeted for a female audience addressed issues and themes related to the

daily domestic routine of their readers. The works of Aemilia Lanyer and Anne Wheathill are two samples of this genre, which encouraged a relationship with God by appealing to their female readers' sensitivities. Lanyer's and Wheathill's works maintained their reader's interests while inviting them to participate in the joys of prayer and devotion. Collectively these books serve to render an image of female piety and devotion found in England's early modern period which is centred upon the senses, housewifery duties and her life stages.

Chapter 3

Worshipful and Virtuous Women: The Public Face of Piety

Funerary representations of females in the early modern period were a contemporary vehicle for the instruction of women.¹ The funerary representations discussed herein fall into two modes of expression: 1) the literary mode which encompassed commemorative-type works such as funeral sermons, epitaphs, eulogies, elegies and last wills and testaments; and 2) the visual mode which included funeral monuments and monumental brasses. Each of these instruments of instruction and representation comprised the standard societal visions of women, with piety being a popular, prevailing topic. The message communicated via these modes of expression taught the female audience how to live godly lives. Funeral sermons, epitaphs and eulogies were examined for this study because they reveal which qualities were deemed necessary for a godly early modern English woman. On a visual level, the brasses and funeral monuments communicated the values of Protestant England, that is, the importance of the family and the household as venues of religious expression and central to the public face of women's piety. Sixteenth-century wills reinforced the idea of extending piety beyond the household into the community and are testaments to the importance of the charity advocated in the commemorative works. On the whole, funerary representations did not relay profound expressions of individual faith or piety.

¹Funerary representations is the generic term used in this chapter when referring to commemorative works (funeral eulogies, epitaphs, elegies, poetry) and funerary imagery (funeral monuments and brasses).

Instead, sources such as funeral sermons and monuments outlined contemporary generic opinions of how women should lead worshipful lives. Hence, as historical sources, funerary representations are valuable expressions of what constituted the public face of piety. Indeed, emulating the proper qualities guaranteed a virtuous life. This study examines the messages communicated in the funerary representations of women, and, as works intended for instruction, what they conveyed in terms of the externals of piety. The many funeral representations available within Tudor and early Stuart society facilitates a comprehensive rendering of the external face of early modern English women's piety.

Sermons, Epitaphs, Eulogies, Funeral Poetry

Before discussing commemorative works as contributions to understanding the public face of female piety, it is important to examine their reliability, or credibility, as historical sources. Several problems emerge when using funerary literature. First, it is difficult to gauge their accuracy and authenticity. The poet of a funeral elegy or epitaph was not required to create or develop new poetic forms; he picked and chose from ready-made, conventional, forms which best suited his needs.² Given that the majority of these works followed a pattern, how are we to know whether the author was communicating "true" facts of an individual's life? The fine line between fact and fiction becomes blurred. O.B. Hardison has questioned: "Who is the real subject of the poem?"³ Certainly,

²O. B. Hardison, The Enduring Monument: A Study of the Idea of Praise in Renaissance Literary Theory and Practice (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973), 123.

³Hardison, 114.

the family and friends concerned with leaving an impression of these women would want to leave a good one. So, in a similar vein, the writer of a commemorative work was faced with the realities of what his employer desired to include, emphasise or eliminate altogether. Finally, the act of publishing a sermon or a poem suggests a degree of universal applicability, or emblematic status. The female reader, thus, was given an altruistic impression of female piety. Elizabeth Crashawe's epitaph, as we shall see, demonstrated what it meant to lead a virtuous life. At her funeral, "was present one of the greatest assemblies that ever was seen in mans memoire at the burial of any priuate person..." She was remembered as a pious, charitable, devout and modest, wife mother and woman with other "worthy qualities."⁴ It is evident that as sources, commemorative works limit the scope of evaluating female piety and devotion, but they highlight the social prerequisites which early modern English society deemed necessary for a virtuous life. These statements on women's lives were primarily guides for the Protestant or Catholic female, who learned to be devout through the standards illustrated in commemorative works. As idealised lives of early modern English women, funerary representations are useful to historians in that they schematically delineated what were considered "good" traits according to the dictates of social norms of the time.

The authors of the funeral eulogies, poetry and sermons tended to have a Protestant background. Several of the authors served as chaplains, rectors in other clerical capacities. William Ford (fl. 1616) and Thomas Gataker (1574-1654) were educated in

⁴Crashawe and others, The Honour of Vertue (London, 1620), B.

theology and subsequently both were divines. John Phillips (fl. between 1570-1590) was “inclined to Puritanism,”⁵ and was patronised by several noble Puritan ladies. John Mayer also tended towards religious pursuits and was a recognised biblical commentator, serving as a rector in Suffolk from 1631 until his death.⁶ All of these authors were educated at Cambridge, where they received at the very least a B.A. The authors of the epitaphs included in this study were anonymous, but none the less their works served to remind their readers of the eminence and certainty of death. Similarly, funeral sermons, poetry, and eulogies were designed to educate the laity, male and female alike, especially in the case of funeral sermons, instructing the audience or readers on matters of faith was one of the primary purposes of these sermons.⁷ Similarly, preachers were interested in highlighting the virtuous qualities of the deceased, while elevating them for imitation. A motivation of funerary literature was to forewarn the living that death does not discriminate, while stressing the importance of leading a godly life. Although the traits ennobled were specifically directed towards a male or female audience, the message imparted focussed on the same goal, leading a godly life. Therefore the religious inclinations of these authors translated into an emphasis on the value of godly living. The lives of members of the community were used as examples, with the desire to foster a cathartic experience within the individual. In the Puritan tradition, the laity were expected

⁵DNB, vol. VII, 1088-89.

⁶DNB, vol. XIII, 148-49.

⁷Leland Ryken, Worldly Saints: The Puritans As They Really Were (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, 1968), 96.

to take notes and record the essential message contained within the sermon, emphasising their instructional value.

The anatomy of the tradition of funeral poetry in Renaissance England was complex. Funeral elegies consisted of three sections: 1) *epainos*, or the “praise of the individual” which consoled the mourners; 2) *threnos*, or song of lament; and 3) *paramuthia*, or consolation.⁸ Usually, the elegy opened with the greatness of the deceased and then moved into a more detailed discussion of their “greatness” by employing representative examples of their virtuous deeds. Being charitable, adhering to pious norms, maintaining one’s faith even in the face of temptation, were all keys which unlocked the door of a truly religious life. Presenting the lives of these women as “contemporary sketches... [of] godliness,”⁹ was advantageous for a comprehensive reading of the text. Each of these accounts traced the cycle of a woman’s life while describing the deceased according to the “familiar topics of encomium.”¹⁰ In doing so, the poet underlined the grief of the mourning community, exhorting readers to emulate the virtues of the deceased.¹¹ Funeral poetry and funeral sermons follow a comparable structure. Similarly, the preacher giving a funeral sermon assisted the mourning community by coming to terms with the death of the woman. As in the case of the

⁸Hardison, 113.

⁹John Morgan, Godly Learning: Puritan Attitudes Towards Reason, Learning and Education 1560-1640 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986), 169.

¹⁰Hardison, 115.

¹¹Hardison, 114.

epitaph or funeral elegy, the preacher's motivation was to console and alleviate the woes of the lamenting family and friends: "it was an important part of his [the preacher's] function to dramatise, represent, the process of coming to terms with death; his performance had a primary, consolatory purpose...the preacher's job was to locate the exemplary matter in his subject and then to broadcast it for the edification of the survivors."¹² Consolation and representation were both important in the genre of funeral poetry and sermons. They were modes of dealing with the inevitability of death, and they soothed the sorrows and pains of losing a loved one.

Funeral sermons were not exclusively devoted to the instruction of women, but were also important in the edification of the male laity. Organised so that the sermon moved towards the inner reformation of the individual, preachers incorporated Scriptures to highlight essential truths.¹³ Ultimately, biblical women's lives illustrated the application of lauded characteristics. Such traits as sobriety, obedience and modesty were transplanted into the day-to-day living of early modern women: "Stirring the individual Christian to a change of behaviour wherever it was needed by awakening the conscience."¹⁴ In the Puritan tradition, sermons were a means of evoking "holy reformation" of character and action.¹⁵ Active involvement of the "godly" was necessary,

¹²Dennis Kay, Melodious Tears: The English Funeral Elegy From Spencer to Milton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 5.

¹³Ryken, 101.

¹⁴Ryken, 101.

¹⁵Ryken, 101.

in order to change or accommodate their ways.¹⁶ Indeed the success of a sermon relied upon an interactive relationship between the preacher and the parishioners.¹⁷ These godly lives were preached, and in some cases printed, for the purposes of encouraging proper behaviour. As registers of pious behaviour, women attending a sermon took notes and recorded the much lauded, godly traits; perhaps, they even reformed their ways.¹⁸ Hence, the funeral sermon educated its female listeners to adapt godly traits into their everyday life; the lives of these deceased women served as contemporary snapshots of godliness.¹⁹ Funeral sermons, therefore, served a twofold purpose: 1) they commemorated the deceased and eased the sorrows of the family; and 2) through praise, the preacher educated the female parishioners in the socially acceptable components of female piety.

Commonly written to venerate and memorialise the memory of the deceased, commemorative works celebrated a myriad of virtues ranging from religious devotion and piety to praising the departed's spousal and mothering qualities. Deceased women's lives were used as a means of qualifying and to an extent outlining the prerequisites they needed in order to lead a "worshipful" or "virtuous" life. As was often the case, the author of a commemorative work urged his readers to emulate the deceased's worshipful

¹⁶Morgan, 30.

¹⁷Morgan, 134.

¹⁸Crawford, 91.

¹⁹Morgan, 169.

qualities.²⁰ Epitaphs were an effective visual text, conveyed within a pious setting. Consider the following example from the Church of St. Pancrate, Needler's Lane, London:

Here lies a Mary, mirror of her sex
 For all that best their soulds and bodies decks
 Faith, form or fame, the miracle of youth,
 For zeal and knowledge of the sacred Truth,
 For frequent reading the whole Holy Writ,
 For fervent prayers, and for practise fit,
 For meditations, full of use and art,
 For humbleness in habit and in heart,
 For pious, prudent, peaceful, praiseful life,
 For all the virtues of a Christian wife:
 For patient bearing, seven dead-bearing throws
 For one alive, which yet dead with her goes.

From *Travers* her dear spouse, her father *Hayes*
Lord Mayor, more honoured in her virtuous praise 1614. *Mary Travers*.²¹

The above cited epitaph, written for Mary Travers, illustrates this notion of remembering the deceased; written in "virtuous praise," her husband declared that she was indeed a good Christian wife, mother and woman. Religious zeal and practice, especially in relation to personal conduct and the pains of childbirth, were the qualities emphasised. In

²⁰Thomas Gataker's maintained that Rebekka Crisp's sermon was, "Collected and transcribed not long after at the request of some of you for your owne priuate use and benefit... take that course that you saw she did, lay a sure foundation in life for comfort in death..." (Thomas Gataker, The Testimonie Giuen to Mrs. Rebekka Crisp at her Burial (London, 1619), A3 verso); John Phillips' piece for Helen Branch relayed to his readers, "...Ladies all behold hir life, and marke hir virtuous end/ And whilst you liue vouchsafe in time, to make sweet Christ your frend..." (John Phillips, A Commemoration of the Life and Death of Dame Helen Branch (London: 1594), 7).

²¹W. H. Beable, ed. Epitaphs: Graveyard Humor and Eulogy (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co, 1971), 67.

short, Mary Travers was “a mirror of her sex.” Similarly, Juliana Osborne’s (d.1614) epitaph at Clyst St. George, Devon stressed her generosity and virtue: “A hundred years almost she lead her life,/ Kind to the rich and good to the poor./ Here lies her dust whose soul’s to Heaven gone,/ Since she did live and die a saintlike one.”²² The epitaph on Lady Shirley of Isfield (1613), illustrated the admirable qualities in a good pious woman: “Her pity was the clothing for the poore/Her piety the mother of her practice/Her devotions were her daily offering to God,.../And all her minutes were but steppes to heaven.”²³ As this short, but telling epitaph encapsulates, the admirable qualities in a pious woman. The qualities revered in epitaphs followed early modern perceptions of women, that is, they are to be loving wives, good mothers, and devoted to their faith.

These works are not representative of all women, since women of the upper middling and higher ranks were the subjects commemorated in eulogistic works. One typical example is Katherin Brettergh (1579-1601) the daughter of a Cheshire squire, who was distinguished from an early age by her religious fervour.²⁴ Katherin's devotion to God, regardless of day-to-day temptations, was cogently commemorated by William Harrison. Married at the age of twenty to William Brettergh from Liverpool, Katherin

²²Beable, 17.

²³Katherine A. Esdaile, English Church Monuments 1510 to 1840 (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1946),133 Similarly, the epitaph on Ethelred Meynell (d.1618) of Southward: “Modest, Humble, godly wise,/ Pity ever in her Eyes,/ Patience ever in her heart:/ Great in Good, in Evil least:/ Loving wife and Mother dear,/ Such she was that now lyes here.” (Esdaile, 133).

²⁴DNB, vol. II, 1194-95.

was buried at Childwall Church on June 3, 1601. A second example is the life of Elizabeth Crashawe who was the daughter of Anthony Skinner and married to William Crashawe (1572-1626), a Puritan divine and a poet. William Crashawe was educated at Cambridge in St. John's College and was "considered a good scholar, a strong Protestant, and an eloquent preacher." Elizabeth Crashawe died during childbirth and was buried at Whit Chapel October 8, 1620 at the young age of twenty-four.²⁵ As illustrated by the biographical details of these women, both Elizabeth and Katherin came from good family backgrounds.

Funeral sermons commemorating a deceased male emphasised the individual's hospitality and his ability to carry out his responsibilities well and effectively. In Master Dutton's funeral sermon, Richard Eaton stressed Dutton's ability to maintain an orderly family and home: "He [Thomas Dutton] was worthy of much praise and commendation for the ciuil order and gouernment of his family... his seruants, were obsequious and officious vnto him,..."²⁶ Eaton also commended Dutton's generosity: "It is well knowne, his house was seldome without strangers...And this gentlemen desired his friends and neighbours to come to his house and they were unto him welcomed guests."²⁷ His

²⁵Other subjects for published sermons include Lady Anne Glover, sometime wife to the honourable Knight Sir Thomas Glover; Lady Mary Ramsey, who was the late wife to Sir Thomas Ramsey Knight and sometime Lord Mayor and alderman of the City of London, and Lady Dorothea, Countess of Northumberland.

²⁶Richard Eaton, *A Funerall sermon* (London, 1616), 23.

²⁷Eaton, 19-20. Master Dutton was also praised for his kindness to his poor friends and neighbours: "...he was ready to speak for them, to write for them, and to lend them money in their neede. It was his resolution to keepe some by him alwaies, if God should

modesty and frugality were underlined; albeit a wealthy individual, Dutton "would lay aside superfluities and vanities,..."²⁸ Unlike the funeral sermons dedicated to deceased women, Dutton's funeral sermon does not stress the stages of his life; that is, the author does not take the reader through his youth, married life, widowhood and death. Life stages are seemingly less important. Instead the author chose to underline Dutton's hospitality, generosity to friends and neighbours, his command of the household, his career as a judge, and, finally, his last moments before death.²⁹ The text was designed to harness a listener's attention by instructing men on the basic godly precepts of generosity, orderly governing of the household, the family, and a proper death. The themes accented in a funeral sermon dedicated to a male drew on the societal norms then believed appropriate for men. Read in conjunction with the sermons commemorating women, the crux of these sermons was to exhort members of the Protestant community to lead a godly life, via the appropriate means.

What Hardison has termed "praise" was the first stage presented in the funeral accounts and was part and parcel of what constituted a brief introduction to the woman's parentage, or lineage. The degree of detail varied; nonetheless, the authors were certainly

so blesse him and inable him, that he might lend (as he said) fiue pounds...to any neighbour or Gentleman...." (Eaton, 22).

²⁸Eaton, 22.

²⁹Prior to his death, Dutton was filled with a great reverence for God. Because of his illness he was unable to attend public worship; and so, he: "would haue a Preacher in his house, because his corpulent and vnweildie body would not permit him to trauaile vnto the Church." (Eaton, 24).

drawing connections between the honour of these women and their lineage. For example, "The Christian Life and Death, of Mistris Katherin Brettergh" (1612) by William Harrison introduced Mrs. Brettergh as "well descended, and of an ancient house" which placed her socially as a woman of respectable background, ultimately reinforcing the perception that a reputable family fostered a virtuous upbringing.³⁰ Harrison then proceeded to describe Katherin's virtuous life prior to marriage: "[her education] was such, as became the profession of the Gospell, in godliness and puritie of life and religion. The Scriptures shee knew from a child, and by reading thereof, gained such knowledge...."³¹ Emphasis placed upon Katherin's reading of Scriptures reinforced the accepted belief that literate women were to read the Bible.³² The same was true of the narration of the life of Lady Anne Glover by William Forde (1616). Forde highlighted the lineage and education of this noble lady: "Shall I tell you of her Lineage? ancient and worshipful, of her education? vertuous and religious."³³ The "Hojour of vertue" written in commemoration of Elizabeth Crashawe also underlined the importance of lineage: "Descended/ of the worshipfull Families the/ Skinners and Emersons."³⁴ Pairing lineage

³⁰William Harrison, The Christian Life and Death of Mistris Katherin Brettergh (London, 1612), A2.

³¹Harrison, A2.

³²Thomas Becon, A Christian Upbringing (London: 1559) in Cressy, Education, 108.

³³William Forde, A Sermon Preached at Constantinople (London, 1616), 75.

³⁴Crashawe and others, A2.

and godly education in this way, Forde implied that the latter was the direct result of the former. Chamber, Forde and Harrison emphasised the inseparability of religious education and spirituality. Reading Scriptures and having knowledge of religious works were important to the regime of the godly and was regarded as “a trustworthy guide for all of life... moreover [especially for the Puritan’s] the Bible was a living book, uniquely powerful to affect a person’s behaviour and destiny.”³⁵ As the accounts of these women progressed, a list of appropriate literature for godly women began to emerge. In addition to the Scriptures, John Foxe’s Acts and Monuments is mentioned in the account of Katherin’s life.³⁶ The virtue and piety of these women was determined, or as Crawford suggests, socially constructed, by what they read. Reading appropriate works cemented their faith and future as dedicated, honourable Protestant women. With the advent of the Reformation came a less institutionalised perception of religion, as underlined by Katherin’s reading of the Scriptures without a clergymen’s guidance; the household became a place where religious education could flourish independently from the institutionalised church.³⁷ Lineage and education set in motion a proper religious upbringing which would then be fostered in the household environment once the female was married and bore children of her own. Implied in the funeral sermons of early modern English women is the primacy of a well-descended family and her religious

³⁵Ryken, 154.

³⁶Harrison, A3 verso.

³⁷Willen, 148.

education.

Central to leading a godly life was obedience to one's parents and steadfast devotion to the Protestant faith. Katherin Brettergh was said to, "Reade, to pray, to sing, to meditate, [as] her daily exercise; and her chiefest delight..."³⁸ Helen Branch was described similarly: "Shee by her deeds did stir them [her parents] up in goodness to delight,/First unto God her honour due, most reverently she gaue,/and to her parents as a childe her she did behave."³⁹ This detail highlighted the importance of a child's obedience and respect towards her parents, a duty based on the fifth commandment, and in the Scriptures: 'Children obey your parents in the Lord.'⁴⁰ Katherin and Helen were described according to their faith, obedience to their parents and devotion to God. Accounts emphasised the importance of being meek and mild tempered; vanity, gossip mongering, and a preoccupation with bodily adornments was discouraged.⁴¹ As Crawford notes, a modest personal attire and cleanliness were associated with early modern feminine piety.⁴² Praying, meditating, being modest and obedient, apparently simple principles, were emphatically conveyed within the commemorative works hitherto

³⁸Harrison, A2 verso.

³⁹Phillips, 3-4.

⁴⁰Houlbrooke, 167;Ephesians 6:1. Exodus 20:12.

⁴¹Mrs. Lucy Thornton is described as: "she despised the ornaments of vanity, which other women so much delight in, her outward habit did shew the inward lowliness and modesty of her mind." (John Mayer, A Patterne for Women a Sermon, (London,1619), 20).

⁴²Crawford, 91.

studied. Katherin Brettergh, Lucy Thornton and other godly women led exemplary lives. As examples of godly living, these women's lives highlighted the emerging importance of the religious household, or "spiritualised household" within and outside the community. Choosing a husband who was equally devoted to God was crucial to a woman's godly life. The idea that a spiritual companionship enhanced marriage is apparent.⁴³ The need to marry within the faith was an important standard theme of Of Domestical Duties (1622) by William Gouge the most widely distributed household manual of the age, which went into five editions.⁴⁴ Gouge outlined the necessity of equality in piety and religion:

The parity which is of greatest consequence betwixt parties to be married, is in piety...A worthy couple: one worthy of another: being both alike in such excellent qualities, they could not but reape each from other much comfort, and profit every way.⁴⁵

Katherin Brettergh was married to, "one who likewise embraced Religion sincerelie and was also tormented by the papists."⁴⁶ Lady Branch's, husband was described as, "a man discreete and wise,/and such a one as fist Gods feare before his eyes."⁴⁷ Katherin Brettergh's husband played an integral role in her religious life. Praying and meditating

⁴³Willen, 148.

⁴⁴William Gouge (1578-1653) was a popular puritan divine and scholar, considered "a model of the gentle scholar, rising before daylight to pursue his studies, never wasting a moment, devout with a puritan strictness and simplicity, never ruffled in temper." (DNB, vol. VIII, 272).

⁴⁵William Gouge, Of Domestical Duties (London, 1622),194.

⁴⁶Harrison, A3.

⁴⁷Phillips, 4.

together Katherin and her husband combated the offences of their Catholic neighbours; singing and celebrating the Psalms eased this couple's pain before Katherin's death.⁴⁸ Devotion to God was perceived to be the glue which united these women to their husbands. A relationship which fostered spiritual growth, as in the cases of Helen Branch, Katherin Brettergh and Elizabeth Crashawe, demonstrated that a common faith fostered a good Christian marriage, setting the tone in a Protestant household. Hence, a mutually shared faith between a husband and his wife resonated in their roles as successful wives, mothers and nurturers of the faith.

Commemorative works reinforced the patriarchal nature of the Protestant household, while stressing the role of women as wives, mothers and housekeepers. Women expressed their piety and devotion in the environment of the household, where religion and familial duties intermingled. A wife's goal was to show obedience and subordination to her husband, the head of the household.⁴⁹ The "docile housewife"⁵⁰ perception was emphasised in Gouge's Of Domesticall Duties. In his Third Treatise, Gouge outlined the duties of a wife: "A wiues obedience requireth: submission and contentment. Submission in yeelding to her husbands minde and will. Contentment in

⁴⁸Harrison, C3.

⁴⁹J.A. Sharpe, Early Modern England: A Social History 1550-1766 (London: Edward Arnold, 1990), 67.

⁵⁰Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800 (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977), 203.

resting satisfied and content with his estate and abilitie.”⁵¹ Epitaphs and commemorative poems written in honour of Elizabeth Crashawe *all* characterised her as, “a most worthily beloued wife,.../a wife of a thousand.”⁵² Listed as one of her foremost qualities was Elizabeth’s, “affection to her husband.”⁵³ Similarly, Lady Blount’s funeral sermon stressed her, “amiable and spowsall duty.”⁵⁴ The relationship between the obedient wife and her husband is underlined in passages from sermons and reinforced in Scriptures: “Wiues submit your selues unto your owne husbands as unto the Lord... For the husband is the head of the wife, euen as Christ is the head of the Church.”⁵⁵ Alongside their commitment to their husbands, women were responsible for the education of their children, and we learn from these commemorative accounts that providing a proper religious education for one’s child, was considered a virtuous quality. Lady Dorothy and Lady Lucy served as examples of women who instructed their children in the faith.⁵⁶ Gouge’s emphasis upon the importance of a common faith in the household is evident in fostering a child’s godly education: “Happie is that family where both the gouernors

⁵¹Gouge, 287.

⁵²Crashawe and others, A2.

⁵³Crashawe and others, A2.

⁵⁴Thomas Moundeforde, A Sermon Preached at the Funerall of Lady Blount (London,1619), 36.

⁵⁵Ephesians 5: 22 and Verses 23.

⁵⁶Richard Chamber, *Sarah’s Septure; or a Funerall Sermon Preached for Dorotheie Countesse of Northumberland* (London:1620),19; Mayer, 9.

thereof ... are mutuall members of Christs bodie...Children will there be trained vp in the nurture of the Lord...."⁵⁷ Teaching servants and children in the faith as well as conforming to the subservient role of women in the Protestant household were qualities central to a "good" wife. While nunneries, a centralised place of worship, disappeared as options for pious women, the Protestant household replaced these former institutions. Now, the environment of the household became a thriving centre of piety and devotion. A viable venue for female religious expression, Protestant women, in fulfilling their responsibilities as wives, mothers and housekeepers, were demonstrating their religiosity.⁵⁸

As "domestic missionaries" pious women were publicly praised for bringing religion to the home, being charitable and instructing the ignorant in religion.⁵⁹ Being charitable for an early modern woman meant that she gave generously to the poor and performed charitable acts within the community,⁶⁰ such as dressing the wounds of the sick or providing relief for the poor. Epitaphs and sermons praised women who were, "kind to the rich and good to the poor."⁶¹ In her study of hospitality on early modern England, Felicity Heal has argued for the existence of role perceptions which offered

⁵⁷Gouge, 196.

⁵⁸Willen, 147.

⁵⁹Wiesner, 190.

⁶⁰Willen, 148.

⁶¹Beable, 17. This is an excerpt from Juliana Osborne's epitaph cite previously.

widows especially, a positive incentive to be charitable.⁶² Described as saintly zealots in their devotion to God and generosity to the needy, the formula for a godly life included good works, the teaching of the ignorant in the faith and the constant nurturing of piety within and without the household.⁶³ Juliana Osborne's epitaph praised her saintly quality: "Here lies her dust whose soul's to Heaven gone,/Since she did live and die a saintlike one"⁶⁴ In fact, if female readers were in doubt as to how to lead a godly life, she need only look to the example of Lady Dorothy, who was described in her sermon as being a true example of piety;⁶⁵ or, she need only be reminded of Lady Shirley's charitable acts: "Her pity was the clothing for the poore."⁶⁶ John Mayer's sermon on Mrs. Lucy Thornton encapsulated these godly characteristics:

whilest shee liued, the hungry could not goe vnfed, the naked vncloathed, the sicke unvisited, plentifully the lord had dealt unto her, plentifully she gaue to the lord againe in the poore members, appointing continuall releefe to bee giuen to

⁶²Felicity Heal, Hospitality in Early Modern England (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 179-182.

⁶³Mayer's sermon on Mrs. Lucy Thornton stresses this idea of instructing the ignorant or backward: speaking of Mrs Thornton, "she shewed loue, by admonishing the disorderly, instructing the ignorant, and exhorting the backward in religion, by all meanes prouoking o loue and good works. O how great was her care, that her whole household and all her neighbours might serue the lord..." (Mayer, 17). This emphasises Heal's idea of bringing religion or faith outside to the community.

⁶⁴Beable, 17.

⁶⁵"All yee of that sexe reade Tit. 2.3.4.5. and when ye haue read it once, let me entreat you to reade it ouer againe, there you shall see what vertues the apostle requireth at your hands, and if you desire to haue an example to illustrate the apostles doctrine, come hither and behold them her intombed." (Chamber, 19).

⁶⁶Esdaile, 133.

the sick and needy, in such places of great pouerty.⁶⁷

Reinforcing this idea is John Downname's The Plea of the Poore (1616) which justified married women's "rights" to give alms to the poor: "the power of the wife to give alms appeareth clearly by all the examples of holy women in the Scriptures."⁶⁸ Moreover, women such as Katherin Brettergh were described as wholly dedicated to a religious life.⁶⁹ Lady Thornton is honoured by her publicist for attending Sunday service regardless of pressing inconveniences: "neither the length of the way, the cold and wet of the winter, neither the business of the world could hinder her feet from coming to the house of God."⁷⁰ John Phillip's commemoration of the life and death of Lady Helen Branch laid stress upon her earnest faith even in the face of sickness: "Arrested hir with sicknes sharpe and sickness wrought hir death./But as in health in sicknes shee, the Lord of hoastes did praise,/And in true faith and feare of him, shee sought to end hir dayes."⁷¹ Preached at the burial of Rebekka Crisp, Thomas Gataker's sermon underlined that just, "as the rest of her life had bin, so her latter end was not vnlike; full of piety and patience,..."⁷² External factors should not influence a female's capacity to practice her

⁶⁷Mayer, 15-16.

⁶⁸John Downname, The Plea of the Poore, (London,1616).

⁶⁹Harrison, A3 verso. This is also true of Mrs. Lucy Thornton and Rebekka Crisp.

⁷⁰Mayer, 8-9.

⁷¹Phillips, 7.

⁷²Gataker, B3.

pious regime.

Significant to the substance of these godly women was their "final moment" as they struggled "between anges and devils vying " for their souls.⁷³ How to die a good death was necessary in the instruction of both Catholics and Protestants.⁷⁴ Women were portrayed as struggling with the temptations of Satan during their final days, in order to demonstrate their implicit dedication to God. Not all accounts included a description of this encounter. In the instances where challenges with the Devil are described, the lives of these holy women took on a saint-like quality. Hagiographers and martyrologists were known for including details which illustrated the power of the faithful.⁷⁵ John Mayer described Mrs. Lucy's tormenting brush with the Devil: "Being much troubled for her sinnes, and buffeted by the temptations of Satan, she sayd, that shee had yet much assurance,...."⁷⁶ On another occasion she combated Satan through, "true loue, that still abounded in her towards God."⁷⁷ Similarly, the temptation which Katherin Brettergh experienced during her last days was portrayed in similar manner:

Sometimes she [Katherin] would say her sinnes had made her prey to Satan, a spectacle to the world, a disgrace to religion, and a shame to her husband,...: and

⁷³Richard Wunderli and Gerald Broce, "The Final Moment Before Death in Early Modern England," Sixteenth Century Journal 20(1989):262.

⁷⁴Wunderli and Broce, 264-265.

⁷⁵One need only to read John Foxe's Acts and Monuments in which he will on occasion described the struggles of a martyr with the devil before martyrdom.

⁷⁶Mayer, 26.

⁷⁷Mayer, 28.

here she would weepe bitterly...⁷⁸ Once after a great conflict with Satan, she said: Satan reason not with me, I am but a weake woman, if thou haue anything to say, say it my Christ; he is my advocate, my strength, and my redeemer, and he shall pleader for me....⁷⁹

Here we have two women, who when confronted with Satan's temptations were freed from his "fierie darts,"⁸⁰ because they were wholly and consistently devoted to God. Commemorative works emphasised a godly woman's ability to conquer the devil with the shield of her piety.

Of the nine women examined in this study and honoured with a published funerary narration between 1594-1620, we are told of only two (Lady Ramsey and Lady Branch) who bequeathed legacies to various charitable institutions (poor, sick, prisoners, high altars et cetera). Married women rarely wrote wills or held goods in their own name; leading one to believe that the opportunities for deathbed charity was somewhat limited to widows.⁸¹ In Phillips' commemoration of Lady Branch, he informed his readers of her preparation for death, "Thus being mindefull of hir end as one that needs must die,/ Shee hir last will in perfect minde did make right orderly,..."⁸² In the sermon preached for

⁷⁸Harrison, B1.

⁷⁹Harrison, B1 verso.

⁸⁰Harrison, B.

⁸¹Henry Swinburne maintained: "Of goods and chattelles the wife can not make her testament, without the licence or consent of her husband, because by the laws and customes of theis realme..." (Henry Swinburne, Briefe Treatise of Testaments and Last Wills (London, 1591), 47-48.).

⁸²Phillips, 7.

Anne Glover a married woman, we are told that she too prepared for her death: "in her last sicknesse had by diuine inspiration a foreknowledge of her death, in that presently shee deliuered the deyes of her Iewells and the rings from her fingers,...she bespake mourning garment, and tooke care of her funerall,..."⁸³ However, she did not bequeath any items to charitable institutions. This is an important observation for, as we shall see, the clerical authors of the standard prescriptive tracts on how to die a Christian death placed considerable emphasis upon final acts of charity, and, legacies found within last wills and testaments, which constitute a valuable method of assessing early modern English piety. The commemorative poem for Lady Mary Ramsey listed, *ad infinitum*, the many prisons and poor houses, scholars, preachers, orphanages and even the building of a writing school, as a *few* of her bequests.⁸⁴ However, we are told little about her charity and devotion during the course of her life: "Showed forth her fruits both unto man and childe./ Whose liberall hand was never frozen fast,/ From Alms-deeds, so long as breath did last."⁸⁵ Indeed, most accounts emphasised the charitable acts made during the lifetime of the deceased, highlighting the virtue of doing good works throughout one's life, rather than saving it for the last will. Perhaps it was difficult to convey an individual's piety quantitatively, based on how much or how little they donated and to which charitable institutions; perhaps, a reflection of piety and devotion was better sought in the

⁸³Forde, 78.

⁸⁴Nicholas Bourman, An Epitaph Upon Lady Mary Ramsey (London, 1602), A3.

⁸⁵Bourman, A3.

standardised descriptions of these women's daily routines. Gratuitous bequests fell short in comparison to that of a woman whose life was filled with day-to-day piety. The largely clerical authors of these commemorative lives wished to emphasise the virtues of the godly life lived to the full. This emerges as the pre-eminent model for female piety and the Protestant equivalent of saints' lives of the Tudor-Stuart era.

Carved in stone: Funeral Monuments and Brasses

Upon their backs the ancient Statues lie,
Devoutly fix'd, with Hands uplifted high,
Intreating Pray'rs of all passers-by.⁸⁶

Funeral monuments and brasses, not unlike their literary counterparts, "were intended to establish in the collective memory and set forever the honourable reputation of the subjects commemorated."⁸⁷ As *memento mori*, brasses and monuments reminded viewers of the inevitability of death, but also memorialised the deceased and their reputation.⁸⁸ What was remembered was expressed in terms of visual imagery, postures, and heraldry. Preserving the reputation and honours of the deceased, while conveying stylised representations of societal values, postures suggested piety and devotion. Usually, the deceased female was portrayed in the company of her husband and children, cementing the importance of the familial commitment in Protestantism. Crests and coat

⁸⁶Esdaile, 54.

⁸⁷Nigel Llewellyn, "Honour in Life and death and in Memory: Funeral Monuments in Early Modern England," *Transaction of the Royal Historical Society* 5(1996):179.

⁸⁸Llewellyn, 9-16.

of arms delineated her family history and respectable background. Such visual signifiers were all-important markers to the process of identifying the social status of the female. Intended to last the tests of time, these funerary representations commemorated the dead and celebrated the living. While some were grand and elaborate in their attempts to communicate the final message, *all*, irrespective of format, shed light on the importance of visual representations as contributions to the historian's understanding of the public face of women's piety.

Unlike the literary modes of commemoration which schematically detailed the necessary qualities needed for a virtuous life, the monument must be examined in a more subtle manner. Although at first glance there are no obvious markers of piety, aside from the clasped hands and lowered eyes, if probed further, the monument visually encased Protestant attitudes towards female piety. As in the case of funeral sermons and epitaphs examined earlier, the monument visually reinforced the importance of a good reputable lineage. As identified by recent scholarship, the monument, "commonly served the family as well as the individual."⁸⁹ In a spectacular imported marble, the "Monument to Raphe and Elizabeth Wyseman, 1594, (St. Mary and All Saints, Rivenhall, Essex.)"⁹⁰ prominently displayed both Raphe Wyseman and Elizabeth Barley's family crests, and coat of arms; an inscription further details their lineage. Social status was accented by

⁸⁹Houlbrooke, 205.

⁹⁰See Fig. 7. "Wyseman Monument" appendix VII. "Monument of Raphe and Elizabeth Wyseman" as reproduced in Nigel Llewellyn, The Art of Death (London: Reaktion Books, Ltd., 1992) Fig. 51.

Elizabeth Wyseman's and her husband's attire. Dressed in the costume of the day, Elizabeth wears the popular ruffs around the neck, a Paris head-dress pleated, and a kirtle.⁹¹ Next to her is her husband in impressive armorial dress, again highlighting his illustrious lineage and social standing. Both effigies are elevated and both are the focal point of the monument. Situated alongside the base of the monument are the children which occupy a subsidiary role. Elizabeth and Raphe have clasped hands, bare heads, and closed eyes; and the children who are kneeling in a devotional manner. It is difficult to determine from these slight suggestions of piety what the role of religion was in the life of Elizabeth Wyseman. Focussing on the group, that is the family unit, rather than on the individual attests to the fundamental role of the household in a woman's piety. The presence of her husband and many children demonstrate the efficaciousness of her marriage,⁹² as well as underlining her role as a mother and a wife. Where epitaphs and sermons focussed on the individual life punctuated by pious acts, the monument was concerned with a more holistic, collective view of religion. One can look singly at the effigy of Elizabeth Barley, but her representation is framed within the context of the family unit. The monument of Sir Anthony Mildmay (d.1617) and Grace, Lady Mildmay (d.1620) at Apethorpe Church in Northamptonshire is similar in its conceptualised rendering of women's devotion. Although more elaborate, the Mildmay effigies are in like postures: hands are clasped in prayer, eyes are closed. Dress is typical of the

⁹¹E. R. Suffling, English Church Monuments A.D. 1150-1559 (London: L. Upcott Gill, 1910),160.

⁹²Houlbrooke, 205.

deceased's social position and time period, and the monument was representative of the landed gentry. Lady Mildmay's piety was accented by the accompanying inscription situated above and to the right.⁹³ According to the inscription, "Here ... lyeth Grace Ladie Mildmay only wife of the said Anthony Mildmay... she was moste devout, unspottedly chaste maid, wife and widow. Compassionate in heart and charitably helpful with physick, clothes, nourishment or counsels to any in misery... so as her life was a blessing to her and in her death she blessed them."⁹⁴ Hence, the emphasis was placed on her abilities as a good wife, having an unspotted reputation and being generous to those around her --- *all* qualities stressed in commemorative, prescriptive and devotional works.

The monument of Edward Styward (d.1596) and his wife at Tersham Church,⁹⁵ was similarly representative of the essential purpose of funeral monuments: commemoration.⁹⁶ Once again, determining an individual's piety becomes wrought with

⁹³See Fig. 8. "Mildmay Monument" appendix VIII. Monument to Sir Anthony Mildmay and Grace, Lady Mildmay at Apethorpe Church. Funeral Monument as reproduced in An inventory of the Historical Monuments in the County of Northampton Volume 6. Architectural Monuments in Northamptonshire, Royal Commission on Historical Monuments. (London: Trinity Press, 1984)frontispiece.

⁹⁴Cited in With Faith and Physic, ed. Linda Pollock (New York: St Martin's Press, 1995), 21-22.

⁹⁵See Fig. 9. "Styward Monument" appendix IX. Monument of Edward Styward and wife as reproduced in An Inventory of Historical Monuments in the County of Cambridge Volume 2, Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (London: Trinity Press, 1972) plate 46.

⁹⁶Houlbrooke, 205.

difficulty at the surface level as funeral monuments revealed only nuances of piety and devotion, if unaccompanied by an inscription. Hardison's question "Who is the real subject?" is once again appropriate. As in the case of funeral sermons, which guaranteed an admirable semblance of the deceased, monuments were equally flattering and equally elusive. As sources they should be respected as expressions of the public face of devotion and piety. Women of the early modern period were not the central figures of these monuments, but are cast in their social context: wives and mothers. Physical postures indicated suggestions of faith; inscriptions provide memories of faith, charity and dutifulness within the context of a life course. Margaret Lady Legh's monument at All Saints in Fulham provides yet another example of piety meshed within the context of family.⁹⁷ In this monumental representation, Legh is first and foremost depicted as a mother.⁹⁸ Prolifically accented is the nature of Legh's posture: her one hand cuddles the child closely, while her other hand rests on her left breast, with fingers slightly apart, in what appears to be a nursing posture. This intimate scenario is certainly suggestive of the closeness between mother and child. The practice of maternal feeding was a central element in the care of an infant.⁹⁹ Early modern English medical opinion supported the

⁹⁷See Fig. 10. "Legh Monument" appendix X. Monument to Margaret Lady Legh (d.1605) perhaps by Maximillian Colt. All Saint's, Fulham. As reproduced in Katherine A. Esdaile, English Church Monuments 1510-1840 (London: B. T. Batsford, Ltd., 1946), plate 65.

⁹⁸In fact, the monument resonates with allusions to medieval representations of the Madonna and Christ child, which underlined the sacredness of mother and child.

⁹⁹Houlbrooke, 132.

idea of a mother breast feeding her own child, who “was supposed to imbibe with his milk the characteristics of the women who fed him....”¹⁰⁰ This is an intriguing detail. If a mother was godly, then naturally she would pass her virtuous qualities on to her children through breast feeding, reinforcing the intimate role women played in the education of their children. Swathed infants in this monument are reminiscent of the chrisom in the brass of Lady Anne.¹⁰¹ In the directions of baptism which appeared in the first Book of Prayer of 1549, godfathers or godmothers were expected to provide the priest with a “chrisom,” a piece of linen shaped in a square, which covered the child’s head; in the priest’s prayer, he enjoined the child to wear the chrisom, an emblem of “purity, spirituality, unsullied through life.”¹⁰² A child who died before it was a month old was buried in its “chrisom,” which was then used as a shroud.¹⁰³ Kneeling or praying postures of the deceased shown in previous monuments are absent in the case of Lady Legh, suggesting a shift from the previously discussed postures to a more secularised representation of commemoration. In focussing the viewers’ attention on the role of mother, the craftsman was recognising and legitimising the role of women as central to the household. They played a significant role in the raising, disciplining and educating of their children. This monument identifies the family as the centre of spirituality.

¹⁰⁰Houlbrooke, 132.

¹⁰¹See Fig. 11. “Brass of Anne” appendix XI. Brass of Anne. As reproduced in Ernest R. Suffling, *English Church Brasses* (London: L. Upcott Gill, 1910), Fig. 87.

¹⁰²Suffling, 257.

¹⁰³Suffling, 257.

Depicting Legh among her children produced the image of the godly mother, responsible for the spiritual and material well being of her children.

Prior to the Reformation, monumental brasses in England were more explicit in their expressions of religiosity. Lady Margaret de Cobham (d.1506) wife of Sir John Brooke, Baron Cobham, contains an image of the holy trinity which displayed God seated in a throne wearing a triple crown, or papal tiara.¹⁰⁴ Situated in the centre of this image, superimposed over the seated God figure is a crucified Christ with the foot of the cross engraved in the form of an orb; to the right of the seated god-figure is an image of what appears to be the Holy Ghost. This detailed panel of a religious scenario denotes the obvious Catholic inclinations of Lady de Cobham. The foot of the cross, "enlarged to an orb, was typical of power and dominion emanating from the cross."¹⁰⁵ Her solemn dress and clasped hands was similar to the ecclesiastical attire and posture of a nun.¹⁰⁶ Above the religious panel of the trinity is a family crest, exhibiting her familial or spousal commitment, while stressing the importance of parentage. Directly below the religious panel are miniature figures of Lady de Cobham's eight sons and ten daughters, all with clasped hands. In a similar vein, is the brass for Lady Anne (a Wode), the second wife of Thomas Astley, 1512 with chrisom twins. Anne's garment is typical of the time. Hanging

¹⁰⁴See Fig. 12. "Brass of Lady Margaret" appendix XII. Brass of Lady Margaret de Cobham (1506).As reproduced in Suffling, English Church Brasses, Fig. 86.

¹⁰⁵Suffling, 150.

¹⁰⁶See Fig. 13. "Brass of Nuns" appendix XIII. Brass as reproduced in Suffling, English Church Brasses, Fig., 88, 89, 90.

from her waist is a large beaded rosary indicating her Catholic faith, an instrument of religion. A particularly intriguing brass is the “rare” bracket brass to Sir John Marsham, Mayor of Norwich in 1518 and his wife Elizabeth (1525) at St. John's Church, Maddermarket, Norwich.¹⁰⁷ Elizabeth wears a long gown decorated at the waist with three clasps bearing roses, from which falls a rosary with crucifix.¹⁰⁸ The rosary with its large sized crucifix along side Elizabeth's clasped hands, sets the brass panel within a religious context. Linking, yet keeping the two figures separate, is the chalice shape bracket, stressing the presence of the Catholic faith in the lives of these individuals as a married couple. On the surface of the chalice are human bones and worms to remind viewers of the inevitability of decay, and the impermanence of the human body.¹⁰⁹ The brass encompasses Catholic themes of religiosity. *All* of these brasses, although pre-Reformation, emphasised the importance of religion, the family and lineage. Unlike the post-Reformation brasses which lack outright religious signifiers, these brasses communicated similar messages. The outward signs of individual religion, rosaries, crucifixes, important to the ritualised element of Catholicism, disappeared with the Reformation, as different points of focus began to emerge.

Post-Reformation brasses, on the other hand are less concerned with physical

¹⁰⁷See Fig. 14. “Bracket Brass” appendix XIV. Bracket Brass to Sir John Marsham and his wife Elizabeth, 1525. As reproduced in Suffling, English Church Brasses, Fig., 192.

¹⁰⁸Suffling, Fig., 192.

¹⁰⁹Malcolm Morris, Monumental Brasses (London: Faber&Faber, 1978), 77.

manifestations of piety and devotion. Aside from the postured kneeling figures or clasped hands, there are no spiritual artefacts such as crosses, or prayer books, as seen in Catholic brasses. With the shift from Catholicism to Protestantism, the obvious instruments of devotion, such as rosary beads, were abandoned. Aside from the brass of Thomasine Palmer 1546, which portrays her in the act of praying at a prayer desk, the brasses of the Reformation period seem less interested in portraying the physical manifestations of religion, devotion, or piety.¹¹⁰ Aphra Hawkins' brass (1605) attested to the importance of the social face of the deceased.¹¹¹ Hawkins, not unlike Elizabeth Wyseman, was dressed in the latest garb: an intricate brocaded petticoat within a low-cut bodice (kirtle), ruffles at the neck and puffed sleeves.¹¹² Hands are clasped in prayer, and family crests are above centre. A short inscription indicating marital status and a brief detail of her family history conclude the image. The inscription suggested Aphra's piety: "scarcely having arrived to 21 yeares of age yet fully attained perfection in many vertues."¹¹³ We are not told of her "many" virtues. A Jacobean brass for Edward Younge (d.1607) and his family at Great Dunford, Wiltshire, is another intriguing monument.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ See Fig. 15 "Palmer Brass" appendix XV. Thomasine Palmer, 1546. As reproduced in Suffling, English Church Brasses, Fig., 92.

¹¹¹ See Fig. 16. "Hawkins Brass" appendix XVI. Aphra Hawkins, 1605 Fordwich, Kent. Brass rubbing as reproduced in Suffling, English Church Brasses, Fig. 94.

¹¹² Suffling, 160.

¹¹³ Suffling, Fig. 94.

¹¹⁴ See Fig. 17. "Younge Brass" appendix XVII. Brass of Edward Younge and his Family (1607) Great Dunford, Wiltshire. As reproduced in Esdaile, English Church

Edward Younge and wife are the central figures. To the left of Edward and to the right of his wife are their children, males to the left and females to the right. Family coat of arms are positioned at their respective places. All the figures in this brass are kneeling and have clasped hands, revealing nuances of devotion. Specific details about the extent of the figures' devotion or piety are not provided. Particularly interesting is the inscription located above the figures: "Beholde all Yee y [that] come to see al we are deade so shall yee be." The passer-by reading this *memento mori* was reminded of mortality and the inevitability of death. Below the figures a second, lengthier inscription identified their respective lineage. Little else is related. Aside from the obvious, standard, postures and clasped hands one can only speculate about Mrs. Younge's piety.

All of the brasses from the later sixteenth and seventeenth century of English women are, except for the clasped hands and kneeling, devoid of any devotional or pious qualities. Emphasis tended to be placed stress on the centrality of family; the wife and husband are united in a fruitful marriage, which has born them these many children (a primary Christian teaching dictated the importance of procreation --- the more children the union produced the better¹¹⁵). Their union, as portrayed in the brass, cements the Protestant belief that marriage was a companionship.¹¹⁶ Clearly this was sufficient to establish a conventional image of piety, judged to be all that was necessary for the

Monuments, plate 53.

¹¹⁵Houlbrooke, 96.

¹¹⁶Houlbrooke, 96.

cultural memory. The elaboration of detail was all devoted to social position: clothes, crests and choice statements on lineage all spoke directly to this. These clearly lay at the heart of community reputation within this society.

Where there's a will ...

Wills examined for this study were proved at the Prerogative Probate Court of the Archbishop of Canterbury. This was the highest probate jurisdiction for the wealthier and more populous heartland of southern and central England. Testators in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury were above average in social status and wealth, comprising by and large the nobility, gentry and the rural and urban parochial elites of the yeomanry, professionals and merchants. The classes represented, therefore, are the same as those selected for public recognition in this society through funeral orations, eulogies, and monuments and they are the one with expanding literacy targeted by the authors of prescriptive and devotional literature. The wills studied fall into two periods: 1) wills from the reign of Henry VIII during the 1520s, (50 wills), representing the pre-Reformation period; and 2) post-Reformation wills from the reign of Elizabeth I, during the 1580s, (100 wills). The wills were extracted from these specific times so that they reflected periods of both Catholic and Protestant orthodoxy. A small sample of male wills was read for comparative purposes. Information collected included: testator's full name, social status when indicated, marital status when indicated, year will was proved, bequest of soul, bequest of body, and charitable bequests when recorded. The purpose in studying wills is to determine what these snapshots of a particular moment in the lives of real individuals reveal about female piety in Tudor England. For charitable bequests, general

questions were asked: how much was being bequeathed? which charitable institutions received monies? what percentages of female testators donated to these charitable institutions? On the whole the wills analysed were made primarily by widows; they comprised the majority of the sample. According to Claire Cross' study of female testators of Hull and Leeds, 1520-1650, married women rarely made wills, by law a woman's property and goods was her husband's.¹¹⁷ Widows on the other hand, had greater liberties.¹¹⁸

Late medieval and early modern wills have long been used by historians to determine expressions, of a testator's religious sentiment or lack thereof.¹¹⁹ Although Christians were encouraged to make their wills early; "make your will in the time of your health, "were William Asshton's words of advise, warning his readers against the

¹¹⁷Claire Cross, "Northern Women in the Early Modern Period: The Female Testators of Hull and Leeds 1520:1650,"The Yorkshire Archaeological Journal 59 (1987):85. Cross identifies six married women in her study and concludes that their wills were a result of possible claims they may have had on certain possessions. In "Wives and wills 1558-1700" in Essays in Honour of Joan Thriske eds. Joan Chartres and David Hey. Mary Prior argues that although a married woman's property became her husband's upon marriage, she could also make a will if she was the executor of a will (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990), 204-206. Ann Kettle's essay "Marriage and Property in the will and Testaments of Later Medieval England," in Marriage and Property ed. Elizabeth M. Craik argued the same (Aberdeen UP, 1984),91.

¹¹⁸As Vivien Brodsky shows in her study on Elizabethan widows in London, there were limitations placed on a widow by her husband. Although in theory she had considerable freedom to bequeath, in practice, her "choices were sometimes limited by the rival claims of sons and daughters,...the widow was strait jacketed by the provisions of her late husband's will..." "Widows in Late Elizabethan London," in The World We Have Gained ed. Lloyd Bonfield and others (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 144.

¹¹⁹M. Zell "The use of Religious Preambles as a Measure of Religious Belief in the Sixteenth Century," Historical Research 50(1977):247.

consequences of neglect,¹²⁰ for the most part, wills were written on the individual's deathbed.¹²¹ Usually, in the preamble to the will, testators indicated the status of their health. Of the 150 sixteenth-century wills examined for this research from the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, the majority were written on the throes of the deathbed ("sicke in bodye, hole in mynde"). Little attention has hitherto been devoted to examination of indications of female piety and charity contained within wills. However, the will is fraught with problems. This research has demonstrated that it is difficult to determine the piety or devotion of a female testator based on either the statistical analysis of charitable bequests or the careful reading of religious preambles. The bequest of the soul, a "formal invocation of God's name,"¹²² says very little or nothing of individual religious commitment or sentiment. As M. Zell points out, there is no sure-way of knowing whether the testator was completely or partially responsible for the testament; the possibility that the will was drafted by an advisor, scribe, local notary, clergy, or local official was, as Zell maintains, "legion."¹²³ Margaret Spufford's study of village scribes suggested that they adopted their own formula; a scribe's own personal convictions were

¹²⁰William Asshton, A Discourse of Last Wills and Testaments (London, 1696), 3-5.

¹²¹Stephen Coppel "Willmaking on the Deathbed,"Local Population Studies 40(1980):37,40.

¹²²Coppel, 37.

¹²³Zell, 247.

more likely to be apparent than the testator's.¹²⁴ Recent local population studies have used religious preambles of last testaments as a measure of religiosity; these studies have indicated the problems scholars are faced with when hoping to derive statistical or quantitative results of a community's religious belief. Because of their formulaic nature, religious preambles expressed little individual sentiment. Of the 150 wills examined for this study, few expressed or communicated any originality in the bequest of the soul. Phraseology, tone and the overall message was essentially the same for each individual. Striking variations did occur between wills examined from the 1520s and those examined from the 1580s. The former expressed Catholic tenets, while the latter were more inclined to Protestantism.

150 wills of female testators were examined and sorted according to the three types of religious preambles identified by Zell: the traditional or Catholic formula, the non-traditional type, and the Protestant formula.¹²⁵ Each form expressed in cursory language the religious values or norms of a segment of the English population. An example of the traditional or Catholic type is provided by the testament of Joane Story (d. 1521), a widow who bequeathed her soul, "to almighty God maker and redeemer, to the blessed moder sent mary and all the holy company of sents in hevyn."¹²⁶ The 'non-traditional' formula lacked reference to Mary and the saints or any identifiable Protestant

¹²⁴Margaret Spufford "The Scribes of Villagers in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: Some Lancashire Evidence," Local Population Studies 7(1971):33.

¹²⁵Zell, 246

¹²⁶P[ublic] R[ecord] O[ffice], Prob. 11/20, fol 113 verso.

theology. Isabelle Walton (d. 1586), a widow, bequeathed her soul simply, “unto the handes of almightie God.”¹²⁷ Protestant formulae reflected on the sinfulness of the testator and her need for Christ’s mercy: Alice Benalio (d.1585), another widow, commended her soul, “to the mercies of God, wishing to be saued by the precious death and bloodshedding of Jesus Christ my Sauour.”¹²⁸

Examining these 150 women’s wills has shed light on the thorny question of women’s devotion and piety in early modern England. Invocations to God might suggest the female testator’s religious tendency, but, only in a few instances did a preamble communicate a sense of individual faith or devotion. Rather, what is found, overall, is society’s understanding of appropriate female piety, usually as conveyed through, or by, male scribes. Many scribes were themselves clerics; others utilised will formularies or instructions written predominantly by clerical authors. Male clerical influence with the construction and content of wills, therefore, was not dissimilar to the influence exercised for the construction of female eulogies, albeit more muted and clearly less biographical in tone and content. Will making in early modern England was frequently a public event; when time permitted, family, friends and neighbours gathered at the bedside for the social rituals of death.¹²⁹ The will, therefore, was in many ways a public document which had to convey appropriate social messages. As in the case of commemorative works, the will

¹²⁷PRO, Prob. 11/69, fol 105.

¹²⁸PRO, Prob. 11/69, fol 119 verso.

¹²⁹Coppel, 37.

frequently constructed women as obedient wives, good mothers and charitable individuals. This, of course, they were --- if only for one moment in time. What is impossible to determine is whether these values had been internalized by the testators.

W. R. Jordan's study of philanthropy in England traces the gradual emergence of "endemic poverty"¹³⁰ arguing that philanthropy increased during the early modern period in response to an increase in poverty. The will formularies appearing at the this time, The Book of Presidents (1543), and William West's Symbolaegraphia (1590) outlined via model wills the important components of a last will and testament. None of the printed model wills were available to Tudor audiences for single, married, or even widowed women. None the less, as previously discussed in the section dealing with the funeral literature, a formulary of sorts does emerge from these sources. Women such as Lady Ramsey and Lady Helen Branch, both wealthy widows, donated generously to the poor, unmarried maidens, the sick and unemployed soldiers. Lady Ramsey even donated funds for the building of a school.¹³¹ Funeral poetry and sermons provide societal clues to the importance or necessity of women's charitable nature. Within the context of will writing, such funerary literature was a prescriptive message to their female audiences. A women's generosity would be broadcasted at their funerals, and in some cases they were published and printed for a larger audience of women to access. The association between

¹³⁰W. K. Jordan, Philanthropy in England 1480-1660 (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1959), 54-76. Although Jordan argues convincingly that philanthropy was on the rise in England, recent scholarship proves that he did not consider inflation, which adjusts this perception.

¹³¹Bourman, A3.

being charitable and being commended for one's generosity were important to the public face of piety. This is not to suggest, however, that women such as Lady Ramsey and Lady Branch donated for the single incentive of being publicly praised in their communities. At a less formal level, we are given the account of Anne Glover, a married woman who gave her personal jewellery to her children before dying.¹³² In Glover's case there was no formal will drafted; none the less this did not limit her from informally distributing her personal goods.

What did it mean to be charitable? John Ley, vicar of great Budworth, detailed in his biographical work, A Patterne of Pietie (1640), that "his[A Christian's] pietie must be set upon God, and his charity upon man."¹³³ Ley goes on to argue that the two, piety and charity are inextricably joined: "...we must lovingly linke them both together, and take heed lest wee make a divorce betwixt them...."¹³⁴ The importance of being charitable was underlined in W. Asshton's Theological discourse on last wills and testaments (1696). Asshton opens his works with the following statement: "The settling and disposing of a man's estate by his last will and testament, is not only the most solemn, but also the concluding act of his whole life: and as such, should be managed with the greatest deliberation and prudence."¹³⁵ In this discourse on how to make a "good" will,

¹³²Forde, 85.

¹³³John Ley, A Patterne of Pietie or Religious Life and Death of that Grave and Gracious Matron Mrs. Jane Ratcliffe (London, 1640).

¹³⁴Ley, 99.

¹³⁵Asshton, 2.

Asshton lists five points of advice, the last of which and the one he spends a considerable amount of time explaining was how a testator makes a charitable will.¹³⁶ According to Asshton it is the duty of the clergy to move the dying person to be liberal in their gifts to the poor. Relieving the poor was a necessary duty, "not only is it commanded in the Gospel but also in the Law and the Prophets."¹³⁷ Drawing from biblical passages, Asshton fuses charitable acts with the obligation of a good Christian: "charity to the poor makes us like unto God."¹³⁸ A moral obligation and a Christian duty: giving to the less fortunate became equated with the inherent fabric of a good Christian. Those men who covet and refuse to be charitable were misers and will not reap the fruits of everlasting life. This philosophy of charatability and hospitality carried through in the funeral sermons for both male and females. Being charitable became synonymous with being a good Christian. Robert Allen in his Treatise of Christian beneficence (1600) outlined the "excellency of giving."¹³⁹ Writers such as Thomas Lupset and Henry Bedel, exhorted Christians to understand that, "charity is a good and gracious effect of the soule."¹⁴⁰ Being charitable was not limited to the last will and testament, but was encouraged to be practised throughout a Christian's life. John Downname's A plea of the poore (1616) explained and

¹³⁶ Asshton, 3.

¹³⁷ Asshton, 47.

¹³⁸ Asshton, 51.

¹³⁹ Robert Allen, Treatise of Christian beneficences, (London, 1600), 7.

¹⁴⁰ Thomas Lupset, A Treatise of Charitie, 7; Henry Bedel A sermon exhorting to pitie the poore, 1572.

taught Christians the duty of being charitable. Particularly interesting is his discussion on whether it was lawful for a wife to be charitable without her husband's consent. Downname argues that wives should be allowed to give to the needy as long as they do not abuse their husbands goods.¹⁴¹ Downname recognised the importance of married women being charitable especially in a "country which ordinarily authorizeth them to doe these workes, if their power be not justly restrained by their husbands for their abusing it."¹⁴² Married women had to recognise and respect the authority of their husband's as "the chiefe authority over the person of the wife and their common estate..."¹⁴³ If a married woman was able to do this, being charitable should not pose a problem.

William West's will formularies for the (male) testators, in fact, leave charity to secondary acts, appearing normally as a donation to the poor towards the end of the will.¹⁴⁴ In one model will, charity is omitted entirely. For most men, of course, the first order of business was the distribution of the testator's goods to his wife and children. For widows this was not as central an issue; most children would have received the bulk of their inheritance from their fathers. The Book of Presidents (1543) written earlier than West's work, includes a formulary which did identify charity as an important component of the last will and testament. Throughout this model, various charities are identified and

¹⁴¹John Downname, A plea to the poore (London, 1616), 103.

¹⁴²Downname, 124.

¹⁴³Downname, 114.

¹⁴⁴West, section 404.

given monies. The first donation is made to the high altar, following this, is one to the repairing of the highways, followed by poor householders, prisoners and orphanages. The sequence of these donations occur within and throughout the body of the will. This particular (male) model will is somewhat similar to the nature of bequests highlighted in the women's funeral sermons, but less gratuitous. Men were expected to support their families and perhaps this explains the less generous stance of male testators in formularies. Widows were less responsible for the financial upkeep of the family and perhaps could afford to give more generously as a proportion of their total bequests. Although W. R. Jordan argued that philanthropy was on the rise in late sixteenth and seventeenth century England as a response to the emergence of "endemic poverty,"¹⁴⁵ it is intriguing that the one model will in print which emphasises charity dates from the 1540s, whereas the numerous Elizabethan and Jacobean editions of West's work, treat the Christian and community duty of charity very casually indeed.

For the pre-Reformation female testators whose wills were examined from the 1520s, the most popular charitable bequests (that is charitable bequests which received the most numerous donations) were: the church, masses for the dead, and the poor.¹⁴⁶ A total of 332 monetary donations were made in the wills of 1520s, of which the church

¹⁴⁵Jordan, 54-76,

¹⁴⁶See appendix XVIII Table I: Total Charitable Bequests in Wills of 1520s; appendix XIX Graph 1: Charitable Donations of Wills - 1520s (by number of bequests); and appendix XX Graph 2: Charitable Donations of Distribution of Wills – 1520s (total amount donated in pounds sterling).

received 38.9% or 129 bequests.¹⁴⁷ Donations to the church were in most cases intended for the mending of the altar, repairing of the church steeple, and for tithes forgotten. Masses for the dead comprised 25.9% or 86 of the total donations. These were usually bequeathed with the intent of having a mass or several masses sung for her soul, and the souls of her husband, family and all Christians. Stipendiary priests interceded on behalf of the dead in order to improve the status of their souls.¹⁴⁸ Margery Hartcourte, a widow from the county of Berkshire, ordained, "an honest prest to synge and pray for me and Thomas Humfrey [and others]... for one hole yere and he to haue for his stipend sixe pounds sterling."¹⁴⁹ Together these two categories made up approximately two-thirds of the total charitable donations bequeathed in the 1520s. A rather distant third in number, but more substantial in quantity of money donated, were the poor, who constituted 13.6% of all monetary donations or 45 of 332 bequests. Agnes Wyngar, widow of a London alderman, for example, willed:

...that myn exectours shall distribute and dispose for my soule yerely upon goodfryday twenty shillings during the terme of tenne yeres next after my decease amonge the poor householders of the said parishe....¹⁵⁰

Similarly, Dame Cristian Collett:

¹⁴⁷See appendix XVIII Table I: Total Charitable Bequests in Wills of 1520s; appendix XIX Graph 1: Charitable Donations of Wills - 1520s (by number of bequests).

¹⁴⁸Alan Kreider, English Chantries (Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 1979), 40-41.

¹⁴⁹PRO, Prob. 11/21, fol 73.

¹⁵⁰PRO, Prob 11/21, fol 3.

wydowe bienge of hole mynde and good memorye..[willed] that my sole executour distribute and dispose amonge the poor householders of the said parishe... fyue poundes sterling....¹⁵¹

Those who gave to the poor, on average, gave substantially more than the average donations to either the church or for masses for the dead. Indeed, apart from the five to individual women (who may or may not have been relatives), the poor consistently attracted the highest average amount donated. Other charitable bequests were relatively modest. Combined, the monetary bequests to monastic establishments and personnel and prisoners made up 22.9% of the total. Dame Elizabeth Thurston a widow stipulated that: "I give and bequeathe unto euery of the prison houses of Lydgate, Newgate...and the kynges benche 6 shillinges and 8 pence."¹⁵²

For the wills of the post-Reformation 1580s, double in number, total monetary donations were at 180, far fewer. Women whose bequest of the soul implied a Protestant bias of testator and/or scribe bequeathed their monies most frequently to the following charitable uses, in order of first to last : poor, churches, prisoners, hospitals and regional churches.¹⁵³ The most popular category was the poor, with 55.0 % of the total monetary donations; £1 to the poor was the most frequently occurring donation (the mode), with a

¹⁵¹PRO, Pro 11/21, fol 182.

¹⁵²PRO, Prob. 11/20, fol 183 verso.

¹⁵³See appendix XXIII Table 4: Total Charitable Bequests in Wills of 1580s; see appendix XXIV Graph 3: Charitable Donations Distribution of Wills – 1580s (by number of bequests); and appendix XXV Graph 4: Charitable Donations Distribution of Wills – 1580s (by total amount donated in pounds sterling).

maximum monetary gift of £22 and a minimum bequest of 4 pence.¹⁵⁴ Although women received only 5% of the total donations, monetarily, these donations were approximately five times greater than those bequeathed to the church. In other words, approximately 90% of the total monetary donations to the church in the 1580s.¹⁵⁵ During the Elizabethan period, substantial amounts of charitable bequests were given to the poor,¹⁵⁶ as reflected in the evidence gleaned from Post-Reformation wills, which indicates that there was “a growing humanitarianism towards social problems.”¹⁵⁷ According to D. M. Palliser, ‘the poor,’ as defined by Elizabethans, included those without employment and those whose incomes were not enough to provide for themselves and their families; these categories were subdivided further into the ‘impotent poor’ who were physically unable to work because of illness or age, the ‘able bodied’ poor, who were could not find employment; and, the ‘work-shy’ who were considered vagabonds.¹⁵⁸ Combined, the church, prisoners, hospitals and other women comprised only 41.7% of all monetary donations. The church, on its own, attracted 25% of bequests. Poverty was clearly a central, self-evident

¹⁵⁴See appendix XXIII Table 4: Total Charitable Bequests in Wills of 1580s; see appendix XXIV Graph 3: Charitable Donations Distribution of Wills – 1580s (by number of bequests).

¹⁵⁵See appendix XXV Graph 4: Charitable Donations Distribution of Wills – 1580s (by total amount donated in pounds sterling).

¹⁵⁶D. M. Palliser, The Age of Elizabeth: England under the later Tudors (London: Longman, 1992), 139.

¹⁵⁷Palliser, 139.

¹⁵⁸Palliser, 140-141.

problem. Consider the will of Dame Elizabeth Barkley the widow of Sir Morris Barkley who, after bequeathing her body to the earth, “in the hope of the resurrection to eternall lyfe ...I [gave] to the poore of the same parishe where i shalbe buried twenty pounds...to the poore in the towne of Bruton...tenne pounds.”¹⁵⁹ In contrast, Elizabeth Multon, of the parishe of Saint Alban in London, the late wife of Robert Multon a former auditor of the Exchequer, left to the poor of her parish only one pound.¹⁶⁰

The most popular categories for testators’ charity reinforced the importance of extending charity beyond the household unit. Giving to the poor, to prisoners and to the hospitals underlined a general concern for the extended community. As illustrated in the sermon for Lady Ramsey, donating to the poor was considered a honourable and virtuous act; she, too, as we are told in her sermon, donated to these popular charitable designations. Emphasised in the funerary representations, in the funeral sermons of virtuous women or in the telling epitaphs of pious maidens, donating to the less fortunate was a well-looked upon act.

In addition to monetary donations, it was not uncommon for women to donate material items, such as bread, gowns, or vestments. Consider the will of Elizabeth Dyce widow of the county of Berkshire who bequeathed, “...to the poore people of Aryee Bulmarshe and Wodley halfe a quarter of wheat and halfe a quarter of rye to be giuen

¹⁵⁹PRO, Prob. 11/68, fol 262.

¹⁶⁰PRO, Prob. 11/68, fol 7 verso.

unto them at the discession of my executour and ouerseers." ¹⁶¹ For the 1520s, several women donated clothing and with food items to the poor. Prisoners were also a popular category for donations of food. In the wills from the 1580s, women donated clothing to the poor, and food, which included barley or rye or a specified number of penny loaves. Regardless of faith or time period, women continued to bequeath consistently to the poor. While during the Pre-Reformation period, the emphasis was placed on donating to church-oriented institutions in order to safeguard the soul, nonetheless, following closely behind were the poor. The doctrinal removal of the doctrine of purgatory and the institutional abolition of chantries constituted the single greatest reason why the number of charitable bequests to churches by widows declined between the 1520s and 1580s. Women after the Reformation focussed their charity upon the conditions of their community, eager to improve the environment of prisoners, poor and hospitals. The emphasis was placed firmly upon the immediate relief of the less fortunate. Other possible themes, institutional education, for example, received almost negligible attention. Diminishing the role of the institutionalised church and emphasising the role of the household accented a woman's desire to extend herself beyond the community.

Understanding the relationship between the bequest of the soul and the testator's religious tendencies is a problematic area. The wording of a religious preamble does not necessarily determine the testator's religious inclinations. Evidence collected for the pre and post-Reformation periods reveal similar results. The three categories most frequently

¹⁶¹PRO, Prob. 11/68, fol 63.

bequeathed remain essentially the same, with no significant shift in the total monetary donations.¹⁶² This evidence suggests that scholars who place focus on preambles as “sure and true” proof of a testator’s religious inclinations, have to be cautious when using preambles as indicators of religious tendencies. Especially for the 1580s, female testators who clearly demonstrated their Protestantism may have been influenced, unknown to scholars, by the scribe or by a member of the clergy. In other words, it is difficult to conclude with complete certainty that a preamble is an accurate way of tracing or gauging the religiosity of a woman, during the period of transition from Catholicism to Protestantism.

Last wills and testaments were certainly a religious action; it was a Christian’s duty to relieve the poor. The significance of charity as a manifestation of godliness is underlined in last testaments, prescriptive and practical literature. Both pre-Reformation and post-Reformation wills examined for this study have attested to the importance associated with being charitable. Regardless of chronology, or creed, early modern English women demonstrated a concern for their neighbours and community, as well as a desire to improve the plight of those in need.

Conclusion

The public face of early modern English women’s devotion and piety is revealed when examining funerary representations of women. Each of these mediums, whether a

¹⁶²See appendix XXI Table 2: Catholic Religious Preambles (1520s) and appendix XXII Table 3 Neutral Religious Preambles (1520s);and appendix XXVI Table 5: Protestant Religious Preambles (1580s) and appendix XXVII Table 6: Neutral Religious Preambles (1580s).

funeral monument, an epitaph, a eulogy or a testament, enhances the historian's understanding of what constituted a social expression of female devotion. Postures and visual imagery preserved the social identity of the deceased. Both literary and visual types of representation were instrumental in their communication of what early modern English society deemed as fundamental qualities for a woman desiring a devout or pious semblance. These prerequisites included: a respectful lineage/parentage, a meek demeanour, a total disregard for material splendour or vanities, an equally worshipful husband, a religious education, and pious acts. Such praiseworthy traits furnished the female reader's understanding of how to be pious or devout. Presented to the public for multiple reasons, funerary representations played a crucial role in indoctrinating women. Eulogies and works such as commemorative poems or even epitaphs, although limited to the social context of female piety and devotion, indicated that a woman's piety was judged to be integral to her general character. A virtuous woman was dedicated to worshipping God regularly alongside instructing the ignorant and caring for the poor. Women who led a devotional life died a happy death. Devotion and piety measured the virtue of a woman. Female readers of these works were encouraged to embrace their Protestant faith wholeheartedly so that it encompassed more than simply a Sunday service, or calendar feast. Devotion and piety was to be fused in their day-to-day routines. For example, praying was not limited to the private realm of her personal closet but was maintained in the household while instructing servants or children. An important component of a godly semblance for women was their capacity to be charitable. Relieving the poor reinforced the ideas of extending piety outside, and into the

community via charitable acts. Literary sources, as represented in the funeral poetry and commemorative prose, combined with the funeral monuments and brasses of the early modern period, encouraged, while lamenting society's loss, female readers or viewers to pattern and emulate their lives after the deceased women. Presented with such altruistic women, the issue of, "who is the real subject?"¹⁶³ becomes problematic. Poets and craftsmen, in their desires to fashion the 'ideal' have created icons. The literary and visual expressions of the public face of piety and devotion, examined in conjunction with the wills of the same time and social class, together attest to the importance of the external or social identity of female piety and devotion in early modern England. Even in combination, these sources say little with respect to the piety and devotion of women at a profound or spiritual level. Aside from the physical postures of praying or kneeling as potential illusions to faith, piety or a few token words on an evasive inscription, little else can be surmised about a woman's devotion. Funerary representations were in good measure confined to the creation of a public or social composite of female piety. Valuable in their contribution to a composite of early modern English social dictates funeral literature, monuments, and wills provide the shades and hues of outward expressions of women's spirituality.

¹⁶³Hardison, 114.

Chapter 4

Diaries, Journals, Devotional Meditations and Godly Correspondence : The Private Face of Female Piety

The previous chapter examined the socially constructed images of early modern English female piety, as revealed in eulogies and represented in monuments and brasses. Explored in the following study are diaries, journals, godly correspondence, and devotional meditations, providing rare glimpses into women's expressions of piety and devotion within and outside the household. As examples of the private face of female piety, Lady Margaret Hoby's diary, Lady Grace Mildmay's journal, the devotional meditations of Elizabeth Grymeston and Jane Grey, and the godly correspondence between spiritual advisors, including that of Edward Dering and Protestant women, capture the godly routines of Tudor and early Stuart women. As "records of piety,"¹ such written expressions relayed women's thoughts on spiritual matters. The records examined herein cannot be taken as representative of all early modern English women. By their nature, diaries, journals, devotional meditations and godly correspondence are very personal; none the less, they reflect societal values of the early modern period. Although limited by the chronology and the social status of these women, these documents provide insights into the spiritual world of some late sixteenth-century and early seventeenth-century pious gentlewomen. Several important points surface upon examining such sources: the importance attached to spiritual advisors; the presence of

¹Crawford, 96.

a female community; the household as a spiritual centre; the extension of piety and devotion beyond the household unit to the community; and, finally, the precise nature of their perceptions of God. All help to determine the nature of women's spirituality. Both the public and private sphere was presented in these sources. Duties within the private sphere of devotion included praying with their husbands and educating their children and servants. The public sphere included meeting with spiritual advisors, and corresponding and discussing religious texts with other women. Each of these spheres afforded women a forum for a pious regime.

Due to their multifaceted and insightful nature, focus is placed on Lady Margaret Hoby's diary and Lady Grace Mildmay's journal, punctuated by the devotional correspondence of Edward Dering and the devotional meditations of Jane Grey and Elizabeth Grymeston. Close examination of diaries, journals, godly letters and devotional meditations of early modern women provides historians with the opportunity to understand and examine the private face of female piety. The daughter of the Puritan Earl of Huntington, Lady Margaret Hoby (1571-1633) was born Margaret Dakins. She married three times: first to Walter Devereux, then to Thomas Sidney, and lastly to Sir Posthumous Hoby. Lady Margaret Hoby's diary, a daily record of her godly routine, is perhaps the earliest surviving British diary, evoking "the quality of life in process" while "catching a mood."²

²Blodgett, 10; Lady Margaret Hoby Dakins, Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby [1599-1605] ed. Dorothy M. Meads. (London: Routledge and Sons, 1930), 45; Blodgett, 9; Arthur

Writing out these activities allowed the diarist an opportunity to examine herself while recording day-to-day patterns. Hoby's diary was a disciplinary tool, which allowed her to consider her daily routine in light of her pious regime. Written in the Puritan tradition, Hoby's diary was intended to, "monitor spiritual progress" while keeping a register of spiritual and pious endeavours.³ Organised chronologically, Hoby's diary spans the years 1599-1605. Lady Grace Mildmay's autobiographical journal was also a record of piety and devotion. Mildmay (1552-1621) was born Grace Sherrington in Wiltshire, a daughter of Sir Henry Sherrington, the third son of a minor gentry family knighted by Queen Elizabeth. Lady Grace was one of four children, two of which died leaving her sister and herself co-heiresses of the family estates. In 1567 she married Anthony Mildmay, the eldest son of the Puritan and government official Sir Walter Mildmay. A spiritual autobiography, Mildmay's account was compiled between 1552 and 1620, and intended for her daughter and granddaughter's usage.⁴ Lady Grace Mildmay's "surviving papers consisted of 85 folios of autobiographical recollections, over 900 folios of spiritual meditations, and 250 folios on diseases, medicines

Ponsonby, M.P. English Diaries (Ann Arbor, MI : Gryphon Books, 1971), 4.

³Mendelson, xxiii; Cynthia Huff. British Women's Diaries: Descriptive Bibliography of Selected Nineteenth-Century of Women's Manuscript Diaries (New York: AMS press, 1985), introduction xxiii; Hoby, 65, 69, 70, 81, 83, 84, 89, 94, 216.

⁴Lady Grace Mildmay, With Faith and Physic the Life of a Tudor Gentlewoman Lady Grace Mildmay 1552-1620 ed. Linda Pollock (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 4-7.

and treatments.”⁵ Mildmay's journal was not a daily record, but rather an edited autobiographical account. Devoted to topics of childhood, marital life, her husband's death, meditations, and the like, Mildmay emphasised piety and devotion within the course of her own life.

Several theories exist as to what motivated these women to record their thoughts and activities. Included amongst these is Arthur Ponsonby's belief that while it is not possible to generalise about a diarist's intentions, egotism was the motivating factor for diary writing;⁶ as argued by Ponsonby, egotism was central in order for diarists to successfully look beyond themselves.⁷ Ponsonby's generalisation provides an ahistorical, negative connotation to the persona of a diarist. As we shall see, Lady Hoby was less motivated by egotism than on a quest for spiritual improvement. There are some elements of self-absorption in Hoby's diary, but in its purest form her diary was a book of self-improvement. An instrument for retrospection, diaries promised spiritual growth.⁸ Surviving Tudor and early Stuart diaries were products of the Puritan desire to examine oneself and take stock of one's spiritual progression and improvement. Although formulaic, a “diary of conscience”

⁵Pollock, introduction, 1.

⁶Ponsonby, 6; 9. Ponsonby also argues that diarists have “a morbid desire for self-analysis, self dissection, introspection, and even self-revelation”

⁷Ponsonby, 7.

⁸Blodgett, 76.

encouraged self-expression.⁹ As part of the religious life of a godly person, the primary concern of these daily writings was to aid in the process of self-communing by developing the inner life of the diarist through the day-to-day documentation of the spiritual self.¹⁰ Diaries such as the one by Lady Hoby recorded a woman's daily routine. For the most part, as we shall see, she spent her time occupied with household duties and religious activities, within the home or community environment. Harriet Blodgett has argued that: "Women have never been encouraged to accept, or understand their own feelings. Habit, training, and expectations have historically combined to make them uncomfortable with feelings...."¹¹ Admittedly, early modern women lived within the constraints of a male-dominated society, expressing themselves within the social roles of mothers, wives and nurturers of the faith within the household setting. Their expression, whether in the form of diaries, journals, correspondence or devotional meditations, was their own. Blodgett's argument that women were "uncomfortable with their feelings" suggests that women were limited and unable to communicate their devotion and piety, comfortably, within this setting. We will see that women, as communicated in letters, diaries and meditations, expressed their perceptions of God, their feelings of sinfulness, their feelings of gratitude and the like. It will also be demonstrated that Lady Hoby and Lady Mildmay were strong, independent females capable

⁹Blodgett, 23.

¹⁰Robert Fothergill, Private Chronicles (London: Oxford UP, 1974),17.

¹¹Blodgett, 53.

of articulating their own sense of piety through a godly regime. The spiritual advisement and comfort afforded women through a male spiritual mentorship was certainly influenced by the perceptions of the advisor. Being male, the advisor naturally counselled the female within patriarchal societal norms. Nevertheless, as we shall see, Hoby's diary, Mildmay's journal, the meditations of Grey and Grymeston and godly correspondence were genuine female expressions of piety, integral to the lives of some early modern English women.

In contrast to Hoby, Mildmay created a different, more autobiographical form of self-examination. Claimed to be the earliest surviving English autobiography,¹² Mildmay's journal, contained a series of undated reminiscences and meditations, written for her daughter and grandchild.¹³ Unlike Lady Margaret Hoby's diary, which captured day-to-day events as they occurred, Mildmay's journal was "moulded and trimmed," as her notes attest to in the original folios.¹⁴ In terms of the format of the journal, subsections included: 1) childhood; 2) marital life; 3) meditations on her husband's corpse; 4) virtuous principles; 5) meditations; and 6) her medical notes.¹⁵ The section dedicated to spiritual meditations

¹²Retha Warnicke, "Lady Mildmay's Journal: A Study in Autobiography and Meditation in Reformation England," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 20 (1989): 55.

¹³Blodgett, 26; Mildmay, 29-30.

¹⁴Ponsonby, 2; Pollock, 1.

¹⁵Mildmay's medical notes will not be discussed in this thesis as they do not directly address the issue of female piety and devotion. The role of the godly woman as a nurturer of both body and soul is well established.

provides a rare glimpse into Lady Mildmay's godly beliefs. Exceptionally useful, Mildmay's journal relays her perception of the proper forms of piety and devotion. Unlike Hoby's diary, which contained fragmented bits and pieces related to domestic duties and religious patterns, Mildmay's journal records a woman's personal and reflective account of her life. Her journal was an "act of language that, by speaking of one's self, sustains one's sense of being a self with an autonomous and significant identity."¹⁶

As illustrated in diaries and godly correspondence, spiritual advisors played an integral role in shaping, moulding and developing women's godliness.¹⁷ Literature on the charge of Protestant ministers reveal they were to: "direct, relieue, instruct and nourish...they are the light of the world to giue light vnto others by their life and learning."¹⁸

Diane Willen and Anne Laurence have argued that it was common for women to seek additional spiritual relationships for supplementary sources of support in their daily godly routines. With the onset of the Reformation, Catholic confessors were replaced with close relationships with Protestant ministers; spiritual mentors broadened a Protestant woman's religious life.¹⁹ Although husbands were the representatives of God in a Protestant household

¹⁶Blodgett, 5.

¹⁷Willen, 150-151.

¹⁸Thomas Tuke, The Picture of a True Protestant... (London, 1609), 13, 35.

¹⁹Willen, 150; Patrick Collinson, Godly People (London: Hambledon Press, 1983), 275.

and could counsel wives in matters of the spirit, this did not preclude women from seeking educated counsel from a minister.²⁰ References to Hoby's close relationship with her spiritual advisor, Mr. Rhodes,²¹ were prevalent, revealing the degree of importance he played in her spiritual life. On the other hand, Mildmay's journal does not specify any spiritual liaison with an advisor or mentor. Recent scholarship argues that women such as Hoby may have pursued these relationships to make up for a less than adequate marriage; others sought spiritual counsel in order to understand theological complexities.²² Sara Heller Mendelson suggests that a life dedicated to charity, reading Scriptures and meditating provided women in marriages of convenience with an "alternative spouse."²³ This spiritual relationship compensated for Hoby's absent husband, while enlightening her on matters of faith via an educated male perspective. In point of fact, Rhodes was another outlet, or venue, through which she could express her spirituality. As we shall see in the relationships Hoby had with other women, her relationship with Mr. Rhodes was also a means of expanding her religious knowledge. Essentially, Rhodes provided needed instruction in everyday piety as

²⁰Houlbrooke, 112.

²¹Mr. Rhodes was probably John Rhodes, of Christ's college, B.A. [fl. 1599-1600]. British Biographical Archive (London: K.G. Saur Ltd., 1984), 440.

²²Willen, 151.

²³Mendelson, 194. Houlbrooke maintains that marriages of convenience were the norm in early modern England: "At all levels of society economic consideration perforce bulked large in the choice of partners...."(Houlbrooke, 88).

a part of life; “after supper I taked with Mr Rhodes of the lordes praier...”²⁴ Rhodes’ guidance brought certainty and comfort. This was reflected in an entry dated Saturday September 1, 1599, when Lady Hoby recorded that, “I praied priuat with Mr. Rhodes, wherein I had more comfort then euer I received in my Life before, I praise god.”²⁵ Mr. Rhodes’ guidance presumably moulded her piety and devotion reinforcing desired theological and societal values as a member of the Protestant educated establishment. Women had few individual public avenues by which to explore their piety. Hence, a liaison such as one that Mr. Rhodes offered Lady Hoby both godly instruction and a recognised mode of religious expression outside the confines of the home.

Early modern English correspondence similarly reflected the need women had for supplementary spiritual relationships. Edward Dering (1540-76), a Puritan divine, had numerous spiritual liaisons with many prominent women. In fact, the majority of Dering’s “spiritual patients” were women.²⁶ This relationship between elite women and ministers was not uncommon. Edward Dering corresponded with Mrs. Catherine Killigrew, Lady Mary Mildmay and Elizabeth Golding; Thomas Wilcox, another divine, corresponded with the Countess of Bedford, the Countess of Sussex, Lady Anne Bacon, Lady Walsingham and

²⁴Hoby, 64.

²⁵Hoby, 68.

²⁶Collinson, 316.

Lady Mary Grey.²⁷ Patrick Collinson has argued that the attraction between women of the higher ranks and Protestant ministers was an attraction based on “a kind of spiritual hypochondria;” these women suffered the pains of spiritual uncertainty and questioned their salvation.²⁸ Certainly, Protestantism, the new budding faith, and its doctrines needed explanation; spiritual mentors provided needed answers for these religious newcomers. Dering’s undated letter to a Christian gentlewoman in “heaviness of spirit,” counselled her to take faith as her defence: “Learne therefore first the word of God, this is the seede of regeneration, by which we are made new creatures Take this vnto you, the shield of your defence.”²⁹ In a letter to “Mistress H.,” Dering advised her in matters of marriage: “Hath your husband beene vnkinde to you, beare it, and you shall win him at the last: If not, thanke God that you can continue louing and obedient, euen vnto an vnkinde husband.”³⁰ Dering’s advice perpetuates early modern English societal values on female deportment, and certainly supports Blodgett’s premise that women were not encouraged to accept their feelings. Dering’s advice is reminiscent of William Gouge’s Of Domesticall Duties (1622) Gouge relayed a similar message, “...but if a man of lewd and beastly conditions, as a drunkard, a glutton, a profane swaggerer...be married to a wise, sober, religious matron, must she

²⁷Collinson, 275.

²⁸Collinson, 317.

²⁹Edward Dering, Certaine Godly Letters. “A letter to Mistres B.” (unpaginated).

³⁰Dering, “A letter to Mistress H.” (unpaginated).

account him her superiour, and worthy of an husband's honour? Surely she must...³¹

Within this same lengthy letter, Dering also spiritually consoles Mistress H. on the illness of her son; herein, Dering draws from biblical passages to assuage her:

...yea but you haue not the hundreth part of the grieffe that Dauid might haue had for his somme Absolon: and will you be more grieued than he? Your sonne I trust shall yet proue well, and you shall see his recouery...: and what if God take from you the comfort of one child, leauing again vnto you the comfort of a great many...Herein you shall know you loue God aboue all, when you can forget the child of your wombe, for his sake...say and think, Thy will be done o Lord....³²

Considering the importance of the family and children to the Protestant faith, Dering's suggestion is unnatural. Surely the ties between a godly mother and child, as seen in Lady Legh's monument, are completely forgotten in Dering's advice. His counsel was conveyed in a less than empathetic manner. How reasonable is it to ask this woman to detach herself from her motherly bond to her son, even for the sake of the bond between herself and Christ? Here we see a clear-cut case of an attempt by male authority to impose, though mentoring, theological views upon the maternal identity.

The letters written by spiritual leaders of the beleaguered Protestant community during the reign of Mary Tudor similarly underline the important role spiritual advisors played in the lives of pious women. William Tym, a spiritual leader in the community of Hockley, was condemned to die because of his heretical views. When imprisoned, Tym

³¹Gouge, 273.

³²Dering, "Letter to Mistres H." (unpaginated).

continued to advise his community of worshippers, several of whom were women. In a letter to his female parishioners, Tym attempted to inspire their wearied souls. Thanking them for their constancy and kindness to him while imprisoned, like Dering, Tym used examples of biblical women to instruct his female parishioners.³³ He invites them to:

...remember Mary Magdalene, how faithful she was; for she was the first that preached the resurrection of Christ.... Remember the blessed martyr Anne Askew in our time, and follow her example of constancy. Thus I beseech God to send you grace and strength to stand fast to the Lord, as she did....³⁴

Employing examples of biblical women such as Mary Magdalene and the noted Henrician martyr Anne Askew provided women with worshipful models. Mary Magdalene, a reformed prostitute, remained a devoted disciple of Christ's teaching unto and after His death. Anne Askew, a contemporary example, was a godly martyr, a champion of Protestantism and an example of constancy in the face of death. These women were models of godliness, and elevated for imitation, much in the same way as the eulogies and funeral orations held up choice elite women. Drawing from such examples, advisors reinforced the qualities promulgated in the commemorative works: constancy, piety and devotion to God. Early modern English women turned to spiritual mentors such as Dering and Tym in order to improve their spirituality. As Dering and Tym's advice revealed, constancy, faith and living

³³Godly letters of William Tym, martyr. "Another Letter to certain godly Women of his Parish, followers of the Gospel." in Foxe, Acts vol. VIII , 114.

³⁴Tym, "Another Letter to certain godly Women of his Parish, followers of the Gospel," 114.

a godly life comprised the focus of this contribution to the spiritual development of women.

In sixteenth-century England opportunities for women to worship their faith together, as a community, diminished. With the Reformation came the dissolution of nunneries, and the minimisation of the saints and the cult of the Virgin Mary as sources of religious veneration. Consequently, women had few formal public religious venues in Protestant England. A “female network,” whereby women sought religious support from each other, replaced these traditional institutions.³⁵ Diaries and devotional correspondence of early modern English women reveal the importance of the female-centred network. Diary entries did not record the ideas communicated between Hoby and other godly women, but they are illustrative of Willen and Crawford’s “female networks.” Hoby’s entries reveal she shared her ideas on sermons and scriptural passages and even exchanged reading material with various pious women. Consider the following entries:

[July 1600: The lordes day 13:]

... after, I Came home and praied and then dined: after diner I talked of the sarmon, and reed of the bible with some Gentlewomen.³⁶

[Nouember: The 10 and :11: dayes]

I Continewe well, I thanke god, these daies: and reed some medetations of the Lady

³⁵Crawford and Willen have argued in their separate studies that women sought support within such female networks (Willen, 151-152; Crawford, 55).

³⁶Hoby, 131.

Bowes hir Makinge, as I hard.³⁷

Both excerpts reveal an interaction between Lady Hoby and other women, which centred around religious endeavours, as well as the private meditations of her female friends. In a third entry Hoby recorded that. "... I walked tell church time and then, after the sarmon, I walked, and read and talked with Mrs Ormston of that was deliuered...."³⁸ Similarly, in a much earlier letter, Lady Jane Grey urged her sister Katherine to "read of Gods word,"³⁹ exhorting Katherine to remain steadfast in the true faith. This letter was a supplication from one religiously devout woman to her younger sister. Within the context of this letter Jane counselled a fellow female in matters of faith as she pleaded with Katherine to take up a devout life.⁴⁰ Lady Mildmay's autobiographical journal lacks any explicit references to a female network. However, the support provided between herself and her mother was perhaps the closest example of this type of female exchange.⁴¹ Moreover, Mildmay used her spiritual

³⁷Hoby, 191.

³⁸Hoby, 78.

³⁹Lady Jane, "A letter written by the Lady Jane which she sent to her sister, the Lady Katherine," in Foxe, *Acts* vol. VI, 420. Lady Jane Grey (1537-54) was the daughter of Henry Grey, the duke of Suffolk. Jane was educated in the humanist classical tradition. Married to Lord Guildford the fourth son of John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, she was the queen of England for nine days. Grey was executed in 1554.

⁴⁰"And if you will cleave unto him, he will prolong your days, to your comfort and his glory: to the which glory God bring me now, and you hereafter, when it pleaseth him to call you." (Grey, 422).

⁴¹Willen, 147.

autobiography as a means of communicating important life lessons to her daughter and grandchild. This female, familial, audience gave Mildmay a forum from which she could, as a woman, divulge her ideas and perceptions. Indeed, a female network, as revealed in Hoby's diary and in correspondence, furnished women with the opportunity to express and examine their spiritual concerns and ideas. Hoby's diary, Mildmay's journal and Jane Grey's letter indicated that women in the absence of institutional formats still came together to exchange ideas about religion. These venues allowed women an active involvement in their faith.

As seen in the previous discussion on commemorative works and funeral monuments and brasses, the household was considered to be central to a woman's piety and devotion. Early modern English women's journals and devotional correspondence reinforced the role of the household within a woman's godly routine. Hoby's relationship with her female servants is further evidence of the notion of a female network. Catechising and instructing servants was deemed a woman's duty. Several of Lady Hoby's entries record discussions she had with her maids and times when she heard them read out of John Foxe's Acts and Monuments:

[.22:day]

After priuatt praiers I went to the Church: and in the after none
I walked (after the sarmon) and thence Came in, and talked with
my Maides of the same:

[The:11:day]

After priuat prairs I went about the house and wrought amonge
my Maides, and hard one read of the Booke of Marters [Martyrs]:⁴²

In each of these instances, Lady Hoby extended her piety to the sphere of her household servants. What connected these women, transcending their contrasting positions within the social order, was household spirituality and the importance placed on household religion in the Protestant faith.⁴³ Hoby also recorded in 1599 an occasion when she read to her workmen.⁴⁴

Lady Hoby's maids, in addition to and alongside of learning essential Protestant precepts, learned to read.⁴⁵ In her correspondence with her husband, one century earlier, Lady Agnes Plumpton relayed that her servants prayed, "delygently for your good speed in your [Sir Robert Plumpton's] matters"⁴⁶ This example sheds light on the importance of educating servants, and their participation in the "spiritualised household." Acting as a "domestic missionary,"⁴⁷ the Protestant Hoby and the Catholic Lady Plumpton each brought

⁴²Hoby, 184;175.

⁴³Willen, 152.

⁴⁴Hoby, 81.

⁴⁵Hoby, 184.

⁴⁶"To the worshipfull Robert Plumpton,..."12 April 1504, Plumpton Correspondence ed. Thomas Stapleton (New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1968),186-187.

⁴⁷Wiesner,190.

the word of God to their servants within the domestic setting. Hoby's diary illuminates our understanding of the outlets women had for religious expression. In view of these entries, we realise that women, especially wealthy godly women, were able to test their ideas and address religious doubts within the domestic world of the household. Meeting with other female parishioners, Hoby was able to enhance her understanding of the Scriptures; within her household, she instructed her servants, while encouraging them to read from godly works. Not allowed to participate in the formal educational functions of the parish church, women such as Lady Hoby were, within their private worlds, able and encouraged to participate in the godly exchange of ideas between females.

As underlined in Gouge and Becon, educating children in the true faith was one of the responsibilities of a godly woman. Funeral eulogies, epitaphs and commemorative monuments publicly accented the virtue of educating children. Women's diaries and devotional correspondence reflect the importance of teaching children religious precepts. Hoby's diary makes no reference to raising children, since she had none of her own. However, Lady Mildmay's journal contains an extensive discussion on the need to discipline children. Using her own childhood as an example, Mildmay stressed the importance of a child's upbringing, underlining "discipline and restraint" as essential components to the raising of godly children.⁴⁸ Houlbrooke reveals that it was the responsibility of parents to

⁴⁸Houlbrooke, 141.

ensure that their children were “not pampered, but strictly controlled for the good of their bodies and souls.”⁴⁹ Mildmay’s mother and a good governess were given credit for raising her properly; furnishing a child’s mind with the true religion and virtue, was an essential ingredient to rearing honourable children.⁵⁰ The relationship between mother and child was one capable of development over time, establishing a forum whereby women expressed their spirituality within the household.⁵¹ In further testament to these ideas, Mildmay’s journal speaks to the crucial role her mother and grandmother played in her own upbringing:

they were both chaste and honest conversation, never spotted in the world. All which I have set down for mine own example and to keep the same in memory, that whosoever shall read the same may see and consider what a blessed thing it is to proceed of virtuous parents.⁵²

Excerpts such as these served as a tool for her children and grandchildren; a legacy was passed from one generation to the next.⁵³ The importance of a mother in the development of her child’s religiosity was strongly underlined in Mildmay’s words and highlighted in Lady Hoby’s relationship with her own mother.

Religion was considered to be the glue that bound together Protestant couples. As

⁴⁹Houlbrooke, 140-141.

⁵⁰Mildmay, 25.

⁵¹Crawford, 91.

⁵²Mildmay, 30.

⁵³Mildmay, 25-26.

revealed in commemorative works and funeral monuments, a common faith was deemed to be essential to the fabric of a good Christian marriage. After the Reformation, “a mutual help in spiritual progress was...increasingly stressed as the transcendent purpose which gave shape and meaning to the lives of the married couple.”⁵⁴ Couples were jointly to read godly books, pray, confess and give thanks. This regime of routine household spirituality between husband and wife was accented in Hoby's diary. Several entries record episodes wherein Hoby and her husband attended a sermon, read to one another from godly books, or went to church together. Consider the following examples:

[The 5 day the :9:]

...After I was busie till towards night, about wiche time I walked with Mr Hoby and Mr Rhodes, and talked touching baptismie....

[Wensday 5]

...I walked and kept Mr Hoby Compenie... and then we went to church....

[The lordes day: 21:]

...and was so ill that I Could not goe to the publecke exercises, but Mr Hoby reed in the morninge to me and praied with me....

[The lordes day 25]

...after I Came home Mr Hoby rede to me a sarmon of Vdale,....⁵⁵

⁵⁴Houlbrooke, 111.

⁵⁵Hoby, 118; 69; 146; 163. For further examples see: 97, 99, 107, 113.

Each of these entries underlined the importance of the marital relationship to Lady Hoby's pious regime. Her husband participated with Hoby, and on several occasions with Rhodes, in religious activities. When Lady Hoby was ill, her husband helped her fulfil her regime by reading to her and bringing her abreast on sermons she missed. This relationship, like Hoby's relationship with her spiritual mentor and her network with other godly women, enabled her to explore her devotion and piety. Shaping and furthering her knowledge of the Puritan faith, this exchange between godly husband and wife was instrumental in the development of women's spirituality and in the cementing of their Christian marital commitment to one another. Although Hoby's relationship with her husband was a venue for spiritual growth, this relationship was predicated on religious companionship, whereas her liaison with Rhodes was centred on counselling and instructing. Earlier correspondence between Dame Agnes Plompton and Sir Robert Plompton also contain nuances of piety in a marital relationship. Agnes' letter to her husband relayed her spousal duty and commitment, "And, Sir, so it is, as God knowes, that I have mayd as great labor as was possible for me to make, to content your mind in all causes."⁵⁶ She ends her correspondence by relaying that she and her children pray for his good health. Lady Plompton's letter captures the inherent obedience and respect due a husband in the early modern period, stressing her spousal duty.

⁵⁶"To the worhsipfull Robert Plompton..." 21 Dec.1502, Plumpton Correspondence, 171. Agnes Plompton(d. 1504), was Robert Plompton's first wife and the daughter of Sir William Gascoigne of Gawthorp, Yorkshire (Stapleton, 171).

Early modern English devotional correspondence between husbands and wives proves how important a marital relationship was in the development of a woman's spirituality. Evidence in a letter from John Careless, a martyr during the reign of Mary Tudor, to his wife Margaret, highlights this joint commitment between Protestant couples. In his letter, on the eve of his martyrdom, Careless reminds his wife of their Christian commitment to one another: "my dearly beloved wife, you and I were joined together in the holy and Christian state of godly matrimony...."⁵⁷ He proceeds to counsel her in matters of faith, rearing children, and being an obedient wife:

I hear say that you do oftentimes use to reap this godly saying, 'The Lord's will be fulfilled'...use that godly prayer continually, and teach you children and family to say the same day and night....Therefore dear wife, put your trust and confidence wholly and only in him, and ever pray that his will be fulfilled....And for God's sake help them to some learning...that they may increase in virtue and godly knowledge, which shall be a better dowry to marry them withal....And when they come to age provide them such husband's as fear God, and love his holy word....⁵⁸

Within this short excerpt Careless underlined the importance of like-religion among couples and the responsibility of parents to educate children in the faith. Links between marital life and piety in Protestant England were underlined in Mildmay's journal. Written in the tradition of William Gouge's Of Domestical Duties, Mildmay's section, "Virtuous

⁵⁷Godly Letters of John Careless, Martyr, "To his wife," in Foxe, Acts vol. VIII, 173-174.

⁵⁸Godly Letters of John Careless, Martyr, "To his wife," in Foxe, Acts vol. VIII, 173-174.

Principles," deals with marital roles and their prescribed behaviour. According to Mildmay, "wives submit themselves unto their husbands as unto the lord," husbands "likewise... love your wives even as Christ loved the church."⁵⁹ Stressing the integral parallel with God, marital relationships outlined by Mildmay reinforced contemporary attitudes promulgated in commemorative works.

Being godly included extending one's faith beyond the household sphere.⁶⁰ Patricia Crawford and Diane Willen have argued that, "practical charity was an acceptable public manifestation of the private virtue of piety.... Godly women prepared cordials for the sick, [and] dressed sores of neighbours...."⁶¹ Protestant reformers and preachers commended women for practising charity beyond the domestic setting. Affirming both Crawford and Willen's argument are the many entries within Hoby's diary describing instances where she cared for the sick, helped strangers and relieved the poor.⁶² The charitable acts Hoby performed outside the household underlined their importance to the fabric of godly women. From giving to the poor to caring for the sick, Lady Hoby made a point each week to be charitable and generous. Consider the following examples:

[The 5 day of the weke Feb 1599: :I:]

⁵⁹Mildmay, 44.

⁶⁰Willen, 150.

⁶¹Crawford, 88.

⁶²Hoby, 86, 200, 100, 102, 141, 145, 169, 170.

After I was readie I went about the house and then praied, brake my fast, dressed a poore boyes legge that was hurt....

[The Lordes day the 1599:10:]

...after dinner I talked with some of my neighbours, that Came to me, tell church time: then after sarmon, I dressed other poore folkes, and then....

[The 26, 1600:]

...and, after, praied and medetated often: some thinge I did eate, and then did reed, and made prouision for som strangers that Came:... before diner and after tell almost night, I was busie prouidinge for such strangers, as Came to me with Mr Rhodes and his wiffe....⁶³

These examples demonstrate the importance of charitable acts in a woman's godly regime and reinforced notions of being charitable within prescriptive and commemorative works. Furthermore, the idea of Christian charity was reinforced, as indicated previously, in the wills of wealthy godly women, who donated considerable amounts of money, food and clothing to the poor of their parishes or communities.

Christian charity gave Hoby a sense of purpose in a household where the husband was master. A religious regimen provided a sense of resolve which women of the early modern period were unable to acquire beyond the household or the community. Through the domestic sphere of the household, Lady Hoby and other women became actively involved in their community, while still maintaining the responsibilities incurred on them in a

⁶³Hoby, 100;102;141.

household setting. Both community and household become centres of female expression: “the household was thus a public as well as a private place,”⁶⁴ where religion could be expressed as well as acted out; the household was “a centre for godly instruction.”⁶⁵ Further testament to the important relationship between charity and a pious routine was captured in the godly correspondence between a spiritual mentor and a godly female. John Careless’ letter to Mistress Agnes Glasock stressed the need to be charitable. Setting down the virtue of charity, Careless argued “...of the chief fountain and well-spring of life, do flow all kind virtues and godly fruits, specially of our life; and all christian charity towards our neighbours, as well to help them at all needs.”⁶⁶ Devotional correspondence and diaries contain evidence of charity’s role in a pious regime. Publicly, eulogies lauded a charitable woman; likewise, Careless’ private correspondence and Hoby’s diary reflected the virtue of being charitable.

Private devotion within the sphere of the household was relayed in the pages of Lady Hoby’s diary and in contemporary correspondence. Following strict regimens of daily devotion and meditation were common, and praiseworthy, among pious women of the early

⁶⁴Crawford, 50.

⁶⁵Morgan, 142.

⁶⁶The Godly letters of John Careless, “a letter to Mistress Agnes Glasock,” in Foxe, Acts vol. VIII, 94.

modern period.⁶⁷ Careless's correspondence with several devout women relayed how a female should lead a pious life. In his letter to Mistress Glascock, he emphasised the importance of praying in order to develop individual faith and spiritual strength: "Therefore pray earnestly for the increase of faith and lively feeling of God's mercy; for all things are possible unto him that can undoubtedly believe. Faith is that thing which assureth us of God's mercy,..."⁶⁸ Similarly, Bishop John Hooper's letter to a godly widow recommended that she increase her knowledge of God by reading Scriptures.⁶⁹ Hoby's diary was a testament to the much-lauded qualities in commemorative works and reflected in the godly correspondence. With a largely absent husband, Hoby devoted her life to a regime of godliness. Women, such as Hoby and Mildmay, in the absence of their husbands, were able to dedicate more time to prayer, meditation, and other godly activities, allowing them the opportunity truly to make piety what Crawford calls, "a career." Rising early, praying and reading, with the occasional variation, Lady Hoby's day followed a set of planned activities, of which most, were dedicated to religious and pious endeavours.⁷⁰ Her pious deeds reinforced the ideas communicated in funeral eulogies. Hoby's entries, or "documentation

⁶⁷Crawford, 75.

⁶⁸Careless, 194-95.

⁶⁹Godly letters of Bishop John Hooper, "a letter to a certain godly woman," Foxe, Acts vol. VI, 670.

⁷⁰Hoby, 66.

of the self”, were not so much an opportunity for spiritual exercise; rather the diary registered “each day’s stewardship”⁷¹ The following are typical entries:

[Thursday, August 23 1599]

In the morninge I praied: then I took order for thinges about the house tell I went to breadfast,...and went to linton wher, after I had salluted my mother, I praied, and then, walkinge a litle readinge of the bible in my Chamber, went to supper: after which I hard the Lector and sonne after went to bed.

[Saturday the 6 October 1599: day]

After priuat prairs I did walke about and eate my breakfast: then I went abroad with Mr Hoby: then I Cam homen and dined: after, I wret notes in my testament, then I went in to the Granerie, and other places in the house, and so came to examine my selfe and praied: and then I went to supper, and so to lector, and then To bed.⁷²

As Lady Hoby’s diary indicated, women expressed their devotion to God through a regimen of piety, which evolved around the domestic duties of the household. These entries contribute to an understanding of what a “godly” woman’s day entailed. Piety and the domestic duties of Hoby’s day occurred alongside one another. Recording day-to-day endeavours and partaking in the religious discipline of diary-keeping constituted a means of legitimate religious expression.⁷³ Lady Hoby’s diary provides a first-hand account of the daily living of a Protestant woman, ranging from her complaints of physical ailments, and

⁷¹Fothergill, 19.

⁷²Hoby, 66; 76.

⁷³Crawford, 75.

discussions with friends, to prayers and sermons. Dissimilar to the sermons, epitaphs or devotional works examined in earlier chapters, which articulated contemporary opinions of what constituted pious behaviour, the diary was an actual, real account of an early modern English woman's individual devotion. Commemorative works articulated a few choice characteristics; the diary, however, sets down daily acts, as they progressed in the routine of a woman's life.

An illuminating source, Lady Mildmay's journal increases the historian's understanding of female piety in early modern England as it addresses extensively issues of meditation, devotion, pious regimes and roles of women within the framework of the Protestant household. Not unlike Hoby, Mildmay also suffered the pains of an absent husband: "my husband, was much from me in all that time and I spent the best part of my youth in solitariness...."⁷⁴ A godly routine offset the longing for an absentee husband. Godly living, as considered by Mildmay, depended on the virtues of meekness, temperance, patience, chastity, love and obedience.⁷⁵ Being a dutiful Christian was paramount and entailed reading the Scriptures and a total dedication of one's self to God. In her journal Mildmay exhorted her daughter and grandchild to take up the pious life, and so engrave the name of God in their hearts forever,⁷⁶ while guaranteeing a life of constant protection from

⁷⁴Mildmay, 34.

⁷⁵Mildmay, 39.

⁷⁶Mildmay, 44.

ill will. Mildmay outlined a list of books which all godly people should read; these included: the Bible, Foxe's Acts and Monuments, Thomas a Kempis' Imitatio Christi of the fourteenth century, and John Musculus' Common Places (1562). These books were all directed to a general godly audience. The correspondence of Dering and Tym emphasised that women were presented with the virtuous lives of godly women in the Bible. In the same manner, as we shall see, John Foxe's work was especially useful in providing women with female models of constancy. Works such as the one by Musculus enhanced Mildmay's understanding of the holy sacraments and the necessary points of her faith,⁷⁷ while Kempis, a medieval mystic, taught her the essentials needed for meditating, using Christ for a model. Each treatise was justified according to how it improved the individual's will and strength.⁷⁸ Her "stability of ...mind and...comfort in all the troubles and calamities of my whole life,"⁷⁹ was the result of playing the lute and singing psalms, making prayers to God and confessing her sins. During the most difficult times, "god was witness and turned his loving countenance towards me."⁸⁰

Similarly, a pious regime dedicated to prayer was relayed in Jane Grey's prayer and

⁷⁷Mildmay, 70-71.

⁷⁸Mildmay, 23. According to Mildmay, "the dew of heaven" was contained in these books. See appendix XXVIII fig. 18. Mildmay Excerpt.

⁷⁹Mildmay, 35.

⁸⁰Mildmay, 37.

Elizabeth Grymeston's Miscelanea, Meditations, Memoratives, published posthumously in 1604 and dedicated to her loving son. Each was expressive of women wanting to engage in a spiritual dialogue with God.⁸¹ Meditation, prayer and piety were sources of strength and a vehicle for spiritual expression, allowing females to explore their faith. At the heart of these devotional works was an attempt to come to terms with their thoughts on faith. These devotional works are particularly helpful in piecing together an image of what constituted female godliness. Prayer and meditation were central both to the Catholic Grymeston and to the Protestant Grey. As Grymeston explained, "Prayer is the wing wherewith thy soule flieth to heauen; and Meditation the eye wherewith we see God...."⁸² Arming herself with prayer and the Scriptures, Jane fought her spiritual battle before her death. Prayer was instrumental in purging sin; charged with a desperate emotion, Jane's prayer beseeched God to "arme me... with thine armour."⁸³ Grymeston and Grey endured the fear of a sin-ridden soul; enveloping these devotional works is a search for inner peace: "I am ashamed to be seen of thee, because I am not assured to be received by thee...let thy passion work compassion for me."⁸⁴ Supplanted in the "burden of sin"⁸⁵ was a general fear of God's

⁸¹Elizabeth Grymeston Miscelanea, Meditations, Memoratives (London, 1604) She was a recusant during the reign of Elizabeth I.; Jane Dudley, A Certaine Effectual Prayer in The Monument of Matrones ed. Thomas Bentley, (London: H. Denham, 1582) 101.

⁸²Grymeston, Chapter I, B2.

⁸³Dudley, 101.

⁸⁴Grymeston, Chapter XI.

punishment. Plagued with the weight of their sins, Grymeston and Grey's words are charged with a deep-seated remorse, while fearful of their sinfulness, "I being defiled with sinne."⁸⁶

A method of quelling personal distresses, and sins in time of death, their prayers were pleadings to God: "give me time to repent, and occasion to amend."⁸⁷

The theme of continual praise and thanks runs through Lady Hoby's diary.⁸⁸ Several of the entries were opportunities in which she thanked God for his mercy, for keeping her healthy, or for being patient during troublesome times. On occasion, Hoby ended a diary entry with a short prayer of thanks or a prayer asking for strength.⁸⁹ God is ever present, during her illnesses and during times of trouble — Lady Hoby's "world was God's theatre."⁹⁰ If she became ill, it was God's way of expressing His discontent with her failure to pray or meditate. Lady Hoby clearly demonstrated an earnest commitment to God. While her diary fails to illustrate any real emotion we do have glimpses of her toiling with ideas and even

⁸⁵Grymeston, Chapter XI.

⁸⁶Dudley, 98.

⁸⁷Grymeston, Chapter XI, E.

⁸⁸Hoby, 149, 151, 160, 167.

⁸⁹"[*The lordes day the 30:*] ... the lord pardon all my wantes in hearing and omissions in practising those Christen dutes which this day I am guiltie of, amen" (Hoby, 69; 111).

⁹⁰Fothergill, 18.

expressing delight or dissatisfaction with sermons.⁹¹ In one entry she relays her discontent, “this day I went to the Church but Came from thence with litle frute....”⁹² At the same time, Lady Hoby expresses gratitude. We similarly see her contending with the devil’s temptations. Just as God was a real presence in her life, so too was the devil. Lady Hoby relayed several occasions about having to fight off Satan’s “buffets”:

[The Lordes day : 27:]

...not whithstandinge Satan hath not ceased me to Cast his malice vpon: but temptations hath exercisede me, and it hath pleased my god to deliuer me from all....

[The Lordes day: 18:]

This day I hard the exercises and now, as though Satan would returne, I felte his buffets: but I know my god will make them, in the end, profetable to me:

[August 1602: The Lordes day:the :I:]

this morning it pleased the Lord lustly, but yet mercifully, to suffer Satan buffetts so that i hard not the morninge exercise so frutfully as I ought, but after ward, I praise god, I was refreshed.⁹³

Lady Hoby’s diary affirms God’s presence in all aspects of her life. An illustration of a woman’s regime of piety, Hoby’s diary provides a window into her world.

Comparatively, a much earlier letter from Anne Abott to Dame Anne Rokesby

⁹¹Hoby, 146, 156, 171, 176.

⁹²Hoby, 146.

⁹³Hoby, 198-99.

reveals Abott's belief that God determines the course of events in her life. In the following excerpt, Abott relays to Lady Rokesby the state of her affairs, while illustrating the trust and faith she has in God's will. She speaks assuredly:

For in goode faith we buy that we spend in our house, and I am faine to eate browne bread and drink small alle myselfe, and lives as hardly, as God knowes... I trust to God it shall be ammeded the next yeare, for I thank God, we had not a better croop toward this good whyle.⁹⁴

As in the case of Hoby, Anne communicates the deciding role that God played in the events of her life, and her confidence in what He has destined for her. Likewise, Elizabeth de Pole wrote to Sir Robert Plompton, expressing her sincerest faith that God will remedy his plight: "Hartely beseching the gud Lord that redemed me and all mankind upon the holy crosse, that he will of his benigne mercy vouchsafe to be your helper, and give you power to resist and withstand...."⁹⁵ As in Abott's letter, Elizabeth de Pole revealed a strong belief in the power of God to improve and rectify circumstances. Calling upon the Lord, according to Pole, provided the individual with strength and determination to withstand adversity. Mary Proud, in a letter to her mother, Lady Sprakeling, also revealed the role of piety and the ever-

⁹⁴"To my good Lady, Dame Anne Rokesby, be this delivered." Plumpton, 229. This letter is undated, but was possibly written during the reign of Henry VIII. Dame Anne Rokesby lived and died at Plompton; her husband was buried at Resby Church. (Stapleton, 229).

⁹⁵"To the right worshipfull, my full singular good master, Sir Robert Plumpton..." 26 Nov. 1501, 162-163. Elizabeth de Pole was the daughter and coheir of Sir Reginald Moton of Peckleton. Pole was the widow of Ralphe Pole of Radburne and died May 31, 1492 (Stapleton, 162-163).

presence of God within the lives of women. In this letter, Mary Proud expresses her gratitude at the recovery of a relative, "...shee har selfe very likely to dy for in har child bed shee got the bloody flexie which brought har very week by now thanks be to God shee is well recouard."⁹⁶ These excerpts display the inherent relationship between God and the lives of these Protestant and Catholic women; an unquestioning faith in God's plans was a prevalent feature of their mental world.

Evident in Lady Mildmay's autobiographical journal are her perceptions of God and the necessity of religion. Lady Mildmay emphasised a God who protected and safeguarded the believer from difficult situations. Particularly striking about her "apprehensions" of God were adjectives associated with the male-oriented roles of protector and preserver. God, some historians have argued, was a "surrogate spouse."⁹⁷ Pollock maintains that, "her piety and spiritual devotions may well have supplied Lady Mildmay with an emotional sactuary...."⁹⁸ Mildmay seems, unknowingly, to have displaced her feeling for an absent husband onto her relationship with God. Spending most of her married life alone, the feelings, the comfort and the protection of a husband, translated into a relationship with God.

⁹⁶"Mrs. Mary Proud to Lady Sprakeling" [date torn] The Oxinden Letters 1607-1642 ed. Dorothy Gardiner (London: Constable and Co., 1933),29. Mary (Sprakeling) Proud was the wife of the "gallant" soldier, William Proud or Prude. Lady Sprakeling (d. May 1627) was born Katherine Eastday or Esday, widow of Sir Adam Sprakeling(d. 1610), kt., of St. Paul's, Canterbury, and Ellington, Isle of Thanet (Gardiner,29).

⁹⁷Willen, Crawford and Blodgett argue that God was a substitute for a poor spouse.

⁹⁸Pollock, 67.

Her pious programme was carried out dutifully, as a wife would perform the appropriate duties within her marriage. Mildmay, not unlike Hoby, also sought comfort in her pious patterns. Comfortably, Mildmay communicated charged and complex emotions, while attempting to comprehend her relationship with God.

Spiritual meditations were a valid means of expression in a world where women were expected to be silent. A common theme in Mildmay's meditations was the power and glory of the Lord. God was her father, brother, husband, master, friend, doctor, saviour and teacher.⁹⁹ She asked for spiritual strength, illumination, and the ability to "walk, live and die unto thee. Let me continually taste, feel and find thee, retain, hold and keep thee in all things."¹⁰⁰ Mildmay used her senses as a mode of being with God and experiencing God's presence in her life. She colourfully described a spiritual scenario where she and others partake in a spiritual meal of sorts:

Open unto me my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled. I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in unto him and will sup with him and he with me. I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse. I gather my myrrh with my spice, I ate my honeycomb with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat friends, drink, and make you merry, welbeloved. Oh let my welbeloved kiss me with the kiss of his mouth, let him indue me with his love, and with the savor of his good ointments. And let his holy name be unto me a precious ointment poured out. And let my sanctified soul continually and wholly love and be in love with him.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹Mildmay, 75.

¹⁰⁰Mildmay, 74.

¹⁰¹Mildmay, 75.

The sensory images exhibited in these excerpts are similar to Aemilia Lanyer's Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum (1611). Both female authors, writing during the early Jacobean period, convey their devotional, spiritual expressions with powerful and sensually charged metaphors. Mildmay, as did Lanyer, used intriguing language to communicate her feelings of a spiritual liaison. The allusion to Christ as "welbeloved" and the ensuing image of "kissing his mouth" and "induing me with his love" evokes powerful images. It is apparent that Lady Mildmay read from the Song of Songs and used these expressions to comprehend her relationship with God.¹⁰² Terms of endearment such as "kissing," "welbeloved" and "embracing" were used to express the inherently intimate nature of Lady Mildmay's spiritual commitment to God. Moreover, Mildmay described the process of attaining knowledge of God as follows: "let me be weaned from thy milk and drawn from the breasts that thou mayest teach me knowledge." Caroline Walker Bynum's work on this subject for medieval Europe has shed light on the significance of the lactating Jesus image, which Mildmay refers to in the former extract. According to Bynum, this image was associated with a medieval tendency to connect Christ's feeding with female recipients; it also evoked the mother-Jesus

¹⁰²In the Biblical book, Song of Songs, the second verse states, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth for thy love is better than wine." 1:2 and "Because of the savor of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee." (1:3).

image popular in devotional writings.¹⁰³ Mother-Jesus was associated with the conventional maternal adjectives of nurturing, comforting, feeding and nourishing. Mildmay's image of the lactating Christ further explains her reference to "my sister" in her prayer entitled "the spiritual feast." Defining her relationship with God in this manner brought femininity to Christ. Her prayer, "The spouse of Christ," provides an erotic description of two lovers and their romantic encounter with one another; Mildmay details a liaison undeniably sexual in tone. Using the sensual language from the Song of Songs to convey wonderfully her spiritual liaison with God. As Warnicke has argued, "It was a world that belonged only to her and her spiritual lover, a world that no one else could enter or fully understand."¹⁰⁴ Warnicke's observation is true of any woman who wholly committed herself to a godly regime. Mildmay's language spoke to her need of intimacy, which she alone and individually understood. Her spiritual liaison with Christ, epitomised the love affair which Lanyer referred to in her Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum, wherein Lanyer invited prominent Protestant women to celebrate in a relationship with Christ.

Mildmay recounted two visions, one fearful and the other comforting. The first vision was of a struggle with the devil,

when I lay in my bed of sorrow and the correction of God was upon me for my sins,
then ugly shapes and a fearful view of hellish figures and monstrous apparitions

¹⁰³Bynum, Holy Feast, plate 25.

¹⁰⁴Warnicke, 68.

presented themselves unto my mind.¹⁰⁵

Lady Mildmay's experience was not unlike the experiences related in the funeral sermons discussed in chapter three, nor were they unlike Lady Margaret Hoby's perils in the face of temptation. What makes her accounts particularly interesting is that she called them visions, and these are described with a mystical quality, suggesting some continuity with Catholic medieval mystical literature. Possibly she was influenced in this direction by Thomas a Kempis' work, which she regarded so highly. In their own way, both Kempis and Mildmay searched for an intimate and individual relationship with God. In the midst of her struggle, Mildmay was able to focus, or "apprehend ... a deep impression, the sorrows of Christ's death, hanging upon the cross..."¹⁰⁶ Using the powers of meditation, Mildmay resisted and ultimately conquered temptation. Her choice of focus, Christ's mortified body, lends itself to the tradition of medieval female mystics, particularly Julian of Norwich, who chose the ravaged body of Christ as a means of stirring up her faith and making the said "fearful shapes" vanish.¹⁰⁷ In her second vision, Lady Mildmay described an experience where, after being tormented by evil, she felt the presence of Christ, the Holy Spirit and God, together, "and did vouchsafe to visit me in this my bed of sorrow. And that the eye of this...blessed

¹⁰⁵Mildmay, 87.

¹⁰⁶Mildmay, 87.

¹⁰⁷Mildmay, 88. Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism (New York: Penguin Books, 1955), 266.

trinity was upon me and his loving countenance was bent towards me....”¹⁰⁸ Here, Mildmay’s piety protected her against malicious evil spirits. Meditation upon the death and passion of Christ allowed her to regain control in the face of temptation. Applying her meditations, her faith and trust in God “moved these good motions in [her] spirit.”¹⁰⁹

Elizabeth Grymeston and Jane Grey also asked God for assistance with their faith and devotion: “conform my life, confirm my faith.”¹¹⁰ These women’s meditations reveal their perceptions of God. In several of Grymeston’s entreaties to her saviour she beseeched Him to, “direct my reason: regenerate my will: lead my desires, that I may seek thee: illuminate my understanding, that I may find thee: let my joy be in enjoying thee...”¹¹¹ God was Jane’s, “strong tower of defence.”¹¹² Supplications to God’s mercy, as her “Savior and Redeemer” were at the heart of Grymeston’s faith in God’s forgiveness. He was described in terms of his wrath, his sweetness, and his capacity for forgiveness and mercifulness. Jane and Elizabeth prayed for strength, patience and the ability to withstand temptation. Complicated feelings, confusing questions, all streamed through Jane’s prayer as she

¹⁰⁸Feeling the presence of God, Mildmay asked one of the people looking after her if they had seen anything around her, and they “saw nothing.” (Mildmay, 88).

¹⁰⁹Mildmay, 88.

¹¹⁰Grymeston, Chapter XI, E.

¹¹¹Grymeston, Chapter XI, E.

¹¹²Dudley, 99.

stumbled through the unanswerable questions faced with at the point of death in a state of anguish. Grymeston and Jane emphasised the necessity of believing in God in order to reap the fruits of redemption.¹¹³ Jane's faith is encapsulated in the following excerpt:

taking to me the shield of faith, wherewith I may be able to quench the fierie darts of the wicked; and taking the helmet of saluation, and the sword of the spirit,...that I may refer my selfe wholie unto thy will....¹¹⁴

Supplications to God revealed women who were wrestling with their faith. Female spirituality was complicated; although the devotee was ideally steadfast and faithful, there were also times when she was both doubtful and fearful. Searching within themselves for spiritual strength, these women emerged as devoted believers.

Diaries, autobiographical journals, devotional meditations and godly letters were vehicles for spiritual expression in early modern England. Such sources allow historians to become privy to the routines of pious women, Catholic and Protestant. Female networks wherein women exchanged ideas on sermons and the importance of the spiritual mentor to the development of women's piety in conjunction with the mutual spiritual relationship between husbands and wives, emerged as important venues in which prominent women, could explore, examine and express their piety. With the removal of the traditional spiritual institutions once available to women, such as nunneries, early modern English women

¹¹³Dudley, 98.

¹¹⁴Dudley, 100.

sought pious expression within the framework of household and community. Harriet Blodgett notes that, “ongoing writing reinforces a sense of one's importance as an entity, reading back helps piece out the design in that entity and redeclare its value.”¹¹⁵ Their male Protestant counterparts, John Angier, Samuel Ward and Richard Rogers,¹¹⁶ who also took part in the practice of diary writing, expressed greater introspection and greater depth of thought than found in Lady Hoby's diary. Although produced by a Puritan mindset, Hoby's diary was more of a record of faith within the context of daily activities than a format in which she explored her feelings and ideas. However, like the female writings examined above, the diaries of Ward and Roger's were a direct occasion for communicating a myriad of emotions, fears and concerns. As “records of piety” diaries, godly prayers and correspondence reveal the private face of women's piety. They reveal that at least these women internalised much of the message of the prescriptive and eulogistic literature of the age. But the sources also demonstrate the vitality, questioning and questful character of female piety, wherein God was contemplated in largely feminine settings and construed in terms meaningful to the women of Tudor-Stuart England.

¹¹⁵Blodgett, 75.

¹¹⁶Oliver Heywood's Life of John Angier of Denton ed. Ernest Axon, F.S.A. (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1937); Two Elizabethan Puritan Diaries by Richard Rogers and Samuel Ward ed. M.M. Knappen, (London: American Society of Church History, 1933).

Chapter 5

Piety and Martyrdom: A Case Study of the Marian Martyrs

John Foxe's The Acts and Monuments of these latter and Perilous Dayes (1563) provides historians with an understanding of what constituted female martyrdom and piety in Tudor-Stuart England. Strong Protestant women, who overtly defied societal prescriptions, sought religious freedom from what they perceived as a false and illegitimate Church. In previous chapters we saw women who conformed to appropriate societal values, including obedience and silence, Foxe's women martyrs overthrew these prescriptions in order to express their faith. Women such as Elizabeth Folkes, Katherine Hut and Rose Allin, armed themselves with the shield of religious devotion in order to deflect the popish Church. As we shall see in the accounts of these and other female martyrs, religion was fundamental to their existence; so important was their faith that they were all willing to sacrifice their lives for the Protestant cause. During Mary I's reign an estimated 275 persons were condemned to die for heresy; the tribunals of the church executed seventeen clergy, four bishops, fifty-five women and a large number of artisans, labourers and others of the lower ranks.¹ Retha Warnicke has demonstrated that in 1555, the first year of persecution, a mere two women died, while eighty men were burnt at the stake; however, between 1556 and 1557 the number of women martyrs gradually rose from twenty in 1556 to twenty-eight in

¹William Haller, Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation (London: Jonathan Cape, 1963), 44.

1557, while the number of male martyrs declined.² The deaths of these martyrs,³ spawned John Foxe's voluminous work. In 1563 Marian martyrs were real, identifiable people, not legends of past times.⁴ The Acts and Monuments, first appeared in English in 1563, and saw five sixteenth-century editions. A ninth edition in 1684 achieved the almost unprecedented estimated circulation of ten thousand copies in England.⁵ Foxe's book was decreed by law to be placed accessible for reading by the general public in cathedral churches, and it was ostentatiously displayed in the homes of the clergy; on the 'best seller list' from the sixteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century, Foxe's Acts and Monuments was an important part of the Protestant tradition,⁶ influential in both reporting and shaping early modern understanding of female martyrdom.

As was the case with early Christian martyrology,⁷ Foxe's account glorified martyrdom as the, "greatest of all human privileges and the readiest way to the supreme

²Warnicke, Women of the English Renaissance, 74.

³Etymologically "martyr" means "witness." According to Helen C. White, the term martyr was not exclusively used "for those who had already given their lives for their faith but for those who, having borne witness, were awaiting death, and even for those who, having confessed Christ, escaped the final penalty." cited in Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs (Madison, WI: Wisconsin UP, 1963), 4.

⁴Haller, 120.

⁵Warren W. Wooden, preface, John Foxe by Warren W. Wooden (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1983).

⁶Wooden, preface.

⁷For example in The Golden Legend, Eusebius' Church History, Tertullian's To the Martyrs.

good, the presence of God....”⁸ Capturing the Protestant’s triumph, Acts and Monuments chronicled the spiritual victory of the Protestants over their Catholic tormentors. Both men and women shared in this victory, but increasingly, as noted previously, women were the popular victims. Retha Warnicke’s study has raised the question: why were large numbers of women rejecting the option of recanting their beliefs? This refusal to recant meant that many females of the lower orders challenged the existing order, which consistently taught women to concede to authority.⁹ Foxe’s female martyrs provide a glimpse of the active piety and devotion of a range of women, unlike those of the elite depicted in commemorative works and funeral monuments. The purpose of this chapter is to understand the initiative of women who were devoted to their faith at any and all costs. Although these women are not representative of all English women, they do reflect a small, committed proportion of the population, and they were consistently held up for veneration over the succeeding century. We will examine the following issues: who were these female martyrs, in respect to their social positions, societal roles, and ages? Was there a “female subculture or network” which existed among condemned women martyrs in prison? How did Foxe depict their martyrdoms? And were there differences in treatment between his accounts of male and female martyrs?

The women Foxe depicted in his Acts and Monuments came from an assortment of

⁸Helen C. White, Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs (Madison, WI: Wisconsin UP, 1963), 10.

⁹Warnicke, 68.

social positions and marital states.¹⁰ In general, this was true of the accounts of male martyrs, some of whom were well-educated, others being simply lame old men from the lower orders. In their "quest for autonomy," women such as Peter Moon's wife were committed to God, transcending the restrictions of social and marital positions.¹¹ Devotion gave them the courage to leave their husbands and children.¹² The narratives were recounted because they told the stories of individuals committed to the Protestant cause. Foxe did not differentiate persons according to economic or social positions. He included detailed accounts of Joyce Lewes, a gentlewoman, and of her religious life before her martyrdom, and he chronicled the religious journey of Joan Waste, a poor blind woman.¹³ Katherine Hut and Joan Beach were both widows, while Elizabeth Thackvel, Joan Horns and Ellis Billerciay were maids. It is readily apparent that the majority of the female martyrs were from the lower orders of society. Foxe emphasised how these women reached the point of martyrdom, and their respective religious transformations. The blind Joan Waste learned Protestant principles by hearing homilies and sermons, while she learned passages from Scriptures by listening to people read from the New Testament.¹⁴ According to Foxe, she could readily recite sections of the New Testament. Joyce Lewes on the other hand, had a

¹⁰Foxe, 201.

¹¹Macek, 64.

¹²As in the accounts of Prest's wife and Benden's wife: Foxe, Acts ,503, 326.

¹³Foxe, 401;427.

¹⁴Foxe, 247.

spiritual advisor, John Glover, who assisted her in understanding the precepts of the Protestant faith.¹⁵ Lewes' Protestant transformation occurred when she heard about the devotion of one Laurence Saunders who suffered his martyrdom at Coventry.¹⁶ These women came from completely different social positions. None the less, Foxe recounted each of their spiritual journeys in similar fashion. What was emphasised was the universality of martyrdom. Martyrdom was the glue that united Protestants in their triumph over the papists, irrespective of social or economic positions.

In twentieth-century historiography, martyrdom is said to have given women a capacity for "self-identity and Christian empowerment."¹⁷ Although, we do not have many details about the lives of these women before martyrdom, their reputedly selfless deaths at the stake were certainly perceived at the time to be the apogee of their spiritual expression. If forced to recant, eventually, severely irked by their consciences, they revoked their recantations. Martyrdom for these women was depicted as the only solution and one frequently requiring defiance of social and marital normative behaviour. An adamant faith and a pious routine could empower a woman to reject her husband's authority for the sake of her religious beliefs.¹⁸ The female martyrs Foxe depicted were far from silent and

¹⁵Foxe, 401.

¹⁶Foxe, 401.

¹⁷Macek, 69.

¹⁸Crawford, 95.

obedient; instead they were strong spoken, defiant and eagerly awaited their martyrdom.¹⁹ Joyce Lewes repeatedly demonstrated her independence by attending mass, but performing all the rituals of the Catholic mass backwards.²⁰ It is important at this time to recall that in early modern England women occupied a subordinate role; they were expected to conform to the will of their husbands, care for their children and uphold social expectations. As discussed in relation to commemorative works and monuments, women were considered the “weaker vessel;” the defiant female was more of an exception than the rule. Ruth Kelso succinctly captured the role of the Renaissance woman: “obedience held a high place. It must indeed underwrite all other virtues, and it belonged as much to the wife as to the little child. A woman’s whole life was a lesson in submission to the will of another.”²¹ Yet, Foxe’s book exposed his readers to a different type of woman, one who cogently defied the concept that women must above all show her obedience to authority.

Scholars such as Anita and Eugene Weiner and Donald W. Riddle, have examined the sociological aspects of martyrdom with particular emphasis on the roles of the martyr and persecutor, the issue of social control and the dynamics of the relationship between

¹⁹There are several instances where females come before the bishop with strong conviction and an earnest desire to die for their faith. In one case a female martyrdom was delayed and she proved quite disappointed that she could not join her fellow believers in death. See the examples of Agnes Bongeor: Foxe, *Acts*, 420-423.

²⁰See the examples of Elizabeth Cooper, and Anne Moon: Foxe, *Acts*, 381, 225.

²¹Kelso, 44.

oppressor and oppressed.²² The Wieners have identified three basic elements to become a martyr: choice, suffering and conviction; a martyr, male or female, chose death rather than forsake their religious beliefs.²³ In Foxe's Acts and Monuments, the females and the males chose willingly and freely to suffer because of their strength and conviction in the Protestant faith. Women such as Elizabeth Folkes and Rose Allin were portrayed as suffering for a greater cause.²⁴ Illustrated in the relationship between the female martyrs and their persecutors was an inherent hostility on the part of the oppressor, in this case represented by the Catholic Church. Male and female Marian martyrs went before a hostile tribunal. Women martyrs were on a journey, which took them to a level of self-discovery and autonomy.²⁵ There is a striking difference between the accounts of male and female martyrdom. The chronicles of male martyrs were not relayed as compellingly as the martyrdoms of females. Accounts of women martyrs contained an added element of rebellion not present in the accounts of the male martyrs.

In addition to expressing their spirituality, women were also asserting themselves as

²²Eugene and Anita Weiner, The Martyr's Conviction: A Sociological Analysis (Atlanta, GA: Scholar's Press, 1990) and Donald W. Riddle, The Martyrs: A Study in Social Control (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1931) have written extensively on the sociological aspects of martyrdom, qualifying and identifying the ideas of persecution and social control as well as the conviction of the martyr.

²³Weiner, 9.

²⁴Foxe, 387, 391.

²⁵Macek, 63.

sovereign individuals.²⁶ Indeed, a general defiance and brashness characterised the accounts of these female martyrs as they moved from a submissive role to one of spiritual empowerment.²⁷ An unwillingness to comply with Catholic doctrine and a complete rejection of false, illegitimate authority was illustrated in their adamance against Catholicism. The women were placed before a group of (male) church officials, inquisitors and bishops, who accordingly questioned them on key Catholic doctrines such as the sacrament of the Eucharist, the power of the pope and the sacrament of confession. In all but a few instances, women refused to concede to these doctrines, leaving them but one option, the stake. Joan Horns, maid, "declared herself a true martyr and follower of Christ's testament."²⁸ The martyr's convictions were succinctly articulated during their respective examinations; they did not passively accept martyrdom.²⁹ Many of the women who were examined by Bishop Bonner, the bishop of London, made it clear that they would rather die suffering the flames of the stake than practice a faith which venerated idols. Their devotion to Protestantism acted as the armour that safeguarded them against the tribunal's blows. What enabled these women, in the face of these tribunals, to be recalcitrant? Like the martyrs of the early church, Foxe's martyrs were profoundly devoted to the championing of their religion and the pursuit of religious independence in the context of an oppressive,

²⁶Macek, 79.

²⁷Macek, 65.

²⁸Foxe, 143.

²⁹Weiner, 10-11.

illegitimate Church, corrupted institutions of state, and ungodly husbands. The message conveyed to early modern readers is that faith transcended socio-political and gender prescriptions.

Noteworthy, was the importance of Foxe's magisterial work in the domestic setting, "the spiritualised household." A tool used repeatedly in the education of women, Foxe's work established a Protestant standard for female devotion. As noted in previous chapters, Acts and Monuments was read by such women as Lady Grace Mildmay, Katherin Brettergh, and Lady Margaret Hoby, who taught her female servants to read from Foxe's book.³⁰ Lady Grace Mildmay rated Acts and Monuments as the third most important book for the devout woman. Mildmay maintained:

The excellent book of Acts and Monuments of the Martyrs, which containth a lively demonstration and testimony of the true church and their constancy in confession of and suffering for the sincere word and truth of God... with their true and inviolable faith in him sealed with their death and blood. Which is a most lively spectacle and example unto all posterities, even to the end of the world.³¹

As discussed in the first chapter, women were encouraged to read devotional literature and godly books because they fostered desirable qualities, including modesty and obedience. Women martyrs' constancy in their Protestant faith was glorified in Foxe's accounts. In earnest, the female reader was confronted with the dual nature of staunch women, who were neither silent nor obedient, but who were glorified for their devotion to Protestantism. If

³⁰Retha Warnicke "Lady Mildmay's Journal: A Study in Autobiography and Meditation in Reformation in England," Sixteenth Century Journal 20 (1989): 61; see above, p. 9.

³¹Mildmay, 70; see above, p. 9.

these women martyrs had followed prescribed behaviour, leaving their husbands and families would have been out of the question. They would have acquiesced to the wishes of authority, readily recanting their beliefs. Answering back defiantly to their examiners would never have been an option.

As seen in commemorative works and in diaries, a husband's role in the household was the universal symbol of the wider connotations of male authority in early modern English society. Male control over a woman was undoubtedly the norm. However, within Foxe's chronicles we are given the martyrdom of Prest's wife, "a certain poor woman and a silly creature,"³² burnt in the city of Exeter. According to Foxe, both her husband and children were "addicted to the superstitious sect of popery" and she was many times rebuked by them and driven to go to church, "to their idols and ceremonies."³³ The said Prest's wife became reviled by the practices of her husband and children and so prayed to God for comfort. She disobeyed her husband, left her children and ventured on her own for the sake of her religion. Her burning, as depicted in the accompanying engravings Foxe commissioned, portrays a seemingly older woman, in a devotional upright posture. She looks upward, as the flames consume her body. No pain, or emotion is expressed, only a silent stillness.³⁴ Mrs. Prest was an example of determination and steadfastness, as relayed in her

³²Foxe, 497.

³³Foxe, 497.

³⁴See Fig. 19. "The cruell burning of a woman at Exeter" appendix XXIX. As reproduced in Foxe, *Acts*, vol. VIII, 891.

account and in the visual representation of her martyrdom; social implications of her acts must have been great; nevertheless, this did not impede her decision. Foxe followed the account with the discussion of her eventual, but forced return to her family and her neighbour's accusation of heresy. At her examination, even after being granted liberty to leave with her husband, she continued to refuse his company.³⁵ Upon her return to court she was again charged for her belief and was sent back to prison to await martyrdom. The account of Prest's wife relayed the commitment of this one woman; "a simple poor creature" who was driven by her faith to forsake her husband and her children not just once, but twice. Regardless of the threats of the priests who examined her, and Foxe assured us that they were in fact "divers" in numbers, Prest's wife utterly defied them all, "Hard imprisonment, threatenings, taunts and scorns,"³⁶ notwithstanding.

The martyrdom of Edward Benden's wife, once again demonstrated to the readers the power of a female to disobey her husband because of her adamant faith. Edward Benden "willed her [his wife] to go the church; which she both then and elsewhere refused to do."³⁷ Consequently, he sent her to prison where she suffered great pains. Devotion to God provided women, even when faced with the authority of their husbands, with energy to stand independently -- they were presumably liberated from corrupted Catholic male domination. Women readers were not initially encouraged to leave their husbands; they were to show

³⁵Foxe, 501.

³⁶Foxe, 501.

³⁷Foxe, 326.

them the value of their own faith,³⁸ or to seek to be allowed to freely practice their devotion without being rebuked. The anger inherent in men at their inability to control women resonated throughout Foxe's accounts. Prest's wife was considered out of her mind by her examiner and husband because she refused to concede; she was released based on her supposed insanity. They must be "mazed"³⁹ women, why else would they refuse to obey? It is not difficult to see how these women were perceived as insane. They were sacrificing their children, homes, and reputations for faith. In short, "the weaker vessel when filled with the Holy Spirit is powerful to pull down strongholds."⁴⁰ These Protestant women were driven by their personal sense of spirituality to defy societal norms.

Particularly cogent was the second examination of three women: Katherine Hut, Joan Horns and Elizabeth Thackvel. In this compelling account, Foxe recounted the process of their questioning by church officials. Katherine Hut's response to Bishop Bonner was as follows:

... Katherine Hut, widow, standing before the bishop, boldly and constantly stood to that which she had said before, neither yielding to his fair promises, nor overthrow with his terror...who being required of the sacrament to say her mind, and to revoke herself unto the fellowship of the catholic faith, openly protested, saying, "I deny it to be God; because it is a dumb God, and made with men's hands." Wherein the good and faithful martyr of Christ firmly persisting, so received her sentence, being condemned of Bonner to the fire; which she with great constancy sustained by the

³⁸Foxe, 499.

³⁹Foxe, 499.

⁴⁰Roland H. Bainton, Women of the Reformation in France and England (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1973), 211.

grace and strength of the Lord, and did abide for the cause and love of Christ.⁴¹

Demonstrating a stern determination, and an iron will, Katherine Hut's story surely taught readers about constancy. Faced with the threats and terror of her persecutor, she was unwilling to compromise her faith. Her responses to the Bishop exposed readers to a woman who did not allow herself to lose sight of her beliefs. Katherine and her fellow female martyrs failed to concede to Bonner's "fair promises." The engraving of these women's martyrdoms reveals two women who appear oblivious to their fiery fates. An expressionless face, marked by a strong stance, portrays the central and left-sided figures. On the right an older female exudes exhaustion and sadness; this woman is seemingly less determined than the two women by her side, or, she has simply accepted her fate.⁴² Another martyr, Cicely Ormes, the wife of a worsted-weaver, was described in like manner: "The chancellor offered her, if she would go to the church and keep her tongue, she should be at liberty...but she told him she would not consent to his wicked desire...[she urged him to] do with her what he would..."⁴³ Notice that two things were required of Ormes: to re-unite with the community by returning to the parish church, and to "keep her tongue." Sharp-tongued women exasperated Tudor-Stuart patriarchy time and again.⁴⁴ Of course, once the Church and

⁴¹Foxe, 143.

⁴²See Fig. 20. "The martyrdom of three women," appendix XXX as reproduced in Foxe, *Acts*, 702.

⁴³Foxe, 428.

⁴⁴J.A. Sharpe, "Defamation and Sexual Slander in Early Modern England: The Church Courts at York," *Borthwick Papers* No. 58 (Heslington, York: York UP, 1980).

society embraced Protestantism, the circumstances permitting, even necessitating, independence disappeared. But the object lesson remained in print, to serve as a guide for any subsequent female dissenter or sectarian.

Protestant females would draw from and incorporate into their own experiences facets from these women martyrs, while realising the value of Hut's and Ormes' obstinacy. Although "a simple woman," implying her defencelessness, Cicely Ormes was described as "zealous in the lords cause."⁴⁵ Her visual depiction similarly conveyed her constancy.⁴⁶ Again, she too looks upward and stands upright with her arms crossed across her chest. The fire consumes her, but she appears unaffected by the flames. As in the case of the previous engraving, her image freezes, singly, her moment of victory. An absence of the crowds and bailiffs creates a distinctively individual moment, where she alone communes with her God. Joan Horns was described as having, "like firmness and Christian fortitude" and Elizabeth Thackvel was similarly portrayed: "no less strength in the grace of the Lord appeared...whose heart and mind the Lord had so confirmed in his truth, so armed with patience, that as her adversaries could by no sufficient knowledge of Scripture convince her affirmation."⁴⁷ *All* of these females revealed their capacity to remain steadfast in their faith under the intensity of social pressures. Appealing to a wide range of women, Foxe's inclusion of women of the

⁴⁵Foxe, 427.

⁴⁶See Fig. 21 "The burning of Cicely Ormes at Norwich" appendix XXXI as reproduced in Foxe, Acts, 853.

⁴⁷Foxe, 143.

lower ranks affirmed that an individual's devotion was not determined by their social status nor by their intellectual capacities.

Carole Levin has argued that these Marian female martyrs taught women how to behave: "The ideals for women in the Renaissance were basically the passive Christian virtues.... Foxe was certainly concerned with these Christian virtues for women; however, in certain ways his positive examples of strong women not only reinforced, but also modified this point of view."⁴⁸ True, Foxe's book was a guide, but it is questionable how effective it was in teaching women "appropriate behaviour," especially behaviour deemed appropriate by early modern English society. In fact, when we examine the actions of Foxe's women we find that many left their families, many were vocal and assertive in the presence of male authority, and many forswore their husbands. The image of the Renaissance woman as silent and obedient was shattered. This is of course painting an image of women with rather small brush strokes. Value was placed on steadfastness and constancy rather than obstinacy to authority. Widows, poor and wealthy women, were all committed to their faith. None the less, Foxe's book was expected to be on the reading lists of most, if not all, devout Elizabethan and early Stuart women.⁴⁹ Memorialising forever the voices of men and women, Foxe's monumental work brought to the forefront the urgency and great immediacy of these

⁴⁸Carole Levin, "Women in *The Book of Martyrs* As Models of Behavior in Tudor England," *International Journal of Women's Studies* 4 (1981):196.

⁴⁹Pollock, 54.

martyrs' deaths and the persecution of the Protestant church.⁵⁰ As a guide Foxe's book provided Protestant women with a first-hand account of a different mode of religious expression. Unlike the domestic role popularised in commemorative works, the crucial moral of Foxe's accounts of female martyrs was embedded in their intrinsic ability to maintain belief in the face of threats. Women such as Katherine Hut and Cicely Ormes gave Protestant women a public, assertive voice. The collective voices of these and other women martyrs articulated their steadfast commitment to the Lord and a willingness to suffer for a greater cause.

In several gruesome accounts Foxe described the horrific details of women forced to raise their children in prison.⁵¹ He recounts, as well, children who were martyred alongside their mothers. An awful account of the martyrdom of three women and an infant from the isle of Guernsey was relayed in tragic, dramatic language. According to Foxe, one of these three women was pregnant; when she began to burn, her belly "burst asunder by the vehemence of the flame, the infant, fell into the fire."⁵² Foxe reported that the child was then taken out of the flames, but the observing bailiff cast the infant back into the fire. The

⁵⁰White, 140.

⁵¹Foxe, 224. The prisons women were sent to were far from pleasant. In several of the accounts, Foxe relayed details about these places. In the story of Margery Austoo, we are told that she was sent to the bishop's prison, "...his dog-kennel; for it was, as is reported, under a pair of stairs." (Foxe, 418); in the report of Joan and her husband William, Joan and her infant were placed with thieves and murderers where it was damp and cold, (Foxe, 252). These women were not treated any different than the male martyrs.

⁵²Foxe, 230.

mother in Foxe's account was described as a "silly mother," who would rather sacrifice herself and her unborn child so as not to conform to Catholicism. At the same time, the sixteenth-century connotation of "silly" infers a helplessness,⁵³ which is in fact prevalent in the visual representation of these women. Moreover, Foxe seems to be remarking on the defencelessness of this pregnant woman who is unnecessarily being tormented. This image is indeed far from the monument of Lady Legh examined in an earlier chapter, who is depicted nursing her infant, cuddling it close to her in a protective stance. Foxe seems to be commenting on the selfishness of this mother, who being pregnant did not take greater precautions for her child. The account of the "martyrdom of John Horn and woman," articulated the tragic circumstances of a woman and her new-born child. Taken to prison and placed among thieves and murderers, she was driven to warming her child with the heat of her body; this did not sustain the poor child and consequently mother and child both died.⁵⁴ These accounts stressed the wicked cruelty and callousness of the Catholic persecutors. A horrific portrayal, the engraving of the "lamentable spectacle of three women" is, as the caption suggests, a spectacle. Not only does it successfully render the horrors of martyrdom, but it cogently encapsulates the ruthlessness of the tormentor, the Catholic Church.⁵⁵ Centrally placed, this dying mother with her child bursting from her belly, exposes her gory

⁵³The Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd ed. vol. XV, s.v. "silly." Silly was used especially to describe women and children who were helpless, defenceless.

⁵⁴Foxe, 252.

⁵⁵See Fig. 22. "A lamentable spectacle of three women...." appendix XXXII as reproduced in Foxe, Acts and Monuments, 747.

entrails and her nakedness. Arms outstretched, as though she were accepting and almost releasing herself from the chaos, crowds of bailiffs and bystanders watch with little remorse or emotion. This sheer callousness further emphasised the unfeeling nature of their oppressors. An equivalent to our modern day shock therapy, this image alongside the account would certainly capture the attention of its Protestant readers. What could be more offensive than the ruthless murdering of a mother and her child? How overpowering must be the faith of these women, empowered to suffer any familial depravation in the name of piety? The message intended by Foxe appears to be the overwhelming commitment of the female martyrs to their cause, willing to forsake all --- material comforts, family, reputation, life, and wellbeing of their children. One message which comes across from the women themselves is stubborn, persistent coping. When Joyce Lewes said the mass backwards she found a loophole which allowed her to exist, defiant. Prest's wife, the "silly" poor woman of Exeter, attempted to side-step the demand she return to her idolatrous husband, by declaring she had taken Christ as her "heavenly spouse."⁵⁶ These women were seeking survival strategies which manipulated societal prescriptions in their own interests. Or, perhaps they, as in the case of Mrs. Prest, were seeking a way to harmonise their social conditioning with the new-found faith.

Willen, Crawford and Macek in her work on female martyrs, identify the concept of a female subculture and network, this sense of community, was also prevalent in Foxe's

⁵⁶Foxe, 498.

accounts of female martyrs. In previous chapters a sense of female community was seen in Lady Margaret Hoby's diary and in Lady Grace Mildmay's spiritual autobiography. Female networking emerged in the sources as an educational exchange of ideas on sermons and biblical passages. A united female community as presented in the lives of women martyrs was both a forum for instruction and support. On several occasions, women prayed and invoked the name of God together just before going to the stake.⁵⁷ Their shared commitment to Protestantism was illustrated time and again. The story of a gentlewoman, Agnes Wardell from the town of Ipswich, illustrated the existence of support and faith networks between females. Returning from hiding to her home, Agnes went to sleep. While she slept, a group of papists came to imprison her because she "was at defiance with their Romish trash."⁵⁸ A "faithful maid," Agnes' servant, helped her mistress to hide and eventually flee from her persecutors.⁵⁹ Foxe's narrative displayed the impregnable commitment between servant and master, as well as the shared support between two women devoted to the Protestant faith. Even when faced with their deaths at the stake, women in the surrounding crowds, and friends of the martyrs, showed their approval and encouragement. Foxe maintained that at the martyrdom of Elizabeth Folkes and five others: "standers-by which were, by estimation, thousands, cried generally almost, 'The Lord strengthen them; the Lord comfort them; the

⁵⁷Alice Mount and Rose Allin, "after they had made their prayers, and were joyfully tied to the stakes, calling upon the name of God...." (Foxe, 392).

⁵⁸Foxe, 219.

⁵⁹Foxe, 218-219.

Lord pour his miseries upon them...”⁶⁰ Prest's wife received friends and persons who sought her counsel. According to Foxe, the wife of Walter Raleigh came to visit Prest's wife in the hopes of hearing her wisdom; she left convinced.⁶¹ Whether it was assisting a fellow female in matters of the soul, or whether it was support granted in times of difficulty, in these accounts, women supported one another. Alice Benden, “while she was in prison she practised with a prison-fellow of hers, the wife of one Potkin, to live both of them with twopence halfpenny a day to try thereby how well they could sustain penury and hunger.”⁶² On the occasion of Agnes Bongeor's deferred martyrdom, she obtained the comfort of another prisoner, Margaret Thurston, who was also condemned to die.⁶³ When these women went to their fiery fates, they reportedly joined hands, fell upon their knees, and prayed to God. Joyfully, they “gave up their souls, spirits and lives unto the hands of the Lord.”⁶⁴ At the martyrdom of one Mistress Joyce Lewes, Foxe reported that after she had prayed, she took a drink out of a cup, raised it and said, “I drink to all of them that unfeignedly love the gospel of Jesus Christ, and wish for the abolishment of papistry.”⁶⁵ Upon finishing her toast, which resonates with sacramental overtones, a great number of women from the town drank

⁶⁰Foxe, 392.

⁶¹Foxe, 501-502.

⁶²Foxe, 326.

⁶³Foxe, 423.

⁶⁴Foxe, 423.

⁶⁵Foxe, 404.

with her.⁶⁶ Foxe noted that these women, were consequently made to perform open penance in the church for their action.⁶⁷ Lewes' symbolic act celebrated her sense of the Protestant community: a community of the faith which transcended parish and family but retained its essential feminine quality.

All the descriptions Foxe provided with respect to female martyrdom, were heroically recounted. Women martyrs for the most part died honourably as they willingly embraced their fate (except in those instances where women martyrs were unjustly left to die in prison or forced to care for their children in unacceptable surroundings). Cicely Ormes, was burnt the twenty-third of September 1557; when coming to the stake amidst a crowd of 200 people, Ormes made an emotional profession of faith. Upon approaching the stake "...she laid her hand on it, and said, 'Welcome the cross of Christ ... Then after she touched it with her hand, she came and kissed it, and said, 'Welcome the sweet cross of Christ. "⁶⁸ Kissing and denoting the stake as "sweet cross" symbolised her deep-felt pride in her choice of martyrdom, recognising the passion and death of Christ, the greatest of martyrs. Embracing her destiny, Cicely Ormes was accepting of her death; she was not a helpless victim. Ormes' representation in Acts and Monuments was glorious, spirited, and strong. Similarly, Elizabeth Folkes was condemned for believing that the bread in the sacrament of the altar was nothing but bread. She rejected the authority of the priest in the sacrament of

⁶⁶Foxe, 404.

⁶⁷Foxe, 404.

⁶⁸Foxe, 429.

confession and the power of the pope; "she answered that she would neither use nor frequent none of them from the bottom of her heart and all such trumpery."⁶⁹ At the end of her examination, one of the bishops was moved by her adamant faith, "Dr. Chedsey wept that the tears trickled down his cheeks."⁷⁰ The subsequent martyrdom of this twenty-year-old maid is described as follows:

... Elizabeth Folkes, when she had plucked off her petticoat, would have given it to her mother (which came and kissed her at the stake, and exhorted her to be strong in the Lord); but the wicked there attending, would not suffer her to give it. Therefore, taking the said petticoat in her hand she threw it away from her, saying, 'Farewell, all the world! Farewell Faith! Farewell Hope!' and so taking the stake in her arms, said, 'Welcome love!'⁷¹

Happily embracing the stake, Folkes triumphed over her persecutors, The last words of this martyr were surely inspiring, and profound to onlookers and female readers. For a woman who was taught to be silent, modest and above all subservient, Folkes demonstrated an ability to transcend the limitations of social attitudes. Folkes was a devout believer, committed to her faith. Her mother, who is described in the account as kissing her daughter at the stake, illustrated the support a mother owed her daughter.

Watching crowds were effectively described in Foxe's accounts. On two occasions the crowds are described as lamenting the loss of these dedicated believers, or some were simply amazed at the martyrs' cheerfulness and peacefulness. At twenty years of age, Rose

⁶⁹Foxe, 390.

⁷⁰Foxe, 390.

⁷¹Foxe, 392.

Allin, a maid and daughter of Alice Mount, walked to her prison cell, "where she sang with great joy, to the wonder of many."⁷² We also learn from this account that Rose Allin and other Protestant martyrs were, "in continual reading, and invoking the name of God."⁷³ Hence, women continued to practice their faith in a community with other devoted believers. Rose Allin, Alice Mount and others were joyfully tied to the stakes, "calling upon the name of God, and exhorting the people earnestly to flee from idolatry, suffered their martyrdom with such triumph and joy, that the people did no less shout thereat to see it...."⁷⁴ The theatrical element is obvious. These are models of strong women in a public forum. Subsequent bonfires on the anniversary date of Queen Elizabeth's accession to the throne and pope-burning processions would later claim the public space of England's streets and market square for a Protestant culture;⁷⁵ these martyrs were already attempting to subvert the ritual execution, and claim the public space for themselves. If Foxe is to be believed, they did so with some success.

"Silly", "weak", "simple" and "imbecilic" were a few of the adjectives Foxe used to depict his female martyrs.⁷⁶ There is an inherent contradiction in Foxe's descriptions of

⁷²Foxe, 391.

⁷³Foxe, 391.

⁷⁴Foxe, 392.

⁷⁵David Cressy, Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England (London: Weindenfeld and Nicholson, 1989).

⁷⁶Foxe, 326.

women martyrs. As revealed previously, female martyrdom was expressed in glorified terms; indeed, there was no hesitation in raising these women to the highest levels. However, Foxe also described them in less than flattering terms as the helpless victims of oppressive male figures. On the occasion of the martyrdom of seven martyrs burnt at Canterbury, the text bewailed, "What heart will not lament the murdering mischief of these men, who for want of work do so wreak their time on *silly poor women, whose weak imbecility the more strength it lacked by natural imperfection, the more it ought to be helped, or at least pitied...*"⁷⁷ Foxe sees these women as the defenceless and innocent victims of Catholic oppressors. Having said this, Foxe then commented: "but blessed be the Lord...who supernaturally hath endued from above such weak creatures with such manly stomachs and fortitude."⁷⁸ His compliment to these female martyrs was doubly back handed. First he thanked God for miraculously giving these women such "manly" fortitude; apparently it was unnatural for women to possess such qualities. Second, Foxe praised them, using male-oriented adjectives. The account was set up to seem miraculous, or unusual, reflecting the common belief that women were naturally the "weaker vessel," surely incapable of possessing such manly attributes unaided by the Holy Spirit. Their persecutors were not only oppressive, they were wasting time with such ignorant and unlearned women. Foxe maintained that even the bishops who examined Elizabeth Thackvel and Katherine Hut

⁷⁷Foxe, 326. The italics are mine; Macek, 70.

⁷⁸Foxe, 326.

accepted: "the simple ignorance of these women [which] had more need to be instructed, than they to be burned."⁷⁹ Patriarchal views were clearly not the preserve of any one side in the religious dispute. Yet, in the same breath, Foxe relayed their honourable deaths. Using the language of chauvinism, Foxe highlighted the strength of these Protestant women. Considering the patriarchal climate in England during the early modern period, it would not be surprising if Foxe were in fact mocking the efforts of these male oppressors for attempting to control the wiles of these brash, but devoted women.

Further evidence was given of this masculine impatience in the account of Peter Moon and his wife. Anne Moon was considered a "perilous woman."⁸⁰ When Moon was told to command her to come before the bishop, Moon answered, "...I am able to command her to come before my lord, as ye are to command the worst boy in your house."⁸¹ Indeed, women were depicted as wily, uncontrollable creatures. Foxe's accounts of male martyrs, in contrast, were tempered. In the reports of Julius Palmer and Edmund Allin he relayed the events leading to their deaths and their subsequent martyrdom with less emotion and less conviction.⁸² After relaying the details of Edmund Allin's examination Foxe concludes the account as follows: "And thus was he carried to prison, and afterwards burned."⁸³

⁷⁹Foxe, 142.

⁸⁰Foxe, 223.

⁸¹Foxe, 224.

⁸²See the examples of Julius Palmer and Edmund Allin: Foxe, *Acts*, 201, 321.

⁸³Foxe, 325.

Considering the way Foxe depicted the martyrdom of these women, one must believe that he had the utmost respect for what they did. Perhaps the pejorative adjectives were employed out of frustration and anger that women had to suffer at the hands of individuals such as “bloody Bonner” the Bishop of London. Anger and impatience characterise the tone of Foxe’s narrative. At the same time, the reading public of Tudor-Stuart England was provided with an object lesson that God worked through the least likely individuals, and that everyone could share in his glory: “As all God works are wondrous, in calling of all men to confirm his truth....”⁸⁴

Foxe’s inclusion of the engravings of his martyrs was instrumental in furthering his message. In the original editions, illustrations took up most of the page; one of the reasons for the commissioning of these images was that they captured the final moment, a memorable scene,⁸⁵ which cemented the acts of the martyrs forever in the minds of its readers. Particularly helpful to those who were illiterate, the plates spoke to their viewers of the deaths of fellow Protestants. Engravers understood the importance of focusing their viewers’ attention on the martyr’s moment of death; “the union of fire, flesh and the spirit were assimilated compellingly in the visual representations of Foxe’s chronicles.”⁸⁶ It is difficult to surmise what specific message these images communicated for female piety or devotion. The image of the twenty-two persons on their way to London is a one-dimensional

⁸⁴Foxe, 201.

⁸⁵Haller, 123.

⁸⁶Wooden, 43.

depiction.⁸⁷ Sadness is expressed in the martyrs' faces. It is not a dramatic or profound portrayal; nonetheless, it captured their willingness to sacrifice themselves for the greater cause. A diversity of women and men who chose martyrdom is revealed in this engraving. On the far right hand-side is a youthful female, while others are depicted as middle aged along with the stooped and elderly. Neither the male or female figures reveal anything specifically pious or devout in their facial expressions, body language or their postures. Silence permeates the image. The appeal of martyrdom is illustrated in this image dominated by the sufferers themselves, where men and women of apparently substantial means were sacrificing their lives.

Turning our attention to the engravings of individuals, there is a noticeable difference. For example, the image of Rose Allin having her hand burnt by Sir Edmund Tyrel as she fetched water for her sick mother.⁸⁸ She stands directly in the middle, sharing the focus with her persecutor, Edmund Tyrel. Between the two, placed subtly on the wall, is an image of three martyrs at the stake --- foreshadowing Rose Allin's own martyrdom and the glory of fellow martyrs gone before her. Particularly interesting is that the centre of attention in this image is shared, unlike previous images where the martyrs took up the whole of the image. Edmund Tyrel looms over his victim in his official attire. Rose Allin on the other hand, is shorter and dressed in a simple work frock. The expressions on their faces

⁸⁷See Fig. 23. "Twenty-two godly and faithful christians apprehended and brought up to London" appendix XXXIII as reproduced in Foxe, *Acts*, 307.

⁸⁸See Fig. 24. "The burning of Rose Allin's hand by Sir Edmund Tyrel as she fetched

are noteworthy. Edmund Tyrel has a devious grin on his face and appears determined to break Rose Allin's steadfastness. Three bailiffs look bewildered and have expressions of disbelief; the one on the right hand side standing closest to Rose Allin seems to be holding back the other bailiff or making a move to intercede. This is the scene of Edmund Tyrel's forced entry into Rose Allin's home. They have come to take Rose Allin, Alice Mount her mother and her father to Colchester to be examined because they are not practising the Catholic faith. Tyrel has just instructed Rose to counsel her parents to be better Catholics. She refused to acquiesce. Tyrel, in his wicked rage, burns Rose Allin's wrist, to show his control over her. Rose is depicted quietly suffering the pain. She stands undisturbed and unshaken by Tyrel's harassment. Tyrel appears to be more frustrated and angered than his victim, demonstrating who in actual fact had control of the situation. What is interesting about this image is that it freezes the moment where Rose Allin triumphed over her tormentor. The illiterate person seeing this image would easily identify the crucial message being conveyed. The Catholic Tyrel is a symbol of male Catholic authority, attempting, with no success, to control this strong-willed Protestant female. Rose Allin expresses patience, strength, and wilfulness so popular among the Marian martyrs. Although she stands with her oppressor in the centre, she nevertheless continues to stand out because of the inherent differences in her attire and expression of patience. The frustration and anger which Tyrel exudes ran through the written account, while permeating the visual representation.

water for her sick mother" appendix XXXIV as reproduced in Foxe, Acts, 385.

Off to the left side of the engraving, we see Alice Mount ill in bed and her husband kneeling by her bedside, engaged in prayer. The two remind the viewers why Rose Allin had her hand burnt. Foxe reported that Rose Allin could have easily hit Tyrel over the head with the pot in her right hand, but she chose not to do so. Instead, she chose to suffer the pains imposed on her. Irrespective of Rose Allin's dress, size or gender, the image speaks of the intrinsic strength of this Protestant female; she was not the victim of Edmund Tyrel's frustration, but rather the victor. In this visual image --- controlled by the presumably male, Protestant, engraver --- the angry, obstreperous woman of the original narrative accounts collected and edited by Foxe is wholly absent. Allin is steadfast, but silent and patient. She was apprehended in the course of fulfilling a filial duty, not in rebellion against family or husband. She submits to punishment. She is, in short, the model woman of the new Protestant regime in England.

The engraving of the burning of Archbishop Cranmer is very different from that of Rose Allin's.⁸⁹ Thomas Cranmer's martyrdom was portrayed with greatness and glory. The strength of their convictions made Rose Allin and Thomas Cranmer equal, and each withstood the flames with fortitude. Cranmer, and the fire which consumed him are the central focus of the portrayal. A multitude of people surrounds him, witnessing his public, not private, sacrifice. The event is spectacular. Hovering over his head are the words, "Lord receive my spirit," and these were his last words before being completely consumed by the

⁸⁹See Fig 25. "The burning of Cranmer; with his hand wherewith he subscribed, first thrust into the fire" appendix XXXV as reproduced in Foxe, *Acts*, 90.

other willing martyrs served. What is distinctive in his stance? Cranmer is openly defiant, stretching the right hand, with which he previously signed his recantation, into the fire. The left is raised dramatically as he speaks. Both Cranmer and Allin are in control of their situation, but the control is of a different nature. Cranmer as the learned theologian is assigned a voice and dramatic movement. Allin is assigned the qualities of quiet forbearance.

A glorious depiction of group martyrdom was contained in the scene of the burning of thirteen martyrs at Stratford le Bow.⁹⁰ Again, the image does not specifically focus on one single martyr, but a collective group --- eleven of which were men and two women. According to Foxe, "the eleven men were tied to three stakes and the two women loose in the midst without any stake; and so they were burnt in one fire, with such love to each other, and constancy in our Savior Christ, that it made all the lookers-on to marvel."⁹¹ The women in the crowds seem to be calling out to the martyrs. The faces of the crowd are sullen; a few seem angry. One woman is defiantly pushing forward, arms outstretched. Another female martyr appears to be waving farewell to one of the crowd members. The image is packed and busy; there is action in every nook and cranny of this engraving. A diversity and wide range of people is represented. Every person is in motion, or reacting. The engraver has successfully captured three levels of action. First, there are the centrally placed martyrs with

⁹⁰See Fig. 26. "The burning of Thirteen Martyrs at Stratford le Bow" appendix XXXVI as reproduced in Foxe, *Acts*, 154.

⁹¹Foxe, 154.

their respective preparations for death; second, there is the presence of the crowd looking upon and witnessing the martyrdom of these thirteen; and, lastly, the bailiffs or keepers are preparing the faggots and controlling disruptive, emotional crowd members. There is no question that the martyrs are the focal point of a viewer's attention. How are the female martyrs depicted in this particular engraving? Simply, there does not appear to be one mode of portraying female martyrs. One cannot determine that male or female martyrs were depicted differently. The concern was placed on communicating the sacrifice of the martyrs. Rose Allin and the females in the group martyrdom were all reaching and subsequently achieving the same goal — victory and triumph for their Lord. We can look specifically at this martyrdom and isolate the individual heroic act, as in the case of the martyrdom of Rose Allin, but doing so would take away from the importance of the group.

The martyrdoms Foxe chronicled in his Acts and Monuments provide a glimpse into the portrayal of earnest faith and constancy of Protestant women of all economic and social positions during the early modern period. Although Foxe's book was recommended to female Protestants, the women he depicted were distinct from the models of female devotion encountered in the prescriptive and devotional literature examined earlier in this study. Women martyrs were essentially strong, defiant and high-spirited. They defied the Renaissance notion that women should be obedient and silent. Strong words and actions characterised the unwillingness of these women to conform to illegitimate male authority, as they, in twentieth-century language, journeyed from a state of submission to one of

autonomy.⁹² Leaving their husbands and families, while compromising their bodily safety in prison, female martyrs did not yield to threats or false promises. Within their supportive communities and networks in prison or in their last moments before death, women martyrs showed their commitment to themselves, their fellow martyrs and the Protestant faith. Champions of Protestantism, women such as Elizabeth Folkes, Joyce Lewes and Rose Allin embraced their fiery fates, defiant symbols of the rejection of Catholic authority. Their journeys transcended boundaries of gender, economics or social positions.⁹³ In many instances religious conviction led them to abandon familial ties or obligations. Through martyrdom, women articulated their devotion and piety. Depictions of women martyrs in the engravings Foxe commissioned created a visual representation which reinforced the accounts. The image of Rose Allin captured the essential and final moment of the Protestant's triumph over her tormentor. Not unlike the male martyrs in Foxe's accounts, women proved themselves capable of withstanding all degrees of pain and torture; surely these women were not the weaker vessels. Although Foxe reported traits which were seemingly male, a woman's fortitude and her dedication served to illustrate that piety and devotion were integral to a woman's being. Radical expressions of commitment, martyrdom necessitated that Protestant women found a way of overcoming early modern societal norms, while attempting to define themselves in a patriarchal society. Ultimately a devotional

⁹²Macek, 65.

⁹³Macek, 69.

work, Acts and Monuments, was to be read by all virtuous women. Within the fabric of the text, images and accounts spoke to the importance of religious constancy. Foxe's chronicles of wily uncontrollable women taught their female readers not to behave wily or uncontrollably, but, rather, to be dedicated to their faith, even in the face of death. Where Foxe spoke of "mazed" women, engravers commissioned to depict martyrdoms portrayed females in light of socially accepted qualities. In the face of an illegitimate, false Church, women at the risk of losing all proved themselves just as determined as their male counterparts, but contemporaries viewed their martyrdoms as more flamboyant, more impressive, and more noteworthy.

Chapter 6

Conclusion: The Piety and Devotion of Early Modern Women Defined?

The piety and devotion of women can indeed be delineated; however, the leanings of historical sources and their availability determines which segment of the female population will be observed. An uneven distribution of materials has determined that the women of the middling to upper orders of early modern society are the subjects of this study. Therefore it is important to note that the women examined herein are not necessarily representative of all English women. Foxe's Acts and Monuments portrays an assortment of Protestant women from varying social degrees, but, for the most part, sources were either directed towards a literate female group or were written by women of some substance. Evidence presented here has provided a rendering of female piety dependent on a woman's social status, education and devotion. Moreover, although early modern English women's devotion and piety has been examined through extensive amounts of conduct, devotional and commemorative literature, these sources were predominantly male authored and reflective of prescriptive values. Being pious and devout, as defined by societal standards, meant that a woman conducted herself according to appropriate behaviour: she was charitable to the poor and needy, catechised her children and servants in the true faith, obeyed and respected her husband and practiced a godly routine. Within the household setting, women such as Hoby and Mildmay brought their spiritual expressions to their pious regimes. The private renditions contained within spiritual diaries, autobiographical journals, godly correspondence and personal meditations, reveal a practical application of the virtues lauded in the prescriptive literature. Obviously, at least some women read and digested the messages being

communicated in conduct and commemorative works. Furthermore, as illustrated in Mildmay's journal, women also exhorted other females to adopt a pious regime. As a mode of religious expression, the godly routine brought them a sense of worth in society, a society where women were not given the access to the formal practices of religious worship which had existed in medieval Europe. Religion was clearly crucial to at least some women, giving them a venue through which they could express themselves and make sense of their existences.

Relayed through the prescriptive literature of conduct books and the funeral orations was the inherent importance of the worshipful virtues a woman obtained through a godly regime. In practicing such regimented routines, they acquired a sense of religion which played an important role in their lives. In most cases, a woman's schedule and daily routine paralleled their devotional practices. Evidence of this inseparability is highlighted throughout the various entries of Hoby's diary, which records charitable acts, private meditation and catechizing servants. Household piety practiced alongside and within day-to-day household duties was reinforced in early modern epitaphs, funeral orations and eulogies. Certainly, a godly routine created for women a legitimate mode for communicating their spirituality within the household setting.

The issue of continuity and change during this period is important. Although women were largely restricted to the Protestant household in the practice of their piety and devotion, the language in various spiritual works contained nuances of the language of female medieval mystics. Women, although dedicated Protestants, conveyed their spirituality through a language which encompassed not the doctrine of Protestantism so much as a language which reflected a woman's spiritual needs, doubts and joys --- a language particularly relevant to a female worshipper. Catholicism and Protestantism

were the contexts for expression, but their theology was not necessarily the vehicle of expression. Women were not restricted to the language of doctrine, nor to the ideology of their religion. Indeed, theology is of modest significance in female devotional works. The emphasis is placed firmly upon faith, and the image constructed is of women simply and honestly relaying their spirituality via a personal mode.

Prior to the Reformation women were able to come together in the beguine communities and in the more institutional setting of the convent where they expressed their spirituality in a sanctioned environment recognized by their church. The Protestant Reformation terminated all such institutions. Nevertheless, as revealed in the martyrs' accounts, and in the diaries and godly correspondence, after the Reformation women continued to come together, often in networks to support one another in their spiritual pursuits. Such networks were not official or institutional, but in many ways they satisfied the need for a feminine mode of worship and celebration of God. Within the Protestant or Catholic environments of these informal unions, women exchanged their ideas, prayers, meditations and reading lists. Thus, the disappearance of the conventional Catholic institutions did not impede women from congregating in female-centred religious surroundings.

Before the Reformation it was not uncommon for women, such as Catherine of Siena or Catherine of Genoa, to rely heavily upon the counsel and advice of a priest. Raymond of Capua, Catherine of Siena's confessor, provided her with spiritual consolation in times of despair and spiritual comfort. Protestantism diminished the capacity of priests, but ministers were often involved in the daily spirituality and pious regimes of wealthier Protestant women. The godly correspondence of Edward Dering and the spiritual advisors whose letters were included in John Foxe's Acts and Monuments

demonstrated the existence of important liaisons between Protestant women and ministers. Lady Hoby's spiritual advisor, Mr. Rhodes, seemingly played a significant role in the development of her religion. He instructed her in matters of faith and comforted her in times of doubt. The important role of spiritual advisors did not diminish the role of the husband in counseling and instructing wives in religion. Husbands, as heads of Protestant households were expected to take part, alongside their wives, in the practice of a regulated spiritual programme. Hoby's diary demonstrated Mr. Hoby's involvement in her day-to-day pious regime: he attended church services and read from the Bible with her. Husbands and spiritual advisors replaced priests of the medieval period, but once again, although women of the English Reformation were largely limited to religious expression within the household sphere, they found outlets and venues to develop and express their religiosity.

The changes which ensued with the Reformation changed the public face of women's piety and devotion. On the surface, women were restricted to the household setting for spiritual expression; convents, veneration to the Virgin Mary and other female saints, as well as the spiritual relationships with parish priests were exchanged for Protestant ministers, female networks and an intimate meshing of household piety and household duties. Historical sources, whether extracted from the pre or post Reformation period, reveal that the essential concern women had was an overwhelming need or desire to understand their personal relationship with God. These new vehicles -- subscribing to a godly regime, talking or corresponding with other females, having a spiritual liaison with a minister or priest -- replaced the pre-Reformation venues which existed during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, but they did not alter a woman's desire to develop her relationship with God. The more prominent medieval mystics used their spirituality

to commune with their God, whereas Protestant women implemented a godly regime to communicate their spirituality. The mechanics of spirituality were essentially the same.

A sensory language was used by both Protestant women and Catholic medieval female mystics to communicate their devotion to God. Lady Mildmay's and Aemilia Lanyer's apprehensions of God were relayed in intimate terms; words associated with food imagery, images related to "spiritual feasts," and banquets, and the language of eroticism and sensuality were employed in order to convey their feelings of devotion. Certainly, implementing such an intimate language revealed the perceptions these women had of their relationships with God. Particularly intriguing, Mildmay and Lanyer's modes of expression paralleled images, motifs and themes within the vitae of the European medieval female mystics. Such similarities suggest that spiritual expression did, indeed, "cross religious boundaries."¹ Women, regardless of their religious inclinations, communicated in terms which defined their individual relationship with God. This shared mode of spiritual expression certainly attests to Willen and Crawford's assertion that contemplating God transcended religious doctrine. Although doctrine played a role in defining the religious context of a woman's expression, ultimately how she relayed her devotion was dependent on her perceptions of piety and devotion.

Diaries and journals are particularly useful in determining the role of religion in a early modern English woman's life. Lady Margaret Hoby and Lady Grace Mildmay stress the intrinsic need to practice a pious routine; Hoby's diary records her daily routine, punctuated by both pious and household duties, and stresses the symbiotic nature

¹Crawford, 90.

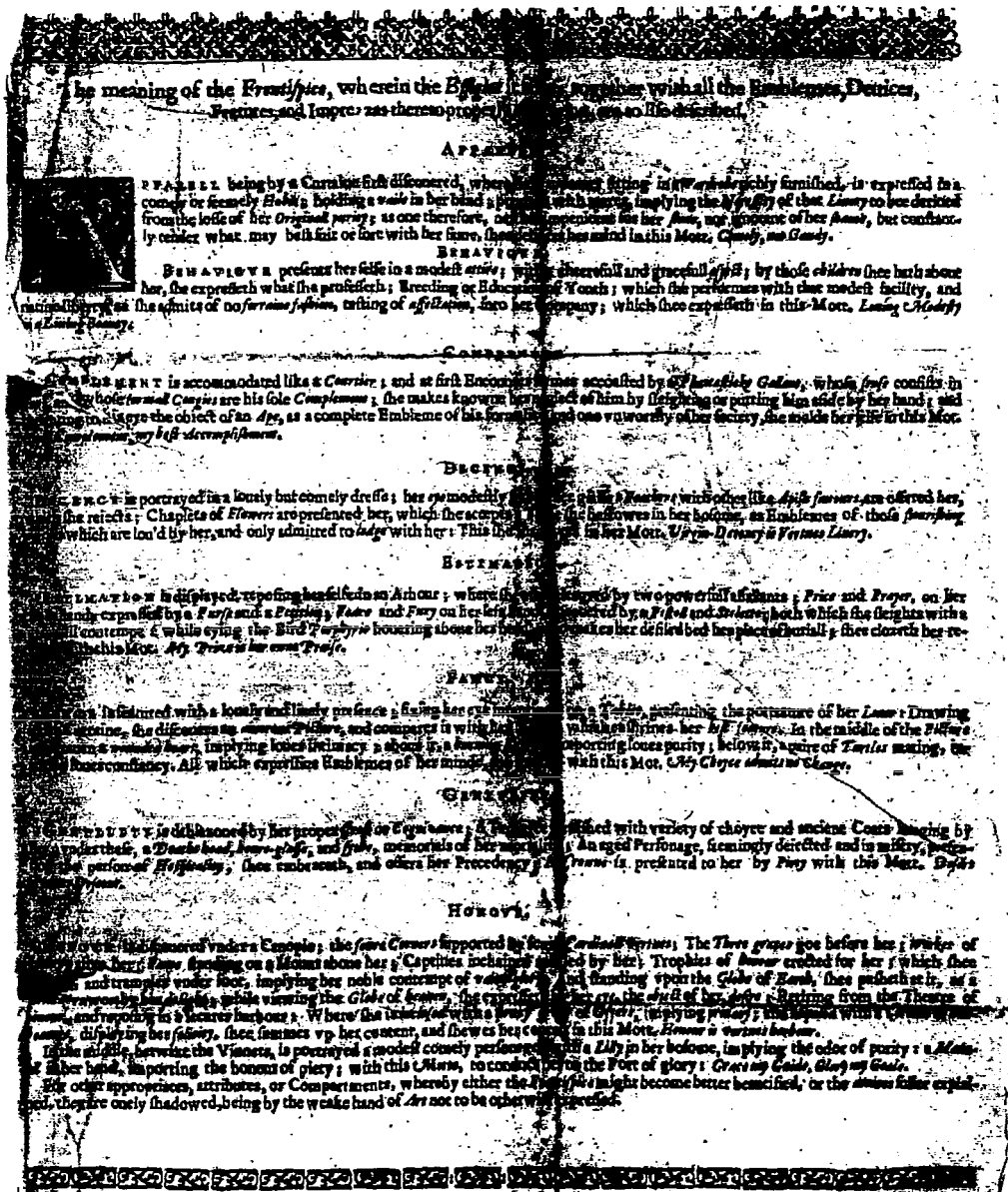
of the household and a woman's religion. Identified within the prescriptive and the practical literature, are two prevalent spheres within which women practised their piety and devotion to God: household and community. Within the context of the household women educated and catechised children and servants, received godly counsel from spiritual mentors, practised, within their closets private meditation and prayer. In the public forum, women attended church, heard sermons, discussed religious texts, corresponded with other godly women and performed acts of charity. The public sphere consisted of extending piety beyond the household and into the community; attending to the needs of the sick and the relief of the poor were necessary outward, public manifestations of female piety. Within these two spheres of religious expression, pious women found a means through which they could readily articulate their spirituality. They afforded women the opportunity to venture upon a life dedicated to a godly regime, while maintaining the responsibilities incurred within home and parish. Emphasis was placed on the integral and intrinsic nature of piety within a woman's daily life. This achieved two functions. First, it made piety appear to be an achievable and realistic goal. Second, it configured female piety as performing a valuable social function. Within the prescriptive literature the social utility of female piety was clear: it made for a better woman and for a better society.

Sources such as eulogies and epitaphs raised the lives of worshipful women for imitation, while devotional and conduct literature employed biblical women to underline praiseworthy qualities. An inherent inseparability was implied in devotional texts, conduct literature and within the commemorative works, both visual and written representations. Outward or external representations of a woman's piety and devotion identified a pious woman within the framework of the Protestant household, where she

was placed amongst her husband and children, qualifying her not as an individual but, as the member of this spiritual centre. We see as much in the funeral monuments. Although limited to these two spheres, obvious networks and “a subculture” of women who supported each other is apparent in both the prescriptive and more practical written accounts for and by women. The accounts published in Foxe’s Acts and Monuments celebrated the steadfast, active female Protestant who triumphed in the public sphere, although after 1558 the aggressive stance of these women became increasingly irrelevant within the strictures of mainstream Protestant orthodoxy. Less institutionalised, the Protestant church gave women fewer opportunities for religious expression in a public forum; at the same time, the fact that worshipping was no longer defined within a institutional format gave women more freedom to develop and express their devotion and piety within their homes. Placing the focus on the household as the central venue of religion in a woman’s life allowed her to practice it alongside her domestic duties or familial commitments. The married devout female had come of age.

Appendix I: Fig. 1. Frontispiece of The English Gentlewoman




Appendix II: Fig. 2. Explanatory Table for The English Gentlewoman

Which Subject had distinguished by line,
And form'd their Modestly deny,
But this choice piece was held fast by time,
It scarce get sight of this first Exemplar:


Yet from this Shrine such names become with
Impartial eyes will judge, right sure I am,
"Her grace improves the place from whence she came:
And well deserves an ENGLISH GENTLEMAN."

Appendix III: Fig. 3. Day's Border

Charitie
visitech the
sick.



I was sick & ye
visited me.
Math. 25.




Let it not grieve
thee to visit the
sick.
E. 1. 17

Christian

eyes, which binneeth away all consi-
derance of mine.


With what face shall he intreat for
mercy, who is worthy of hatred: and
he that meritteth punishment, with what
boldnes can he demaund prayse: He
prouokech þe iudge, who seeketh to haue
a recompence, but neglegeth his pur-
gation. He insolently, and worthy of
death, tryumpheth ouer the king, who
(callet a traitor) sueth for an undefe-
ned reward. He exasperateth the lo-
uing affectiō of his father, who befoze
due tyme, blaspeth the prerogatiue of
inheritance.

O my father, why doe I renue the
memory of my deedes: Death is my
due, yet life is my request. I haue mo-
ued my king to indignation, whose
safeguard I call vpon vniuersally. I
haue despised the iudge, whose ayde I
traue ouer boldly. Proudly haue I dis-




Prayers. 75


dained to goe to him as to a father,
whom now I picture to take my pro-
tectiō. O how late doe I come: Alas,
alas I hasten very slowly: Alas that I
runne to the whē I am wounded, who
in my safety neglegeth thy rodd: I care
not for to auoyd thy punishment, who
am now grauiously disquered because
of present death: I haue geuen my self
wound vpon wound, for that I feared
not to heape sinne vpon sinne. My grei-
feares haue I galled againe, for that
my former sinnes are renewed by reati-
on of my late iniquitie: And what thy hea-
uently medicine had perfectly cured,
my wickednes hath festred: And that
skauue which did ouerslay, and conuer-
my soze, breaketh out into corruption,
because my misdoedes newly commu-
ted, frustrate thy mercy which thou be-
fore hadst graunted: For I know the
sentence, that in what houre the iudg-



Charitie
visitech the
sick.



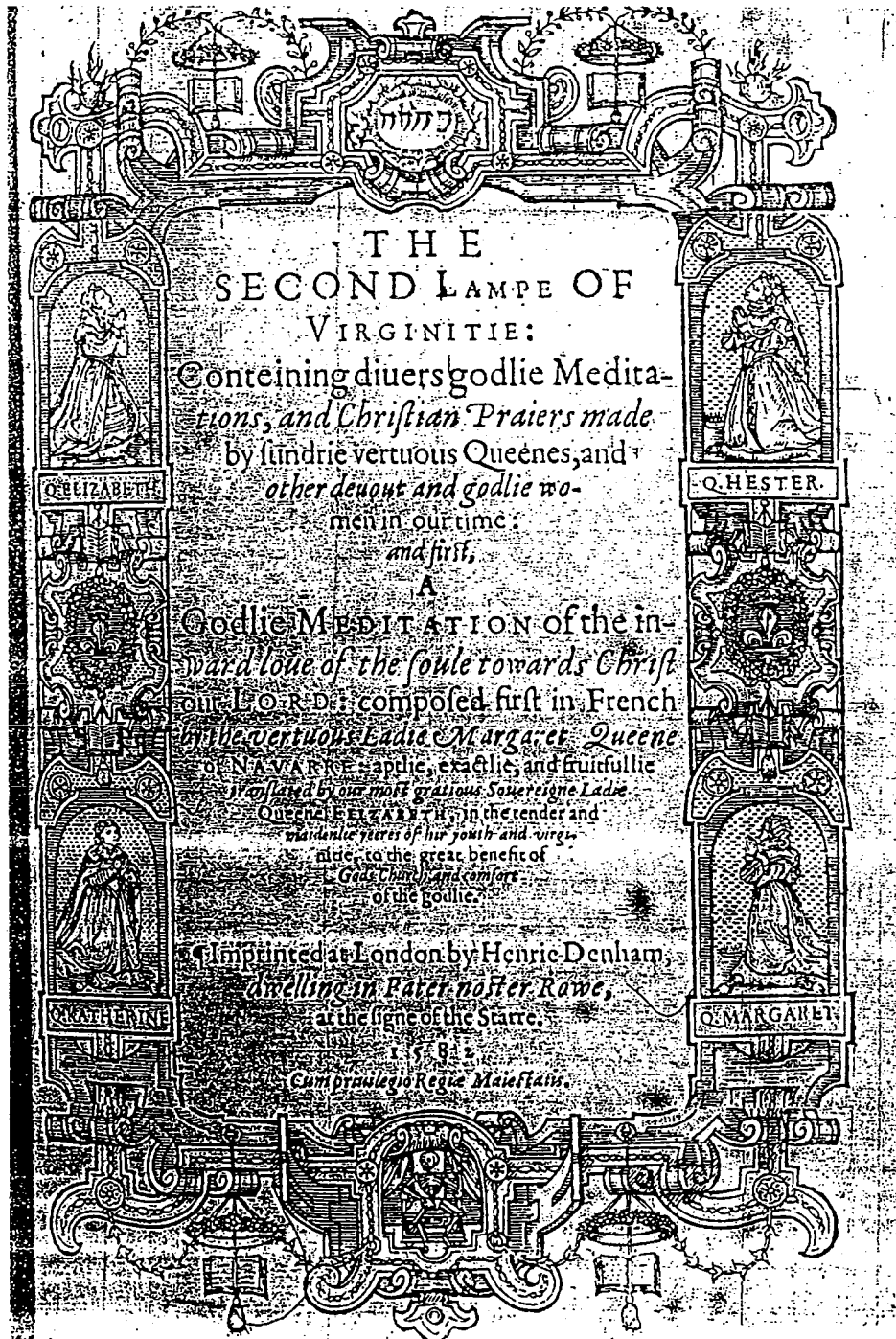
I was in prison
and ye came
to visit me.

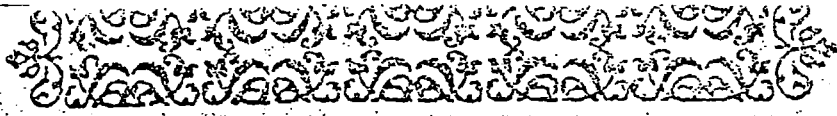


Let it not grieve
thee to visit the
sick.
E. 1. 17

Appendix IV: Fig. 4. Wheathill's table of contents

A table of the praier contained in this booke, as they begin and followe one another in number ; from 1. to 49 .		THE TABLE	
A praier for the morning.	1.	ble, &c.	praier. 10.
A praier for remission of sins, &c.	praier. 2.	A praier wherein the bountifulnes of God is confessed and praised.	praier. 11.
An other praier for the same.	3.	A praier for grace and repentance.	praier. 12.
An Euening praier.	praier. 4.	A praier wherein we desire the life to come.	praier. 13.
Against the temptation of the diuell, &c.	praier. 5.	A praier for comfort in trouble.	praier. 14.
A praier for faith, and for Gods helpe and assistance, &c.	6.	A praier for the prosperitie of the church.	praier. 15.
Another for the same.	praier. 7.	A praier that we may be heard of God.	praier. 16.
A praier of the iustice of God, and of his mercie.	praier. 8.	A praier against the enimies of the church.	praier. 17.
A praier for humilitie, and a confession of sinnes, &c.	9.	A praier of the afflicted person.	praier. 18.
A praier for patience in trouble,		A praier of the iustice of God, &c.	praier. 19.
		A praier for faith & grace.	20.

Appendix V: Fig. 5. Frontispiece of Monument of Matrones



(F) From sinfulness preferue me Lord,
 (R) Renew thy spirit in my hart,
 (A) And let my tongue therewith accord,
 (V) Uttering all goodnesse for his part.
 (N) No thought let there arise in me,
 (C) Contrarie to thy statutes ten,
 (E) Euer let me most mindfull be,
 (S) Still for to praise thy name: Amen.

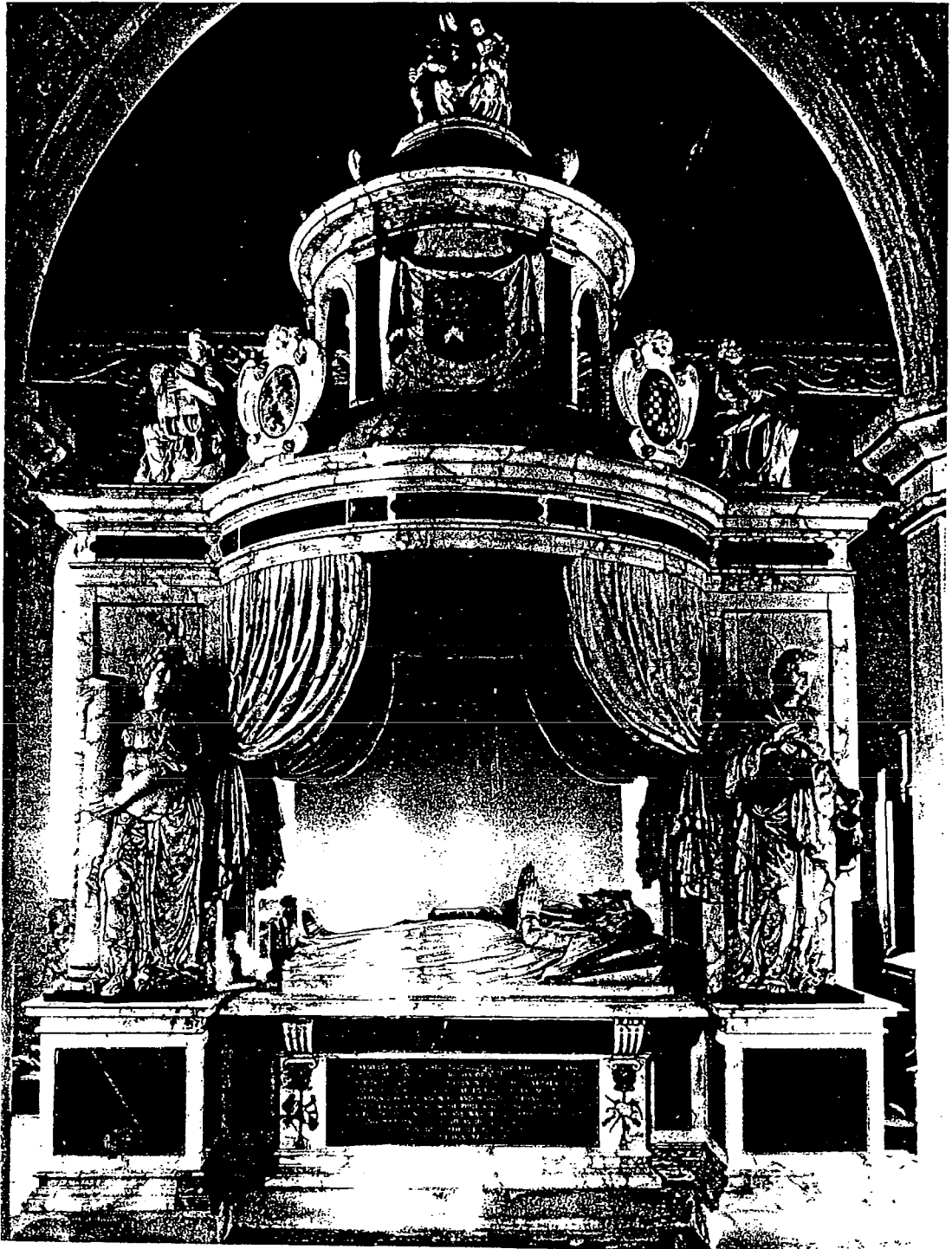
(A) As of my soule, so of my bodie,
 (B) Be thou my guider, O my God:
 (V) Vnto thee onlie I do crie,
 (R) Remoue from me thy furious rod.
 (G) Graunt that my head may still deuise,
 (A) All things that pleasing be to thee,
 (V) Vnto mine eares, and to mine eies,
 (E) Euer let there a watch set bee,
 (N) None ill that they may heare and see,
 (N) No wicked deede let my hands do,
 (Y) Yn thy good paths let my feete go.

Finis.



Appendix VII: Fig. 7. Wyseman Monument





PETHORPE CHURCH

Appendix IX: Fig. 9. Styward Monument



Appendix X: Fig. 10. Legh Monument

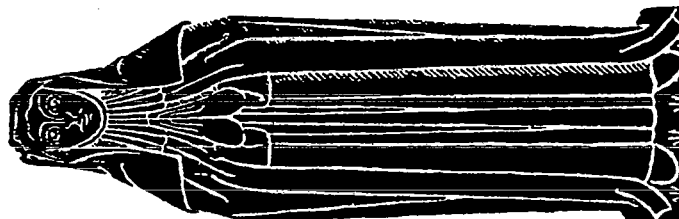
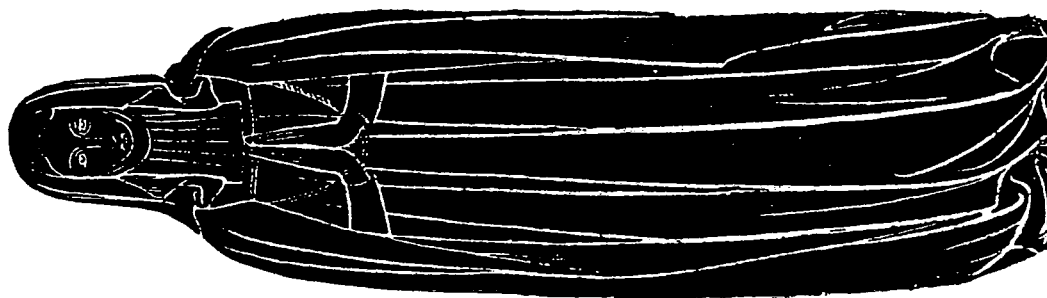




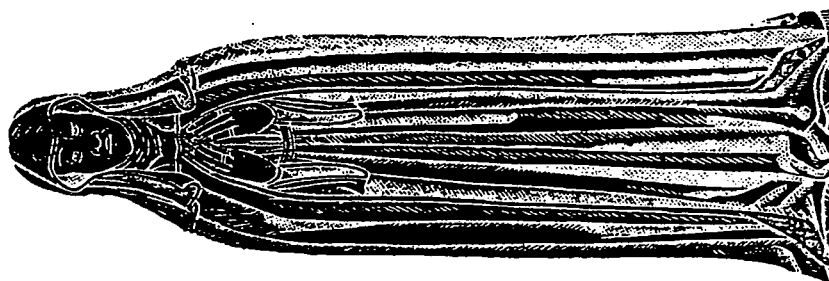
Appendix XII: Fig. 12. Brass of Lady Margaret



Appendix XIII: Fig. 13. Brasses of Nuns



Reste p^{re}ia dⁿⁱ Juliane ap^{pell}
 viduice cu^m anⁿⁱ p^{er}pet^uo de



Off your charite pray for the soule
 of dame Agnes Speden sometime
 Abbess of the Convent of St. Mary
 whiche departed this life the xxiiijth
 of January In the yere of o^r lord god 15
 67 In the lxxx soule she have g^ott amey

Appendix XIV: Fig. 14. Bracket Brass



Appendix XV: Fig. 15. Palmer Brass

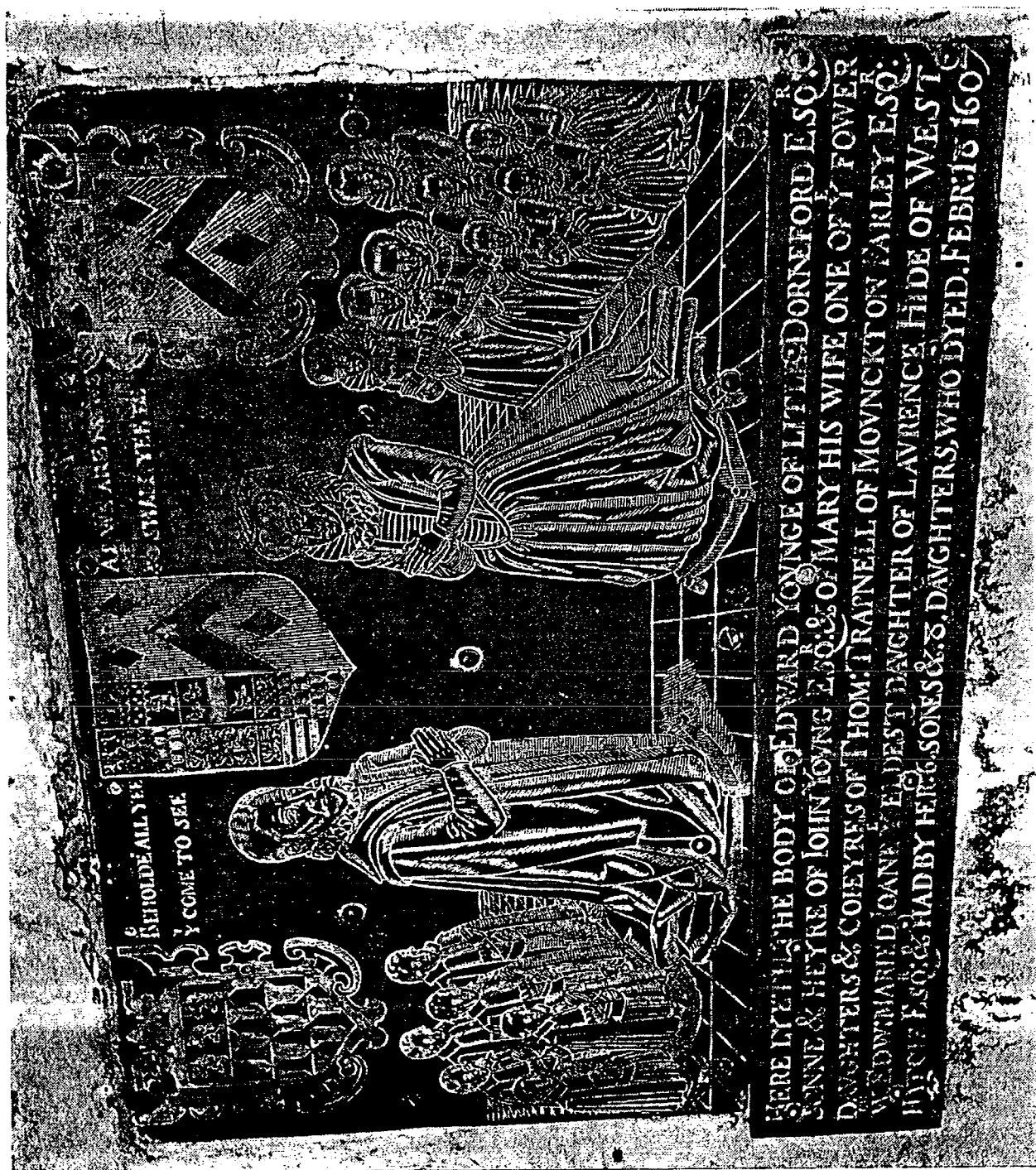


Appendix XVI: Fig. 16. Hawkins Brass



HERE LIES BURIED THE BODY OF ANNE HAWKINS
 WIFE OF HENRY HAWKINS GENT & SON
 OF THOMAS HAWKINS ESQ WHO SCIENTER
 HAVING ARRIVED TO 21 YEARES OF AGE YET FULL
 OF ATTAINED PERFECTION IN MANY VIRTUES
 DEPARTED THIS WORLD THE 14TH DAY OF APRIL 1584

Appendix XVII: Fig. 17. Young Brass



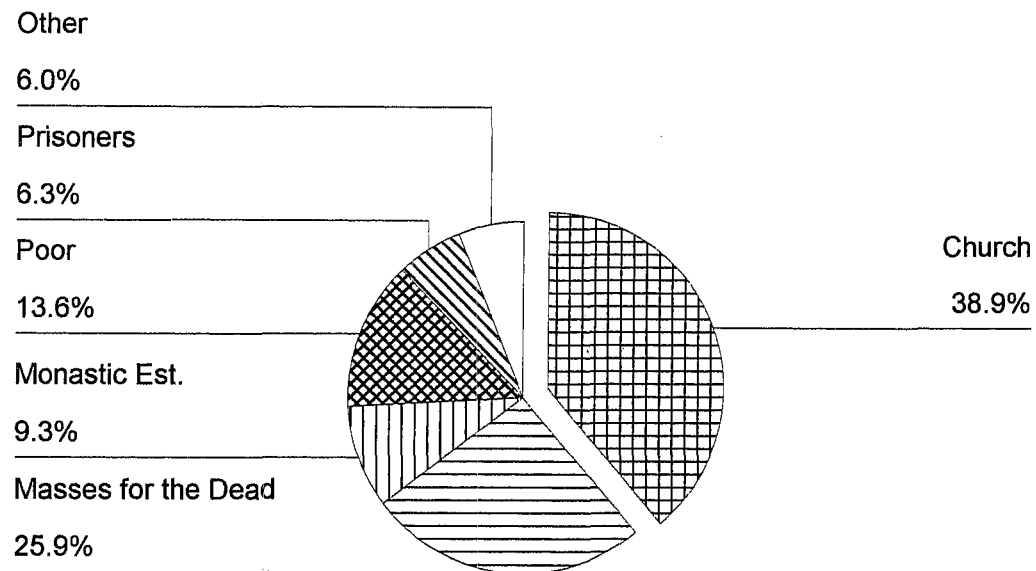
Appendix XVIII. Table 1: Total Charitable Bequests in Wills of 1520s (50 wills)

Total Monetary Donations per Category		Maximum Monetary Donation	Minimum Monetary Donation	Most Frequently Occurring Donation (Mode)	Median Donation	Average Monetary Donation	Percentage of Total Donations
Church-129	Pounds	40.00	.01	.17	.33	2.17	38.9%
	Shillings	800.00	.17	3.33	6.67	43.39	38.9%
	Pence	9600.00	2.00	40.00	80.00	520.66	38.9%
Masses for the Dead-86	Pounds	30.00	.01	.50	.58	3.24	25.9%
	Shillings	600.00	.17	10.00	11.67	64.72	25.9%
	Pence	7200.00	2.00	120.00	140.00	776.65	25.9%
Poor-45	Pounds	53.33	.00	.17	.33	4.11	13.6%
	Shillings	1066.67	.08	3.33	6.67	82.28	13.6%
	Pence	12800.00	1.00	40.00	80.00	987.36	13.6%
Monastic Establishments & Personnel-31	Pounds	10.00	.03	1.00	.67	1.33	9.3%
	Shillings	200.00	.67	20.00	13.33	26.60	9.3%
	Pence	2400.00	8.00	240.00	160.00	319.23	9.3%
Prisoners-21	Pounds	2.00	.04	1.00	1.00	.78	6.3%
	Shillings	40.00	.83	20.00	20.00	15.65	6.3%
	Pence	480.00	10.00	240.00	240.00	187.81	6.3%
Clergy-8	Pounds	1.00	.01	.33	.33	.37	2.4%
	Shillings	20.00	.17	6.67	6.67	7.31	2.4%
	Pence	240.00	2.00	80.00	80.00	87.75	2.4%
Women-5	Pounds	40.00	.03	.03	.33	12.11	1.5%
	Shillings	800.00	.58	.58	6.67	242.12	1.5%
	Pence	9600.00	7.00	7.00	80.00	2905.40	1.5%
Other-3	Pounds	2.00	.67	.67	1.00	1.22	.9%
	Shillings	40.00	13.33	13.33	20.00	24.44	.9%
	Pence	480.00	160.00	160.00	240.00	293.33	.9%
Scholars, Guilds & Fraternalities-3	Pounds	1.00	.17	.17	.33	.50	.9%
	Shillings	20.00	3.33	3.33	6.67	10.00	.9%
	Pence	240.00	40.00	40.00	80.00	120.00	.9%
Hospitals-1	Pounds	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	.3%
	Shillings	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	.3%
	Pence	240.00	240.00	240.00	240.00	240.00	.3%
Group Total-332	Pounds	53.33	.00	1.00	.50	2.62	100.0%
	Shillings	1066.67	.08	20.00	10.00	52.44	100.0%
	Pence	12800.00	1.00	240.00	120.00	629.33	100.0%

Appendix XIX

Graph 1: Charitable Donations Distribution of Wills - 1520s

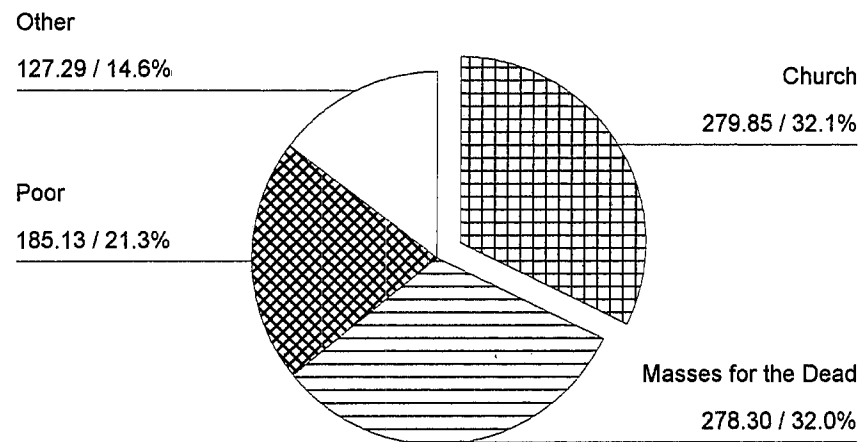
(by number of bequests)



Appendix XX

Graph 2: Charitable Donations Distribution of Wills - 1520s

(by total amount donated in pounds sterling)



Appendix XXI. Table 2: Catholic Religious Preambles (1520s) - 37 wills

Total Monetary Donations per Category		Maximum Monetary Donation	Minimum Monetary Donation	Most Frequently Occurring Donation (Mode)	Median Donation	Average Monetary Donation	Percentage of Total Donations
Church-105	Pounds	20.00	.02	1.00	.33	1.70	38.0%
	Shillings	400.00	.33	20.00	6.67	34.09	38.0%
	Pence	4800.00	4.00	240.00	80.00	409.10	38.0%
Masses for the Dead-69	Pounds	30.00	.01	6.67	.67	3.30	25.0%
	Shillings	600.00	.17	133.33	13.33	66.03	25.0%
	Pence	7200.00	2.00	1600.00	160.00	792.41	25.0%
Poor-39	Pounds	53.33	.00	.17	.33	4.07	14.1%
	Shillings	1066.67	.08	3.33	6.67	81.34	14.1%
	Pence	12800.00	1.00	40.00	80.00	976.03	14.1%
Monastic Establishments & Personnel-27	Pounds	10.00	.03	1.00	.67	1.40	9.8%
	Shillings	200.00	.67	20.00	13.33	28.09	9.8%
	Pence	2400.00	8.00	240.00	160.00	337.04	9.8%
Prisoners-16	Pounds	1.33	.04	1.00	.72	.65	5.8%
	Shillings	26.67	.83	20.00	14.33	13.04	5.8%
	Pence	320.00	10.00	240.00	172.00	156.50	5.8%
Clergy-8	Pounds	1.00	.01	.33	.33	.37	2.9%
	Shillings	20.00	.17	6.67	6.67	7.31	2.9%
	Pence	240.00	2.00	80.00	80.00	87.75	2.9%
Women-5	Pounds	40.00	.03	.03	.33	12.11	1.8%
	Shillings	800.00	.58	.58	6.67	242.12	1.8%
	Pence	9600.00	7.00	7.00	80.00	2905.40	1.8%
Other-3	Pounds	2.00	.67	.67	1.00	1.22	1.1%
	Shillings	40.00	13.33	13.33	20.00	24.44	1.1%
	Pence	480.00	160.00	160.00	240.00	293.33	1.1%
Scholars, Guilds & Fraternalities-3	Pounds	1.00	.17	.17	.33	.50	1.1%
	Shillings	20.00	3.33	3.33	6.67	10.00	1.1%
	Pence	240.00	40.00	40.00	80.00	120.00	1.1%
Hospitals-1	Pounds	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	.4%
	Shillings	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	.4%
	Pence	240.00	240.00	240.00	240.00	240.00	.4%
Group Total-276	Pounds	53.33	.00	1.00	.50	2.48	100.0%
	Shillings	1066.67	.08	20.00	10.00	49.52	100.0%
	Pence	12800.00	1.00	240.00	120.00	594.24	100.0%

Appendix XXII. Table 3: Neutral Religious Preambles (1520s) - 5 wills

Total Monetary Donations per Category		Maximum Monetary Donation	Minimum Monetary Donation	Most Frequently Occurring Donation (Mode)	Median Donation	Average Monetary Donation	Percentage of Total Donations
Church-21	Pounds	40.00	.01	.33	.33	4.77	48.8%
	Shillings	800.00	.17	6.67	6.67	95.34	48.8%
	Pence	9600.00	2.00	80.00	80.00	1144.10	48.8%
Masses for the Dead-15	Pounds	10.15	.33	.33	.50	2.91	34.9%
	Shillings	203.00	6.67	6.67	10.00	58.20	34.9%
	Pence	2436.00	80.00	80.00	120.00	698.40	34.9%
Prisoners-4	Pounds	1.50	.50	1.00	1.00	1.00	9.3%
	Shillings	30.00	10.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	9.3%
	Pence	360.00	120.00	240.00	240.00	240.00	9.3%
Poor-3	Pounds	.50	.01	.01	.01	.17	7.0%
	Shillings	10.00	.25	.25	.25	3.50	7.0%
	Pence	120.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	42.00	7.0%
Group Total-43	Pounds	40.00	.01	.33	.50	3.45	100.0%
	Shillings	800.00	.17	6.67	10.00	68.97	100.0%
	Pence	9600.00	2.00	80.00	120.00	827.63	100.0%

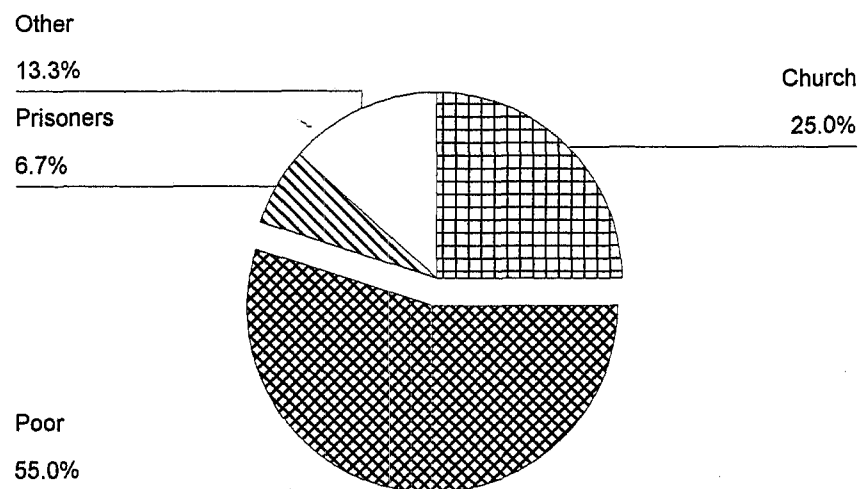
Appendix XXIII. Table 4: Total Charitable Bequests in Wills of 1580s (100 wills)

Total Monetary Donations per Category		Maximum Monetary Donation	Minimum Monetary Donation	Most Frequently Occurring Donation (Mode)	Median Donation	Average Monetary Donation	Percentage of Total Donations
Poor-99	Pounds	22.00	.02	1.00	1.00	2.41	55.0%
	Shillings	440.00	.33	20.00	20.00	48.26	55.0%
	Pence	5280.00	4.00	240.00	240.00	579.15	55.0%
Church-45	Pounds	20.00	.01	.17	.33	1.76	25.0%
	Shillings	400.00	.17	3.33	6.67	35.20	25.0%
	Pence	4800.00	2.00	40.00	80.00	422.40	25.0%
Prisoners-12	Pounds	6.00	.33	2.00	2.00	1.83	6.7%
	Shillings	120.00	6.67	40.00	40.00	36.67	6.7%
	Pence	1440.00	80.00	480.00	480.00	440.00	6.7%
Hospitals-9	Pounds	10.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	3.28	5.0%
	Shillings	200.00	20.00	40.00	40.00	65.56	5.0%
	Pence	2400.00	240.00	480.00	480.00	786.67	5.0%
Women-9	Pounds	25.00	.05	20.00	1.35	7.81	5.0%
	Shillings	500.00	1.00	400.00	27.00	156.19	5.0%
	Pence	6000.00	12.00	4800.00	324.00	1874.22	5.0%
Clergy-5	Pounds	13.28	.30	.50	.50	3.32	2.8%
	Shillings	265.67	6.00	10.00	10.00	66.33	2.8%
	Pence	3188.00	72.00	120.00	120.00	796.00	2.8%
Scholars, Guilds & Fraternities-1	Pounds	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	.6%
	Shillings	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	.6%
	Pence	1200.00	1200.00	1200.00	1200.00	1200.00	.6%
Group Total-180	Pounds	25.00	.01	1.00	1.00	2.56	100.0%
	Shillings	500.00	.17	20.00	20.00	51.27	100.0%
	Pence	6000.00	2.00	240.00	240.00	615.29	100.0%

Appendix XXIV

Graph 3: Charitable Donations Distribution of Wills - 1580s

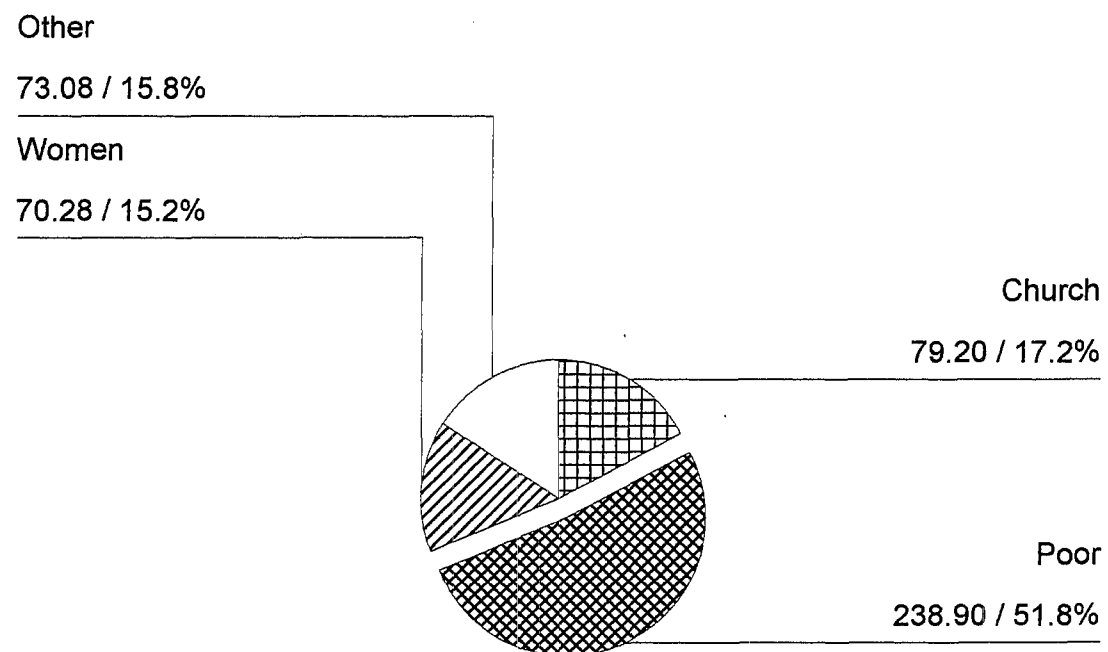
(by number of bequests)



Appendix XXV

Graph 4: Charitable Donations Distribution of Wills - 1580s

(by total amount donated in pounds sterling)



Appendix XXVI. Table 5: Protestant Religious Preambles (1580s) - 48 wills

Total Monetary Donations per Category		Maximum Monetary Donation	Minimum Monetary Donation	Most Frequently Occurring Donation (Mode)	Median Donation	Average Monetary Donation	Percentage of Total Donations
Poor-90	Pounds	22.00	.02	1.00	1.00	2.49	56.3%
	Shillings	440.00	.33	20.00	20.00	49.74	56.3%
	Pence	5280.00	4.00	240.00	240.00	596.87	56.3%
Church-37	Pounds	20.00	.01	.17	.33	1.91	23.1%
	Shillings	400.00	.17	3.33	6.67	38.13	23.1%
	Pence	4800.00	2.00	40.00	80.00	457.57	23.1%
Prisoners-11	Pounds	6.00	.33	2.00	2.00	1.91	6.9%
	Shillings	120.00	6.67	40.00	40.00	38.18	6.9%
	Pence	1440.00	80.00	480.00	480.00	458.18	6.9%
Hospitals-8	Pounds	10.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	3.50	5.0%
	Shillings	200.00	20.00	40.00	40.00	70.00	5.0%
	Pence	2400.00	240.00	480.00	480.00	840.00	5.0%
Women-8	Pounds	25.00	.05	20.00	2.17	8.75	5.0%
	Shillings	500.00	1.00	400.00	43.50	175.08	5.0%
	Pence	6000.00	12.00	4800.00	522.00	2101.00	5.0%
Clergy-5	Pounds	13.28	.30	.50	.50	3.32	3.1%
	Shillings	265.67	6.00	10.00	10.00	66.33	3.1%
	Pence	3188.00	72.00	120.00	120.00	796.00	3.1%
Scholars, Guilds & Fraternities-1	Pounds	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	.6%
	Shillings	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	.6%
	Pence	1200.00	1200.00	1200.00	1200.00	1200.00	.6%
Group Total-160	Pounds	25.00	.01	2.00	1.00	2.72	100.0%
	Shillings	500.00	.17	40.00	20.00	54.37	100.0%
	Pence	6000.00	2.00	480.00	240.00	652.48	100.0%

Appendix XXVII. Table 6: Neutral Religious Preambles (1580s) - 7 wills

Total Monetary Donations per Category		Maximum Monetary Donation	Minimum Monetary Donation	Most Frequently Occurring Donation (Mode)	Median Donation	Average Monetary Donation	Percentage of Total Donations
Poor-8	Pounds	5.00	.03	.50	.75	1.76	53.3%
	Shillings	100.00	.50	10.00	15.00	35.19	53.3%
	Pence	1200.00	6.00	120.00	180.00	422.25	53.3%
Church-7	Pounds	5.00	.02	.02	.05	1.17	46.7%
	Shillings	100.00	.33	.33	1.00	23.31	46.7%
	Pence	1200.00	4.00	4.00	12.00	279.71	46.7%
Group Total-15	Pounds	5.00	.02	.05	.50	1.48	100.0%
	Shillings	100.00	.33	1.00	10.00	29.64	100.0%
	Pence	1200.00	4.00	12.00	120.00	355.73	100.0%

Appendix XXVIII: Fig. 18 Mildmay Excerpt

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE STUDIES COLLECTION NCL. All folio references are to part two, unless specified otherwise.

A Godly present. God's word above all things to be embraced.
To my daughter, Mary, the Lady Fane, wife of the Honourable Knight, Sir Francis Fane.

For as much as by the goodness of God, such abundance of the fatness of the earth shall descend upon you (my daughter) from your father and myself, I present this above all other gifts unto you and your children, even the dew of heaven, contained in these books following. First, the Holy Bible, the book of God, which above all earthly things is to be embraced, to be believed, obeyed, feared, loved, and praised; with continual delight, exercise and meditations therein whereby a good and virtuous life may be framed from youth to old age and from one good generation to another [ff. 1-2].

The true use of the sacraments where to be learned. True faith is the oil of our larynxes.

Thirdly (secondly), the book of *Musculus Common Places* which openeth and divideth the word of God, in all sincerity and truth, and teacheth the true use of the two sacraments baptism and the Lord's supper. With all the substantial points of our faith and salvation in Jesus Christ, which every christian is bound to learn and to understand upon pain of their damnation. Without the which faith and knowledge in our Lord Jesus Christ our lamps will go out at his last coming (which we are daily to expect) and so we be cast out of his kingdom with the foolish virgins, which God forbid.

Secondly (thirdly), the excellent book of *Acts and Monuments of the Martyrs*, which containeth a lively demonstration and testimony of the true church and their constancy in confession of and suffering for the sincere word and truth of God. Even the only true doctrine of our salvation in our only saviour Jesus Christ, with their true and inviolable faith in him sealed with their death and blood. Which is a most lively spectacle and example unto all posterities, even to the end of the world [ff. 2-3].

To discern betwixt the true church and the false church.

Whereby our faith may be strengthened and increased and our understanding enlightened to discern: the truth from lies, the true and spiritual church from the false church and synagogue of Satan, and the persecuted church from the persecuting church, and the meek, humble and lowly church according unto

Christ Jesus, from the proud, presumptuous and arrogant church of Antichrist, from the tyranny whereof the Lord deliver us [f. 3].

The difference between the flesh, and the spirit.

Fourthly, the book of the *Imitation of Christ* which containeth a most sensible feeling and conference betwixt the soul of man and the spirit of God. With a true and lively description and difference betwixt the flesh and the spirit and how the flesh is overcome of the spirit (a separation of them the one from the other) by the sincere word of God and our true faith in Jesus Christ. And also a direction of life and good conversation amongst men, with humility, mortification of the flesh (mind) and a preparation unto the days everlasting and the kingdom of heaven [ff. 3-4].

God's word a direction to a good life and conversation. We are not able of ourselves to think or do anything that is good.

Read the quotations in the by-paper. Fifthly, the book of my meditations written which book hath been to me as Jacob's ladder and as Jacob's pillar, even a book of testimonies between God and my soul, of his gracious presence and of his love unto me from time to time, as by this whole book may appear (by the original). For when I began sometimes to set down any part thereof I found myself empty and void at that very instant of any one thought or disposition to pray or meditate or to apprehend heavenly things. Yet notwithstanding before I went from that place, the Lord did minister such plenty of divine matter unto my mind as I was not able to comprehend so that I was constrained to leave off for that time, being afraid to proceed or presume too far. For he that looketh too fixedly upon the sun is sure to be stricken blind [ff. 4-5].

Unto whom the promises belong.

Thus have I given my mind unto my offspring as my chief and only gift unto them. And unto such of them (or all of them) as shall receive and put the same in practice, according to my mind and well-wishing, I dare pronounce (unto them) an everlasting blessing from God. The which he in his mercy will ratify and make good unto them through the mediation of his son Jesus Christ, our Lord and only saviour [f. 11].

[Topics of meditation.]

In mine own study in the scriptures I have found most profit, comfort and delight to clear one scripture with another upon any point of doctrine whereby the mind might be replenished with plenty of divine matter fit for meditation and be better satisfied in the true sense of every place. And the less of my own additions in our meditations, the better, except the reverent text do draw our minds to meditation and then our meditation do call for the holy word to approve the same [pt. 1, f. 16]. . .

It hath come into my mind in my meditating in the word of God to think often of the death of Christ and of his suffering, and also of the holy

Appendix XXIX: Fig. 19. "The Cruell Burning of a woman at Exeter"



Appendix XXX: Fig. 20. "The martyrdome of three women"



Appendix XXXI: Fig. 21. "The burning of Cicely Ormes at Norwich"



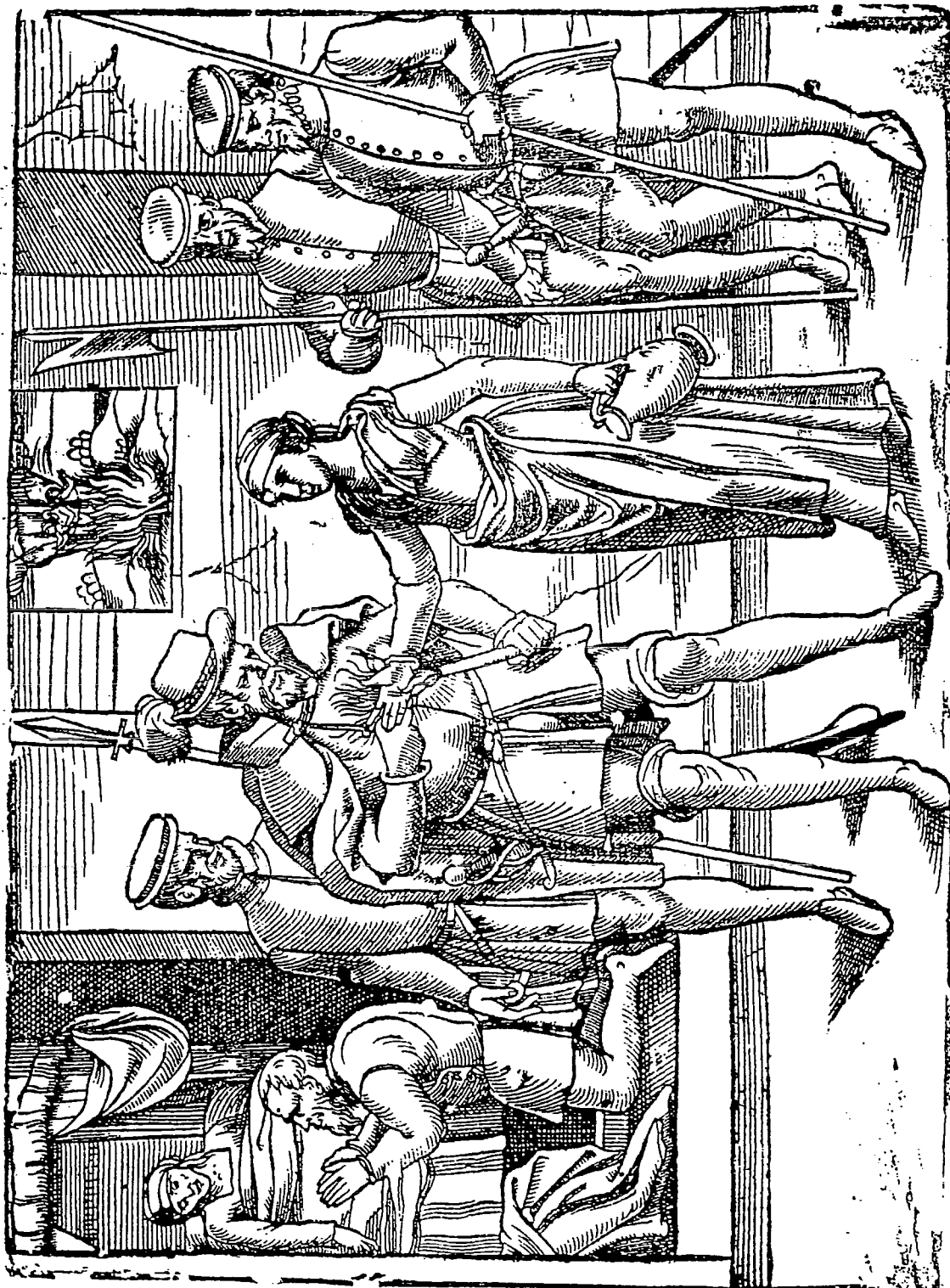
Appendix XXXII: Fig. 22. "A lamentable spectacle of three women"



Appendix XXXIII: Fig. 23. "Twenty-two godly and faithful christians..."



Appendix XXXIV: Fig. 24. "The burning of Rose Allin's hand..."



Appendix XXXV: Fig. 25. "The burning of Cranmer..."



Appendix XXXVI: Fig. 26. "The burning of Thirteen Martyrs at Stratford le Bow"



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