

MOTHERS AT HOME: THEIR ROLE IN CHILDREARING AND INSTRUCTION IN
EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

by

PATRICIA NARDI

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Dr. Margaret King

Date

Chair of Examining Committee

Dr. Joshua Freeman

Date

Executive Officer

Dr. Martin Burke

Dr. Sarah Covington

Dr. Joseph Dauben

Dr. Helena Rosenblatt
Supervisory Committee

Abstract

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Patricia Nardi

Adviser: Professor Margaret King

Based on the examination of more than 150 works of private literature (diaries, memoirs, letters) and prescriptive texts (treatises, advice books, orations), this dissertation explores three main areas of the maternal role – physical care, religious training and educational instruction – to illuminate not only the messages mothers were listening to and reading, but also to show how they themselves perceived their roles. Inquiring to what extent mothers not only performed their roles as instructed, but also actually shaped the lives of their children, this study will underscore the importance of the seventeenth century in the evolution of “modern” childrearing. It is in the seventeenth century (especially in England) that maternal breastfeeding becomes an ideal embraced by mothers; that swaddling begins to decline; that children’s literature becomes copious; and that childrearing becomes a central concern of an increasing quantity of literature.

Chapter One explores familial accounts of husbands and children that depict mothers as affectionate and devoted caregivers who confronted medical and societal challenges in their efforts to provide a safe and nurturing environment. Chapter Two

examines the dedication of mothers as the spiritual guides of their children, and delineates their roles in catechizing the household. Interestingly, an analysis of funeral sermons for women both illuminates the significant role of mothers who nurtured the religious environment of their children and servants, and recognizes women as mentors and models of spiritual devotion. Chapter Three uncovers the faithful role mothers assumed as the early educators of their children, a role amplified as mothers maintained a relentless devotion to their sons while they were away at school.

In Chapter Four, a close examination of the characteristics of four mothers—Margaret More Roper, Anne Cooke Bacon, Elizabeth Cary and Susanna Wesley—reveals some interesting findings such as a sense of purpose, the ability to pursue intellectual interests while remaining devoted to welfare of their children, and a capacity to continue to shape the lives of their offspring after they left home. What makes this particular inquiry unique is the investigation of these well-known women whose roles *as mothers* emerge more saliently from the literature but have not been adequately described.

This study will now provide such information based on the reading of the sources. This failure is all the more surprising because of their prominence, especially in the case of Elizabeth Cary whose own literary work has been exclusively studied in recent years. An outlying sixteenth-century figure, Margaret More Roper's case is anomalous because of the exceptional progressivism of her father, who pioneered the education of women in England. Susanna Wesley is profiled in this study because aside from a simple hagiographical comment on her in the Methodist tradition, there is no critical assessment of her role as mother. Anne Cooke Bacon's significant role in the education of her two children has been overshadowed by the accomplishments of her famous son Francis.

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Introduction

The seventeenth-century diarist Adam Martindale has left us a portrait of his mother beset with anxiety at her daughter Jane's flight to London, against parental prohibitions. In his journal, Adam explained how "My mother's heart had like to have broken for extremity of sorrow," and "I also was much concerned both in her journey and my mother's griefe."¹ What was intriguing about this "family crisis" was the response of the parents to Jane's adolescent impulse to live in London. Nearly out of funds and ashamed of her sudden departure from her home, Jane did send a note home asking for a "goose-pie to make merrie with her friends."² Both mother and father immediately sent the request and added money so that their daughter would also be able to buy something to drink. Unfortunately, Jane had been more desperate than she had let on and attempted to sell her hair. An aspiring suitor interfered with the transaction and married her. Though Jane's parents were disappointed the wedding took place without them, they supported their daughter with a dwelling and provisions. Adam recalled,

...my mother rarely failed any the returne of the carrier, to send them up country provisions, such as bacon, cheeses, pots of butter, &c.; nor did this at all trouble her, but ever when she thought of the necessitious condition of her daughter at her coming up, and her follie in concealing it from her, it even cut my poore mother to the heart.³

¹ Adam Martindale, *The Life of Adam Martindale*, ed. Rev. Richard Parkinson (London: The Chetham Society, 1845), 7.

² Martindale, *The Life of Adam Martindale*, 8.

³ Martindale, *The Life of Adam Martindale*, 8.

Adam's mother, like many other mothers in seventeenth-century England, faithfully and often silently cared for her children deeply, in ways we would recognize, although in a context fundamentally different from our own.

Preachers and magistrates, doctors and moralists, lectured the mothers of sixteenth and seventeenth-century England about their responsibility to rear proper, healthy, and God-fearing children. But what did mothers actually do, feel, and hope for in the shelter of the household? Based on the examination of more than 150 works of private literature (diaries, memoirs, letters) and prescriptive texts (treatises, advice books, orations), this dissertation explores three main areas of the maternal role— physical care, religious training, and educational instruction. These were the activities by which women impressed themselves upon the lives of children. Primary sources by male authorities, including sermons, eulogies, advice manuals and conduct books, provide a glimpse of what others saw as female duties, and helped shape the thoughts and behaviors of sixteenth and seventeenth-century English women. Writings of family members— fathers, husbands, wives, mothers and offspring—reveal, when carefully read, however, a more intimate and poignant account of familial interaction that both conforms to and deviates from the prescriptive advice of the period. This dissertation utilizes such sources to amplify our understanding of maternal and childrearing activity. Such writings, often in the forms of diaries, journals and letters, convey an understanding of religious and social norms and expectations, but they also reflect intimate responses to daily routines and challenges that are both surprising and moving.

This inquiry into how mothers cared for children's physical needs and guided early religious and intellectual training, takes place within the context of the Reformation

and the English Civil War. In the case of the former, messages about maternal roles do not vary noticeably according to the religion of the maternal figure, although religious commitments do seem to energize discussions of the religious and intellectual training of children. For example, Catholics such as Elizabeth Grymeston⁴ and Protestants including Dorothy Leigh⁵, expressed concerns about the physical care and religious and intellectual training of their children. Both mothers also provided personal writings for their children to guide them as they matured. Despite the momentous nature of the social and political upheaval, there do not appear to be significant changes in the discussion of maternal roles, before, during, or after the English Civil War. Families such as the Verneys⁶ and the Harleys⁷, aristocratic families who were royalist supporters, and Puritan households

⁴ Elizabeth Grymeston, *Miscellanea. Prayers. Meditations. Memoratives*, 1604 in *The Early Modern Englishwoman: A Facsimile Library of Essential Works*, eds. Betty S. Travitsky and Patrick Cullen, vol. 8 (Burlington: Ashgate, 2001), A1-H4. See also Marly Mahl and Helene Koon, *The Female Spectator: English Women Writers Before 1800* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), 52-61; and Edith Snook, "His Open Side Our Book: Meditation and Education in Elizabeth Grymeston's *Miscellanea Meditations Memoratives*," in *Maternal Measures: Figuring Caregiving in the Early Modern Period*, eds. Naomi J. Miller and Naomi Yavneh (Burlington: Ashgate, 2000): 163-75.

⁵ Dorothy Leigh, *The Mothers Blessing, or The godly counsaile of a Gentle-woman not long since deceased, left behind her for her children: Containing many good exhortations, and godly admonitions, profitable for all Parents to leave as a Legacy to their Childre*, 1616 in *The Early Modern Englishwoman: A Facsimile Library of Essential Works*, eds. Betty S. Travitsky and Patrick Cullen, vol. 8 (Burlington: Ashgate, 2001), 1-270. Excerpts of Leigh's text are also included in *Women's Writing in Stuart England: The Mothers' Legacies of Dorothy Leigh, Elizabeth Joscelyn and Elizabeth Richardson*, ed. Sylvia Brown (Gloucester, England: Sutton, 1999). See also Dorothy Leigh, *The Mother's Blessing or, The Godly Counsel Of A Gentlewoman Not Long Since Deceased, Left Behind Her For Her Children.....*, London, 1616 in *Daughters, Wives and Widows: Writings by Men about Women and Marriage in England, 1500-1640* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 287-302; Elizabeth A. Nist, "Tattle's Well's Faire: English Women Authors of the Sixteenth Century," *College English*, 46 (November, 1984): 702-16; Wendy Wall, "Isabella Whitney and the Female Legacy," *English Literary History*, 58, (Spring, 1991): 35-62; and Kristen Poole, "'The Fittest Closet for All Goodness': Authorial Strategies of Jacobean Mothers' Manuals," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 35 (Winter, 1995): 69-88.

⁶ Frances P. Verney, *Memoirs of the Verney Family, During the Civil War*, vols. I, II (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1899); Margaret M. Verney, *Memoirs of the Verney Family, During the Commonwealth, 1650-1660*, vol. III (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1894); Margaret M. Verney, *Memoirs of the Verney Family, Restoration to the Revolution*, vol. IV (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1899).

⁷ *Letters of the Lady Brilliana Harley*, ed. Thomas Taylor Lewis (London: Camden Society, 1854); Raymond Anselment, "Katherine Paston and Brilliana Harley: Maternal Letters and the Genre of Mother's Advice," *Studies in Philology*, 101 (Fall, 2004): 431-53.

including the Hutchinsons⁸, continued to maintain customary maternal childrearing responsibilities.

Mothers in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England were barraged with advice from male experts on caring for children. Catholic, Anglican and Puritan clerics instructed women from the pulpit and in written texts on their duties as virtuous and submissive wives and mothers. Puritan leaders such as William Gouge⁹, and William Perkins¹⁰, composed instructional manuals outlining maternal duties, and Anglican ministers Thomas Bentley¹¹ and Richard Allestree¹² prepared devotional and informational texts specifically addressed to women. Developing a treatise for all Christian women to read, Spanish humanist Juan Luis Vives¹³ aspired to guide and educate women from birth to death. Mothers also read works of physicians, including Nicholas Culpeper¹⁴ and Thomas Phaer,¹⁵ who advised them about their health as well as care of their children.

⁸ Lucy Hutchinson, "The Life of Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson, Written by Herself: A Fragment." in *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, ed. James Sutherland (London: Oxford University Press, 1973).

⁹ William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties* (London: Walter J. Johnson, Inc., 1622).

¹⁰ William Perkins, *Christian Oeconomie or A Short Survey of the Right Manner of Erecting and Ordering a Familie, According to the Scriptures* (London: Felix Kingston, 1609). Perkins wrote the text in Latin in 1590, and Thomas Pickering translated the work in 1609.

¹¹ Thomas Bentley, *The Monument of Matrones* in *The Early Modern Englishwoman: A Facsimile Library of Essential Works*, eds. Betty S. Travitsky and Anne Lake Prescott, *Essential Works for the Study of Early Modern Women*: part 1 vol. 4 (Lamps 1-3); part 2 vol. 5 (Lamp 4); part 3 vol. 6 (Lamps 5-7), (Burlington: Ashgate, 2004). *The Monument* has been excerpted in collections of writings. See Suzanne Hull, *Chaste, Silent & Obedient: English Books for Women, 1475-1640* (San Marino, California: Huntington Library, 1982), 91-105; Elaine Beilin, *Redeeming Eve: Women Writers of the English Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 64-86; and Betty Travitsky, ed., *The Paradise of Women: Writings by Englishwomen of the Renaissance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 36-7.

¹² Richard Allestree, *The Ladies Calling* in *Conduct Literature for Women, 1640-1710*, eds. William St Clair and Irmgard Maassen, vol. 3 (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2002), 204.

¹³ Juan Luis Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman: A Sixteenth-Century Manual*, ed. and trans. Charles Fantazzi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

¹⁴ Nicholas Culpeper, *A Directory for Midwives: Or, A Guide For Women, In Their Conception, Bearing and Suckling Their Children*, 1651. Reprint London: S. Ballard, R. Ware, S. Birt, C. Hitch, L. Hawes and J. Hodges, in *Renaissance Woman: A Sourcebook*, ed. Kate Aughterson (London: Routledge, 1995). Also see "Culpeper's Radical Book" in Mary E. Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies: The Politics of Reproduction in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

The prescriptive advice covered subjects as health, moral development and early instruction. Mothers received directives from clerics and doctors about preparation for childbirth, physical care of the infant, naming the child and discipline. The decision to breastfeed, in particular, sparked much discussion from Puritans who advocated against wetnursing, a common practice among the upper classes. Clerics and humanists, who cast mothers as models of religious piety and caretakers of the spiritual development of their children, carefully constructed the maternal role in the religious instruction of the household. As the first teachers of children, mothers were also advised by influential humanists, clerics and writers concerning the training of children and their specific responsibilities as parents.

Raised to be virtuous, obedient and submissive, young girls followed the directives of their parents and eventually those of their husbands within the household.¹⁶ As societal norms limited their educational offerings to elementary reading and some writing, devotional studies, music and household skills, women concerned themselves with the domestic sphere, and developed an intimate circle of relationships with children, servants and neighbors. Although clerical and political mandates strongly prohibited the political voice of women, they sanctioned their domestic roles under the governance of their husbands.

Yet mothers were not completely limited; in many ways, women in households performed important functions, especially when economic circumstances dictated. In her

¹⁵ Thomas Phaer, *The Booke of Chyldren*, 1544 (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies), 1999.

¹⁶ See Suzanne Hull, *Chaste, Silent and Obedient*; Hull, *Women According to Men: The World of Tudor-Stuart Women* (Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press, 1996); and Myra Reynolds, *The Learned Lady in England, 1650-1760* (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1964); Patricia Crawford, *Blood, Bodies and Families in Early Modern England* (Harlow, England: Pearson, 2004).

study of aristocratic women in fifteenth and sixteenth-century England, Barbara Harris maintained while political and economic institutions “ought to have restricted women to a narrow sphere of activity, limited their access to and control of wealth, and deprived them of power and authority, overwhelming evidence points in the opposite direction, and demonstrates that aristocratic women gained wealth, authority and power as they managed their husbands’ property and households, arranged the marriages and careers of their children, maintained and exploited the kin and client networks essential to their families’ political power, and supervised the transmission and distribution of property to the next generation.”¹⁷ While Harris concentrated on the political and economic power women exercised when their husbands’ economic and political responsibilities forced their absence from the domicile, this study maintains mothers exercised significant influence in the care and instruction of their children. As financial and political obligations compelled husbands and fathers to spend considerable time away from the household, women, out of necessity, cultivated important maternal roles that were recognized and sanctioned by their husbands and religious leaders.

Mothers were not completely passive with regard to childrearing; while they read and absorbed the prescriptive literature, they also possessed thoughts of their own. Maternal insight concerning the physical care and moral development of children was sensitive to their particular circumstances; specifically, their spousal relationships and their interpretation of their prescribed roles. For example, although the prescriptive literature directed mothers to breastfeed their infants, many upper-class women did not nurse their children because of pressure from their husbands who not only objected to the

¹⁷ Barbara Harris, *English Aristocratic Women, 1450-1550: Marriage and Family, Property and Careers*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 6. Also see B.J. Harris, “Women and Politics in Early Tudor England,” *Historical Journal* (1990): 259-81.

demands that breastfeeding placed on their wives' health and energy, but who also wanted to produce offspring, particularly male heirs.¹⁸ Mothers also cultivated intimate and meaningful relationships with their children as they guided them in their spiritual devotions and education. Familial writings recounting specific instances of maternal interaction confirm the magnitude of mothers' roles in the lives of their families. In addition, funeral sermons commemorating the lives of the deceased illuminate the vital impact of mothers within the household.

Some mothers wrote their thoughts about their prescribed roles in personal writings such as diaries, memoirs and letters.¹⁹ Although such sources reflect varying degrees of their knowledge of and adherence to the prescriptive literature, maternal accounts of their perceived roles reveal personal attributes and circumstances. In some instances, upper-class women composed texts proposing to bestow maternal insight concerning the spiritual and physical welfare of their children. For example, Dorothy Leigh, a Puritan widow who fulfilled her late husband's wish to ensure that their three sons receive a godly education, composed a text that revealed her perceptions about marriage and motherhood. Mother of nine children, Elizabeth Grymeston wrote *Miscelanea, Prayers, Meditations, and Memoratives*,²⁰ works reflecting her knowledge of Catholic poetry and scholarship, which mourned the loss of her eight children, and

¹⁸ For a comprehensive study on breastfeeding see Valerie Fildes, *Breasts, Bottles and Babies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1986). See also Paula A. Treckel, "Breastfeeding and Maternal Sexuality in Colonial America," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 20 (Summer, 1989): 25-51; Valerie Fildes, *Wet Nursing: A History from Antiquity to the Present* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988).

¹⁹ James Daybell, ed. *Early Modern Women's Letter Writing, 1450-1700* (New York: Palgrave, 2001); James Daybell, *Women's Letter-Writers in Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Patricia Demers, *Women's Writings in English: Early Modern English* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); and Erica Longfellow, *Women and Religious Writing in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

²⁰ Elizabeth Grymeston, *Miscellanea, Prayers, Meditations, Memoratives*, 1604 in *The Early Modern Englishwoman: A Facsimile Library of Essential Works*, eds. Betty S. Travitsky and Patrick Cullen, vol. 8 (Burlington: Ashgate, 2001), A1-H4. *Early Modern Period*, eds. Naomi J. Miller and Naomi Yavneh (Burlington: Ashgate, 2000): 163-75.

proposed to guide and to console her only surviving child, a son, Bernye Grymeston. Continuing to guide her children after they left the maternal classroom, Lady Brilliana Harley sent numerous letters to her son Ned; her correspondence conveyed a loving mother who possessed a keen interest in the health, education and religious practice of her child.

Because the level of female literacy was highest among the upper classes, aristocratic women were more likely to read and write, and so became the key focus of this study.²¹ Literacy was economically determined, so that the wealthier demonstrated higher rates of literacy than the poor did, and therefore produced more records in the forms of personal writings. As the sixteenth century progressed, the gentry and business classes also provided more educational opportunities for women as mothers were expected to prepare sons for the changing economic and political structures as evidenced with the growth of cities, civil administration, commerce, and a demand for skilled professionals in the law and religion. As a result, many of the sources utilized in this paper convey how elite women—including aristocratic, gentry and business classes—reflected upon their education as well as their later roles as instructors of their children.

Personal works by mothers tell us not only how women reared their children, but also reveal to us the profound influence they must have had on children's later lives.

Although upper-class mothers such as Dorothy Leigh or Lady Brilliana Harley carefully

²¹ See Alice Friedman, "The Influence of Humanism on the Education of Girls and Boys in Tudor England," *History of Education Quarterly* 25 (Spring-Summer, 1985): 57-70; Margaret Spufford, "First Steps in Literacy: The Reading and Writing Experiences of the Humblest Seventeenth-Century Spiritual Autobiographers," *Social History* (October, 1979): 407-35; David Cressy, *Literacy and Social Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Jacqueline Eales, *Women in Early Modern England, 1500-1700* (London: University College London Press, 1998); and Retha Warnicke, "Private and Public: The Boundaries of Women's Lives in Early Stuart England," in *Privileging Gender in Early Modern England*, ed. Jean R. Brink (Kirksville, Missouri: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1993), 123-40; Mary Burke, ed. *Women, Writing, and the Reproduction of Culture in Tudor and Stuart Britain* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2005).

monitored the religious, social and intellectual development of their children, a few women emerged as famous maternal figures, distinguished not only for their prestigious ancestry and progeny, but also for their personal accomplishments. In this dissertation, chapter four will examine the characteristics of these mothers—Margaret More Roper, Anne Cooke Bacon, Elizabeth Cary and Susanna Wesley—and investigate their perception of motherhood as well as their roles in shaping the lives of their children. Perhaps one way to measure the impact of these four mothers is to examine how their children responded to their maternal guidance. In some cases such as those of Elizabeth Cary and Susanna Wesley, children dedicated writings honoring their mother's role in their lives. The children of Margaret More Roper continued to excel in their academic studies while remaining devout Catholics, and Anthony and Francis Bacon continued to confer with their mother regardless of the differences that came between them.

Sometimes mothers' thoughts were written down by men, or male authors, writing domestic works in similar genres. Familial accounts by husbands and sons applaud the devotion mothers exemplified in their everyday lives. Anthony Walker's description of his wife's piety and devotion to the religious education of their children reflected his profound admiration of her.²² The letters of John Holles conveyed not only his close and tender relationship with his wife, but also recognition of Anne Holles' involvement in the care of their eldest son John, whose nutrition, study and obedience to

²² Anthony Walker, *The Holy Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Walker, Late Wife of A.W.D.D. Rector of Fyfield in Essex, Giving a Modest and Short Account of Her Exemplary Piety and Charity. Published for the Glory of God, and Provoking Others to the Like Graces and Vertues. Chiefly Designed to Be Given to Her Friends, Who Can Abundantly Testify to the Truth of What Is Here Related. With Some Usefull Papers and Letters Writ by Her on Several Occasions* (London: John Leake, 1690), Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1978, 854:9.

instructors were monitored by his mother.²³ William Bedell, who became Lord Bishop of Kilmore in Ireland, fondly remembered the devotion of his devout mother upon his education when he recalled how Elizabeth Bedell, taught him and his brother young “to read English, and give an account of the heads of the Catechism.”²⁴ Later on, William recalled that among his cherished possessions was a Bible left to him by his mother in her will.²⁵ Other male writers, who were not related to the women whose thoughts and activities they admired, chose to compose guidebooks based upon the herbal and medicinal recipes developed by women. Although many of the texts containing medical recipes authorities credited to men such as Partridge²⁶ and Markham,²⁷ the contents of such recipes reflect an oral culture in which women, as caretakers of the household, shared their medical skills and discoveries.

As an age of print, many of the personal recollections were recorded, and much was printed in the eighteenth through twentieth centuries. Recent editions are numerous as interest in the history of private life and women’s experience swelled in the last decades of the twentieth century. During the past thirty years, memoirs, including many utilized in this study—Cholmley,²⁸ Holles,²⁹ and Hutchinson—were published, providing

²³ John Holles, *Letters of John Holles*, vol.1, ed. P.R. Seddon, Thoroton Society, vol. 31 (Nottingham: Derry and Sons, 1975), 31, 35-6.

²⁴ Thomas W. Jones, ed., *A True Relation of the Life and Death of the Right Reverend Father in God William Bedell, Lord Bishop of Kilmore in Ireland* (Westminster: The Camden Society, 1872), 17.

²⁵ Jones, ed., *A True Relation of the Life and Death*, 87.

²⁶ John Partridge, *The Treasure of Hidden Secrets. Commonlie Called, The Good Huswiues Closet of Prouision, for the Health of Her Household. Gathered Out of Sundry Experiments... And Now Newly Enlarged, With ... Names and Naturall Disposition of Diseases...* (London: I.R. for Edward White, 1600).

²⁷ Gervase Markham, *The English Housewife*, ed. Michael R. Best (Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1986).

²⁸ Hugh Cholmley, *The Memoirs and Memorials of Sir Hugh Cholmley of Whitby, 1600-1657*, ed. Jack Binns (Suffolk: Yorkshire Archaeological Society, 2000).

²⁹ Holles, *Letters of John Holles*.

intimate accounts of the maternal role in the lives of children. In addition, correspondence of individuals such as Joan and Maria Thynne,³⁰ and Susanna Wesley³¹ has been published, therefore illuminating their interactions as wives and mothers. Betty Travitsky and Patrick Cullen have compiled valuable primary sources, including prescriptive literature and personal narratives of women, in *The Early Modern Englishwoman: A Facsimile Library of Essential Works, 1500-1640*.³²

Some of the earlier secondary texts examining the relationship between mothers and their children do not support the model of an affectionate and nurturing family. One of the most influential works in the history of child-rearing is Philippe Ariès' 1960 study, *L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'ancien régime*, available in English translation as *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*.³³ As one of the initial studies in the history of childhood, Ariès' work generated diverse discussion in this new field of historical inquiry. Claiming that the concept of childhood did not exist in medieval society as well as describing the failure of parents to engage in a warm and loving relationship with their offspring, Ariès portrays an indifferent parent-child relationship. Ariès proposes children "belonged to adult society,"³⁴ and as evidence he cites the absence of children's clothes and toys and notes the few and adult-like pictures of children. By the sixteenth century, Ariès acknowledges a change in the relationship between parents and their children with the introduction of a "coddling" attitude and the

³⁰ Alison Wall, ed., *Two Elizabethan Women: Correspondence of Joan and Maria Thynne, 1575-1611* (Devizes, Wiltshire: Wiltshire Record Society, 1983).

³¹ Charles Wallace Jr., ed., *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

³² *The Early Modern Englishwoman: A Facsimile Library of Essential Works, 1500-1640*, eds. Betty Travitsky and Patrick Cullen, 9 vols. (Burlington: Ashgate, 2000).

³³ Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Vintage, 1962).

³⁴ Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, 128.

specialization of dress for infants and young children.³⁵ For Ariès, this more intimate and playful relationship engendered a stern reaction from the moralists and pedagogues of the seventeenth century who believed children needed to be properly educated in a Christian manner. As a result, a strict regiment and harsh discipline for children became necessary in order to prepare them for a Christian life.

Following the lead of Ariès' seminal work, which stated that a decisive shift from the traditional to the modern family occurred between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, historians have attempted to examine this period by also exploring the emotional and political relationships among family members.³⁶ Lawrence Stone constructs three family types to explain parental attitudes towards children as well as change from 1500-1800: "The Open Lineage Family, 1450-1630"; "The Restricted Patriarchal Nuclear Family, 1550-1700"; and "The Closed Domesticated Nuclear Family, 1640-1800."³⁷ Working within the framework Ariès established, Stone asserts the open lineage family was exposed to outside influences and its members had a strong relationship to ancestors and kin. Hierarchical relations, in which women played a subordinate role, characterized the family and the primacy of the welfare of the group overshadowed any individual recognition. While the second type of family, the restricted patriarchal nuclear family, overlapped and gradually replaced the first, parent-child relations continued to be indifferent and Stone concludes, "One reason for this was the very high infant and child mortality rates, which made it a folly to invest too much

³⁵ Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, 128-30.

³⁶ For evaluative discussions of Philippe Ariès' *Centuries of Childhood* see Richard T. Vann, "The Youth of Centuries of Childhood," *History and Theory* (1982):279-297; Adrian Wilson, "The Infancy of the History of Childhood: An Appraisal of Philippe Ariès," *History and Theory* (1980): 132-153; Carman Luke, *Pedagogy, Printing, and Protestantism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989). Luke has a chapter entitled "Approaches to the History of Childhood."

³⁷ Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977).

emotional capital in such ephemeral beings.”³⁸ Stone concurs with Ariès’ portrayal of insensitive parents by providing accounts of babies regularly sent to a wetnurse for approximately twelve to eighteen months. In an effort to substantiate parental lack of intimacy and emotion toward children, Stone cites the absence of “the purchase of mourning—an armband—on the death of very small children in the sixteenth, seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and the lack of parental attendance at funerals.”³⁹ It is in the seventeenth century in which the third type of family, the closed domesticated nuclear family, emerges and embraces a more affective atmosphere within the family and a secluded relationship from kin and members of the community.⁴⁰ Stone also claims adults identified children as a special status group and parents paid careful attention to their education. Unlike Ariès, Stone believes the nuclear family of the seventeenth century provided a more affectionate and less restricted setting for their offspring.

Edward Shorter,⁴¹ Jean Louis Flandrin,⁴² M.J. Tucker⁴³ and Randolph Trumbach⁴⁴ also addressed Ariès’ first stage of the historical investigation of the new field of the history of childhood. Despite the differences among them on specific matters, they are working within the framework Ariès established and, as a result, attribute certain characteristics to the traditional as opposed to the modern family. While Tucker

³⁸ Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England*, 105.

³⁹ Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England*, 105-06.

⁴⁰ Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England*, 221.

⁴¹ Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1975).

⁴² Jean Louis Flandrin, *Families in Former Times: Kinship, Household and Sexuality*, trans. Richard Southern (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

⁴³ M.J. Tucker, “The Child as Beginning and End: Fifteenth and Sixteenth-Century English Childhood,” in *The History of Childhood*, ed. Lloyd de Mause (London: Souvenir Press, 1976), 229-58.

⁴⁴ Randolph Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family* (New York: Academic Press, 1978). For more discussion on Trumbach’s and Stone’s theses, see Mary Lyndon Shanley, “The History of the Family in Modern England,” *Signs*, 4 (Summer, 1979): 740-50.

describes a detached relationship between parents and their offspring before the seventeenth century, she also envisions a more personal and involved interaction as parents began to perceive children as distinct individuals. Edward Shorter firmly argues in support of Ariès' thesis of maternal indifference to infants as a feature that characterized traditional society. Though Shorter did not believe traditional mothers were "monsters," he did decide they failed the "sacrifice test."⁴⁵ Ultimately, Shorter concludes, "Good mothering is an invention of modernization."⁴⁶ Both Trumbach and Flandrin recognize the changing attitudes towards children in the seventeenth century, and Flandrin further adds, "the duties of parents also underwent change."⁴⁷ He cites the significant increases in the number of parental manuals for instruction of children as well as the publication of the responsibilities of parents as educators of their offspring.

Gradually, historians working on family history began to produce evidence that seriously challenged the methodology and conclusions of Ariès and others who believed parents were indifferent and at times cruel towards their children. While previous research supported theories stating parental neglect and repression could be derived from practices such as wet-nursing, swaddling, abandonment, and emotional detachment, new scholarship immersed in the diaries, autobiographies and letters of the early modern period revealed a much different account of parent-child relations. Alan Macfarlane,⁴⁸ Linda Pollock,⁴⁹ Keith Wrightson,⁵⁰ Ralph Houlbrooke⁵¹ and David Cressy⁵² discovered

⁴⁵ Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family*, 169.

⁴⁶ Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family*, 168.

⁴⁷ Flandrin, *Families in Former Times*, 138-40.

⁴⁸ Alan Macfarlane, *The Family Life of Ralph Josselin, A Seventeenth-Century Clergyman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); Ralph Josselin, *The Diary of Ralph Josselin, 1616-1683*, ed. Alan Macfarlane (London: Oxford University Press, 1976); *Marriage and Love in England: Modes of Reproduction, 1300-1840* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

⁴⁹ Linda Pollock, *Forgotten Children: Parent-Child Relations from 1500 to 1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). In chapter one, Pollock provides a comprehensive account of the history of

a more caring and fragile family in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Deeply committed to primary source materials, Macfarlane uncovers the warmth and aspirations of the family of Ralph Josselin, a seventeenth-century clergyman, who had recorded the births, illnesses, and deaths of his ten children.⁵³

The Josselin Diary echoed similar sentiments expressed in the personal memoirs and diaries of the period, leading historians such as Pollock⁵⁴ to conclude that perhaps there was continuity in parental care instead of distinct historical categories. In her research, Pollock underscores the primacy of sources such as autobiographies, letters, diaries and memoirs in order to explore what it was like to be a child or a parent in the early modern period. When fully studied, such sources allow the historian to develop insights about attitudes to and experiences of childbirth,⁵⁵ the physical care of children in sickness and health, socialization, and expectations. Wrightson concurs with Pollock, and warns against “accounts that have a superficial plausibility as interpretations of what little is actually known of childhood in the period.”⁵⁶ Examining the contents of wills and the diaries of individuals such as Ralph Josselin, Adam Martindale and Henry Newcome, Wrightson concludes there is no reason to believe that “parental attitudes towards or aspirations for their children underwent fundamental change in the

childhood. Also, see Pollock, *A Lasting Relationship: Parents and Children Over Three Centuries* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1987).

⁵⁰ Keith Wrightson, *English Society, 1580-1680* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1982).

⁵¹ Ralph Houlbrooke, *English Family Life, 1576-1716: An Anthology from Diaries* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988); *Death, Religion, and the Family in England, 1480-1750* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

⁵² David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁵³ Josselin, *The Diary of Ralph Josselin*, 50, 118, 415.

⁵⁴ Pollock, *A Lasting Relationship*.

⁵⁵ See Linda Pollock, “Childbearing and Female Bonding in Early Modern England,” *Social History* (1997): 286-306.

⁵⁶ Wrightson, *English Society*, 107.

seventeenth century.”⁵⁷ In his survey, *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500*,⁵⁸ Hugh Cunningham also challenges the work of Ariès by confirming Pollock’s findings of continuity in the treatment of children from 1500 to 1900. For Cunningham, the twentieth century witnessed the “most rapid change in the conceptualization and experience of childhood.”⁵⁹ Steven Ozment’s brief overview of the historiography of the family in his chapter “Structure and Sentiment,” also casts mothers as affectionate and devoted in the care of their family.⁶⁰

Historians such as Kenneth Charlton,⁶¹ Ilana Ben-Amos,⁶² and Jacqueline Eales⁶³ have utilized primary source materials to uncover the nurturing relationships between parents and children and to provide examples of how mothers attended to the care and education of their young. Sara Mendelson⁶⁴ and Patricia Crawford⁶⁵ participated in a collaborative venture to survey the lives of early modern English women in *Women in Early Modern England*.⁶⁶ Both authors affirm the affectionate but hierarchical relationship between spouses, and the devotion and concern mothers

⁵⁷ Wrightson, *English Society*, 118.

⁵⁸ Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500* (New York: Longman, 1995). Also, Hugh Cunningham, “Histories of Childhood,” *The American Historical Review*, 103 (October, 1998): 1195-1208.

⁵⁹ Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society*, 187.

⁶⁰ Steven Ozment, *Ancestors: The Loving Family in Old Europe* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001).

⁶¹ Kenneth Charlton, *Women, Religion and Education in Early Modern England* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

⁶² Ilana Ben-Amos, “Reciprocal Bonding: Parents and Their Offspring in Early Modern England,” *Journal of Family History* (July, 2000): 291-312; Ilana Ben-Amos, “Gifts and Favors: Informal Support in Early Modern England,” *Journal of Modern History* 72 (June, 2000): 295-338.

⁶³ Jacqueline Eales, *Women in Early Modern England*.

⁶⁴ See also Sara Mendelson, *The Mental World of Stuart Women: Three Studies* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1987).

⁶⁵ Patricia Crawford, “Women, Religion and Social Action in England, 1500-1800,” *Australian Feminist Studies* (1998): 269-78; Crawford, *Blood, Bodies and Families in Early Modern England*; and Patricia Crawford and Laura Gowing, eds. *Women’s Worlds in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 2005).

⁶⁶ Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England, 1550-1720* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

expressed for their children. Drawing upon the letters, diaries and autobiographies of upper-class women, Mendelson and Crawford suggest the formation of a female culture that was attentive to the concerns of women in reference to childbirth, the socialization of children, education and religious indoctrination.⁶⁷

Compilations containing prescriptive literature advising women on such subjects as birth, childcare, religious devotion and education contribute to our knowledge of advice and guidebooks available during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Of interest to this study is Betty Travitsky's anthology, which contains religious writings consisting of prayers, meditations, confessions and religious poetry; familial and personal writings of mothers writing about motherhood; letters and diaries of elite women; and secular writings by women.⁶⁸ A later collaborative effort with Anne Lake Prescott by Travitsky resulted in a series of Renaissance writing by men and women addressing such themes as domestic affairs, religion, political life and social structure and love and sexuality.⁶⁹

Although the primary source material for this study did not indicate evidence of maternal infanticide, there is a growing corpus of research examining isolated incidents of this practice. While acknowledging the difficulty in establishing the prevalence of infanticide in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England, historians examining this particular area of research, maintain infanticide was a serious problem considering the

⁶⁷ Mendelson and Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England*, 303-27.

⁶⁸ *The Paradise of Women: Writings by Englishwomen of the Renaissance*, ed. Betty Travitsky (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

⁶⁹ *Female and Male Voices in Early Modern England: An Anthology of Renaissance Writing*, eds. Betty Travitsky and Anne Lake Prescott (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000). Also see Joan Larson Klein, ed., *Daughters, Wives, and Widows: Writings by Men about Women and Marriage in England, 1500-1640* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992); Charlotte F. Otten, ed., *English Women's Voices, 1540-1700* (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1992).

enactment of such legal reforms as the 1624 Infanticide Act.⁷⁰ Accounts of infanticidal mothers often reflect the desperation women felt as they struggled with illegitimate births or faced dire economic circumstances. The personal accounts of upper-class women in the sixteenth and seventeenth-century in this study did not reveal evidence of maternal infanticide. Instead, diaries, letters and other personal writings were rife with maternal grief when an infant died.⁷¹

A review of the more recent secondary literature examining mothers and their relationships with children as well as an analysis of primary literature unveiling maternal roles within the household, support the profound and caring impact mothers had on their children. This dissertation looks at mothers of the upper class in seventeenth-century England who played an instrumental role in the lives of their children. Aristocratic families have been chosen for study simply because they have left more accessible records than other social groups, rather than because they might have distinctive child-rearing practices. As mothers, women encountered a plethora of instruction (both verbal and written) in the form of sermons, eulogies, advice books and manuals, so that they would be better able to raise healthy, Christian children. Diaries, letters, autobiographies and other personal writings show that mothers recognized those responsibilities, and modified such instructions to cater to the needs of their particular families, while making use of their specific resources and skills.

⁷⁰ Stephanie Chamberlain, "Fantasizing Infanticide: Lady Macbeth and the Murdering Mother in Early Modern England," *College English* 32 (Summer, 2005): 72-91; Laura Gowing, "Secret Births and Infanticide in Seventeenth-Century England *Past and Present* 156 (1997): 87-115; and Peter C. Hoffer and N.E.H. Hull, *Murdering Mothers: Infanticide in England and New England, 1558-1803* (New York: New York University Press, 1981).

⁷¹ Raymond Anselment, "'The Teares of Nature': Seventeenth-Century Parental Bereavement," *Modern Philology* 91 (August, 1993): 26-53; "'A Heart Terrifying Sorrow': An Occasional Piece on Poetry of Miscarriage," *Papers on Language and Literature* 33 (Winter, 1997): 13-46; and Pamela Hammons, "'Despised Creatures: The Illusion of Maternal Self-Effacement in Seventeenth-century Child Loss,'" *English Literary History* 66 (Spring, 1999): 25-49.

This dissertation examines the three main areas of the maternal role – physical care, religious training and educational instruction – to illuminate not only the messages mothers were listening to and reading, but also show how they themselves perceived their roles. Inquiring to what extent mothers not only performed their roles as instructed, but also actually shaped the lives of their children, this study will underscore the importance of the seventeenth century in the evolution of “modern” childrearing. It is in the seventeenth century (especially in England) that maternal breastfeeding becomes an ideal embraced by mothers; that swaddling begins to decline; that children’s literature becomes copious; and that childrearing becomes a central concern of an increasing quantity of literature.

It is this rich amount of primary source literature concerning childrearing that forms the basis for this dissertation. Specifically, private literature by male and female authors largely from the seventeenth century (and last few years of the sixteenth and first few of the eighteenth), elucidate the intimate concerns and actions of families as they raise children, handle social and economic commitments and confront unexpected events in their everyday lives. While memoirs, diaries, autobiographies, letters and family advice manuals provide valuable information about the political, economic and social events of the seventeenth century, they also offer insight about the maternal role in physical care and early training. Such private literature first became abundant in seventeenth-century England, and at the same time, writing by women in any genre increased in this period.

This study will not address the formal literary works written by women such as texts by Elizabeth Cary, Margaret Cavendish and Aphra Behn) nor proto-feminist

treatises such as those by Mary Astell, but will focus upon the genre of private literature. Excluding mass popular media (journalism, broadsheets and ballads), this study will examine pertinent prescriptive literature that presents models of maternal care and instruction. Though this literature is mostly male-authored, including sermons and treatises, it also includes texts from women (Brilliana Harley, Lucy Hutchinson, Dorothy Leigh Lady Fanshawe and Elizabeth Clinton) that convey their intimate thoughts concerning the physical care and intellectual maturation of their children. The prescriptive works contain mainly seventeenth-century texts, similar to the private literature this study examines, but do include sixteenth-century humanist texts, notably those by Erasmus and Juan Luis Vives (who lived and worked in England in the early sixteenth century as tutor to Mary Tudor), whose Latin works circulated widely in the contemporary translations and significantly influenced later vernacular works on these subjects.

Examining a specific body of primary texts, this dissertation will present evidence of how mothers cared for children's physical needs and early religious and intellectual training in chapters one to three, providing as a capstone in chapter four, profiles of four well-known figures whose roles as mothers emerge from the primary sources and are not otherwise widely known. Chapter one explores familial accounts of husbands and children that depict mothers as affectionate and devoted caregivers who confronted medical and societal challenges in their efforts to provide a safe and nurturing environment. Chapter two examines the dedication of mothers as the spiritual guides of their children, and suggests the profound role they possessed in catechizing the household. Interestingly, an analysis of funeral sermons for women both illuminates the

significant roles of mothers who nurtured the religious environment of their children and servants, and recognizes women as mentors and models of spiritual devotion. Chapter three uncovers the faithful role mothers assumed as the early educators of their children, a role amplified as mothers maintained a relentless devotion to their sons while they were away at school.

Chapter four focuses on the lives of four extraordinary mothers—Margaret More Roper, Anne Cooke Bacon, Elizabeth Cary and Susanna Wesley—whose ancestry and individual accomplishments not only make them distinctive, but their ability to shape the lives of their famous children also merit examination. What makes this particular study unique is the investigation of these four women as mothers. While scholars have examined important writings of these women or have provided thoughtful accounts of their existences or the lives of their family members, the relationship between these four mothers and their children has yet to be explored. The study will span the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, beginning with Margaret Roper (1505-1544) and end with an investigation of Susanna Wesley (1670-. 1742), the mother of nineteen children of whom John Wesley is the most famous.

Chapter One

Advice and Practice for the New Mother: Birth, Loss and the Challenges of Childrearing

...for you have passed by all excuses, and have ventured upon, and doe goe on with that loving act of a loving mother; in the giving of sweete milke of your own breasts, to your own childe; wherein you have gone before the greatest number of honourable Ladies of your place....I thinke it an honour unto you, to doe that which hath proved you to be full of care to please God....¹

Although she did not breastfeed her sixteen children, Elizabeth Clinton praised her daughter-in-law, Bridget, for nursing her nine children and continuing to serve God as a paragon of Christian motherhood. Reflective of her failure to breastfeed her offspring, Elizabeth attempted to reconcile her past decisions with religious belief and, in doing so, wrote *The Countesse of Lincolnes Nursurie*, published in 1622. In addition to lauding the virtues of maternal breastfeeding, Elizabeth Clinton recognized the complexity of the lives of women who worked to comply with societal norms as well as to pursue a Christian life in which the safety and well-being of their family remained paramount.

Elizabeth Clinton's text is significant because it addresses the divergence between the prescriptive literature of the period, in this case advocating breastfeeding, and the incidence of families hiring wetnurses. Drawing upon the lives of upper-class women each of whom possesses unique views and conditions, this chapter examines not only maternal perceptions and experiences in childbirth, but also investigates how mothers

¹Elizabeth Clinton, *The Countesse of Lincolne's Nurserie* (Oxford: John Litchfield and James Short, 1622), A1, A2.

assumed their very important roles as caregivers of their children in light of religious and social directives. While a review of primary and secondary sources provides valuable texts and informative accounts concerning physical care of children, there has yet to be a study that reconciles what the prescriptive literature advocated and how individual families managed the challenges of childbirth and childrearing. This chapter attempts to accomplish this goal while exploring important features of childrearing which include personal narratives of childbirth; infant care including breastfeeding and swaddling; play and discipline; names for children; childhood illnesses and medicinal remedies; childhood mishaps and accidents, and parental grief when a child died.

How elite women chose to handle their maternal roles became dependent upon their relationship with God, family and the unique attributes each possessed as an individual. A careful reading of the writings of mothers such as Elizabeth Clinton and Dorothy Leigh² reveals a sense of piety and conviction, while the accounts of Elizabeth Walker³ and Elizabeth Cholmley⁴ convey a profound feeling of empathy and inner strength. Not all women wrote about their experiences as mothers, however, and fortunately, husbands and children recounted this intimate time in their lives. Such personal recollections enable one to learn how families perceived and handled their roles as they listened to religious and civil authorities while maintaining their distinctive personalities and circumstances.

During the past three decades, historians have studied the birth, care and nurturance of children in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England. Childbirth and the physical care of children played an integral part in women's lives as noted by David

² Dorothy Leigh, *The Mothers Blessing*.

³ Anthony Walker, *The Holy Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Walker*.

⁴ Hugh Cholmley, *Memoirs*.

Cressy⁵, Ralph Houlbrooke⁶, Linda Pollock⁷, Jacqueline Eales⁸, Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford⁹ in their surveys of mothers of this particular period. Valerie Fildes provides a comprehensive history of breastfeeding in her study of wetnursing, and Barbara Harris¹⁰ and Marilyn Salmon¹¹ have analyzed various reasons as to why women breastfed or sent their infants to nurses.

Other authors have surveyed the clothing and recreation of children during this period. Anne Buck¹² covers four centuries of children's clothing in her study, and Nicholas Orme¹³ examines children's play during the medieval period as well as the sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries. Scott Smith-Bannister explores the naming of children in his exhaustive study *Names and Naming Patterns in England, 1538-1700*,¹⁴ and Elaine Hoby¹⁵ and Suzanne Hull¹⁶ include in their compilations writings for women instructing them in the field of medical care.

Primary sources include not only the prescriptive literature of the period, but also intimate descriptions of the lives of women as they confronted childbirth, nursing and raising their children. The religious and medical prescriptive literature came from both

⁵ Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death*.

⁶ Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion, and the Family in England, 1480-1750*.

⁷ Pollock, *Forgotten Children: Parent-Child Relations from 1500 to 1900*.

⁸ Eales, *Women in Early Modern England*.

⁹ Mendelson and Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England, 1550-1720*.

¹⁰ Harris, *English Aristocratic Women, 1450-1550*.

¹¹ Marilynn Salmon, "The Cultural Significance of Breast-Feeding and Infant Care in Early Modern England and America," in *Mothers and Motherhood: Readings in American History*, eds. Rima D. Apple and Janet Golden (Columbus: Ohio State University, 1997).

¹² Anne Buck., *Clothes and the Child: A Handbook of Children's Dress in England, 1500-1900* (New York: Holmes & Meir, 1996).

¹³ Orme, "Child's Play in Medieval England," *History Today*, (October, 2001): 49-5; See also Orme, "The Culture of Children in Medieval England," *Past and Present*, (August, 1995): 48-88.

¹⁴ Scott Smith-Bannister, *Names and Naming Patterns in England, 1538-1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

¹⁵ Elaine Hoby, *Virtue of Necessity: English Women's Writing, 1646-1688* (London: Virago Press, 1988), chp. 7.

¹⁶ Suzanne Hull, *Chaste, Silent and Obedient*.

women and men. William Gouge¹⁷, Robert Cleaver¹⁸, William Perkins¹⁹, Desiderius Erasmus²⁰ and Juan Luis Vives²¹ advised mothers in the areas of childbirth and care of their children. In addition to the male medical voices of the period, Jane Sharpe²², Margaret Hoby²³, Grace Mildmay²⁴ and Hannah Woolley²⁵ also advised women about childbirth, nursing and medicinal recipes. Diaries and memoirs, written by both women and men, provide poignant and riveting narratives of the interaction of parents and their children. They enlighten the reader as to how families grappled with the processes of childbirth and childrearing. The intimate accounts of mothers and fathers as they confronted the challenges of parenthood, raised and buried children, and reconciled what the prescriptive literature said with their emotions and circumstances, provide a genuine account of the role mothers played in the physical care of their children.

Preparation for Childbirth

Religious beliefs greatly affected perceptions of childbirth in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England. Both male and female writing of the period reflected an

¹⁷ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*.

¹⁸ Robert Cleaver, *A Godly Form of Householde Gouernment: for the Ordering of Priuate Families*. London: T. Man, 1612. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1984, 5386: 1. First published in 1598, the text was reprinted in 1600, 1603, 1612, and 1630.

¹⁹ Perkins, *Christian Oeconomie*.

²⁰ *The Colloquies of Erasmus*, trans. Craig Thompson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965).

²¹ Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman*.

²² Jane Sharp, *The Midwives Book: Or the Whole Art of Midwifery Discovered*, ed. Elaine Hobby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

²³ Lady Margaret Hoby, *Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby, 1599-1605*. ed. Dorothy M. Meads (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1930). See also Lady Margaret Hoby and Joanna Moody, *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady: The Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby, 1599-1605* (Gloucestershire, England: Sutton, 1998).

²⁴ Linda Pollock, *With Faith and Physic: The Life of a Tudor Gentlewoman, Lady Grace Mildmay, 1552-1620* (London: Collins & Brown, 1993).

²⁵ Hannah Woolley, *The Gentlewomans Companion; or, A Guide to the Female Sex* (London: A. Maxwell, 1675) in *Conduct Literature for Women, 1640-1710*, eds. William St. Clair and Irmgard Maassen, vol. 4 (London: Pickering & Chatto), 2002.

intimate knowledge of Scripture, especially in reference to Mary, mother of Jesus, and to Eve, the woman responsible for temptation and pain. Childbirth placed women at center stage for religious reflection and interpretation, and women formulated perceptions about childbirth according to the particular ministers they listened to or the specific circumstances that surrounded them. Expressing either fear or thankfulness or both, women and family members indicated in their personal writings how they coped with preparation for childbirth.

The event of childbirth elicited strong religious and personal emotions from soon-to-be mothers, their families and religious leaders. While Catholic, Anglican and Puritan clerics reminded their followers of the religious underpinnings of childbirth—accounts that cast this condition as impure, sinful and painful, reminiscent of Eve who disobeyed God’s laws and who, along with Adam, was responsible for the state of original sin, or at the opposite end of the spectrum, childbirth as a revered part of God’s plan to provide redemption and rebirth, and the suffering experienced by women produced children educated according to Christian principles²⁶—women and their families attempted to balance their religious faith with the uncertainty of childbirth.

Upper-class women were well aware of the expectations of their family and of their faith, and, at the same time, cognizant of the tenuous nature of their health and of the well-being of their newborns. In sixteenth and seventeenth-century England, infant mortality was high, and life expectancy at the age of one was higher than at birth, indicating that a great number of infants perished in their first years.²⁷ Among the

²⁶ See Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death* for a discussion of the spiritual construction of childbirth. On the pain of childbirth and the intercession of the Virgin Mary, see Esther Cohen, “The Animated Pain of the Body,” *American Historical Review* (February, 2000), 59-61.

²⁷ Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion, and the Family in England, 1480-1750*, 8.

aristocratic and gentry classes, life expectancy increased once the child reached the age of five, and when a boy or girl survived the perilous stage of early childhood, he or she possessed a good chance of living into adulthood. Such realities of life at this time in England continued to affect the perceptions of women as they prepared for their roles as mothers and caregivers.

Public discussion and writing about childbirth demanded conservative and discreet attention by male commentators who consistently used familiar religious references. In 1582, when Thomas Bentley wrote *The Monument of Matrones*, the first Anglican prayer book for women, he devoted a section of the voluminous text to childbirth.²⁸ While he was a law student, Bentley wrote this collection of religious prayers, meditations and instructions primarily for a female audience. In his *Fift Lampe of Virginitie*, Bentley included prayers for the woman in labor who conveyed thanks for “this thy gracious gift” as well as expressed trust in “God’s goodness and mercy.”²⁹ Also included in the *Fift Lampe of Virginitie*, were eleven prayers requesting strength ‘to endure and abide this travell of child-birth,’ so that the mother may receive from God, “comfort and heavenlie consolation,” and the chance to “enioie the fruit of my wombe.”³⁰

²⁸ Bentley, *The Monument of Matrones The Fift Lampe of Virginitie*, vol. 6 contains prayers concerning childbirth. C. Atkinson and W. Stoneman provide an overview of the intended audience and a useful guide to *The Monument of Matrones* in “These Griping Greefes and Pinching Pangs”: Attitudes to Childbirth in Thomas Bentley’s the *Monument of Matrones*, 1582,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal XXI* (1990): 193-203; See also C. Atkinson and Jo Atkinson, “Subordinating Women: Thomas Bentley’s Use of Biblical Women in the *Monument of Matrones*, 1582,” *Church History*, 60 (September, 1991): 289-300; and C. Atkinson and Jo Atkinson, “Thomas Bentley’s the *Monument of Matrones* (1582): The First Anglican Prayer Book for Women,” *Anglican Theological Review* (Summer, 1992): 277-88; C. Atkinson and Jo. Atkinson, “The Identity and Life of Thomas Bentley, Compiler of the *Monument of Matrones*, 1582,” *Sixteenth Century Journal XXXI* (Summer, 2000): 323-45.

²⁹ Bentley, *Monument of Matrones, Fift Lampe of Virginitie*, vol. 6, 95-99.

³⁰ Bentley, *Monument of Matrones, Fift Lampe of Virginitie*, vol. 6, 106-07.

The Puritan writer Philip Stubbes also provided a religious account of the birth of his son and the subsequent death of his young wife, Katherine. Proposed as an example of Christian piety for women, Philip Stubbes praised the altruism and obedience of Katherine whom he had married when she was fifteen and buried four years later. In 1591, he wrote *A Crystal Glass for Christian Women, Containing a Most Excellent Discourse of the Godly Life and Christian Death of Mistress Katherine Stubbes*, in order to honor Katherine's memory and to describe her pious life to other women so they could emulate her virtues. In childbirth, Philip Stubbes recounted how his wife predicted her death after the delivery of a son, and then willingly accepted God's plan of her death. According to Stubbes,

...she was delivered of a goodly man-child with as much speed and as safely in all women's judgments as any could be. And after her delivery, she grew so strong that she was able within four or five days sit up in her bed and to walk up and down her chamber.... it pleased god to visit her again with an extreme hot and burning quotidian ague in which sickness she languished fir about six weeks.... And so desirous was she to be with the lord that these golden sentences were never out of her mouth: "I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ and, oh miserable wretch that I am, who shall deliver me from this body subject to sin? Come quickly, lord Jesus, come quickly."³¹

Childbirth was cast in a negative light by the cleric John Donne who not only emphasized the uncleanliness of this stage, but also held heartbreaking personal recollections. Educated by Jesuits and later admitted to the Anglican ministry, John Donne spoke of the dirty, sinful and unholy condition of childbirth. Advocating the importance of baptism, Donne delivered sermons describing the unholy nature of birth

³¹ Philip Stubbes, *A Crystal Glass for Christian Women, Containing a Most Excellent Discourse of the Godly Life and Christian Death of Mistress Katherine Stubbes, 1591*, in *Daughters, Wives, and Widows*, ed. Klein, 144. Also see Patricia Phillippy, *Women, Death and Literature in Post-Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 95-6. Phillippy concludes that Katherine Stubbes' deathbed scene symbolized a reversal of hierarchy in the household as she gains supremacy with the expression of faith and courage.

when he claimed, “Our mothers conceived us in sin; and being wrapped up in uncleanness there, can any man bring a clean thing out of filthiness?”³² In his personal life, Donne’s recollection of his wife’s ordeal in childbirth left him depressed and remorseful. According to his biographer and friend, Izaak Walton, Donne had debated over the decision to pursue a business venture or stay with his young wife as she was close to the birth of their child. While he was away, Donne had a vision of his wife in pain and of his first child who had died. Tormented by this vision, Donne sent a messenger to check on the condition of his wife, Anne. Unfortunately, the report confirmed his anguish: “Mrs. Donne very sad and sick in her bed; and that, after a long and dangerous labor, she had been delivered of a dead child.”³³ During his sixteen-year marriage to Anne, who died at the age of thirty-three after the stillborn death of their twelfth child, Donne had buried five children and had to provide for the care of the remaining seven.

Female perceptions of childbirth placed greater emphasis on the miraculous nature of the event and the intercession of God on behalf of humanity than on the transgressions of Eve. In her study “The Animated Pain of the Body,” Esther Cohen discusses the pain women experienced during childbirth, citing an accepted belief that women, as punishment for Eve’s crime, experienced labor pains. Cohen also maintains that religious authorities supported the notion that the Virgin Mary, who was free of all sin, did not experience labor pains.³⁴ Well aware of the religious interpretations of Eve, notions of impurity, and biblical sources as to why females experienced labor pain,

³² Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death*, 19.

³³ Izaak Walton, *The Life of Dr. John Donne in John Donne, Devotions upon Emergent Occasions; Together with Death’s Duel* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1959), xvi.

³⁴ E. Cohen, “Animated Pain of the Body,” 36-68.

upper-class women in early modern England offered a more intimate and hopeful perception of childbirth that celebrated God's role in the creation of the child. In *The Mother's Blessing*, Dorothy Leigh conveyed her sense of obligation to her three sons and to God in the spiritual development of her children:

My dear children, have I not cause to fear? the Holy Ghost saith by the prophet, *Can a mother forget the child of her womb?* Esther 49:15. As if he should say, is it possible, that she which hath carried her child within her so near her heart and brought into this world with so much bitter pain, so many groans and cries can forget it? Nay rather, will she not labor now till Christ be formed in it? will she not bless it every time it sucks on her breasts, when she feeleth the blood from her heart to nourish it?³⁵

Religious devotion and the tenderness between mother and child overshadowed the reference to pain by Leigh in her description of a woman's role in childbirth and the development of the infant. Elizabeth Freke, an Anglican noblewoman, also expressed her gratitude to God for the birth and subsequent recovery of her infant son. In her diary, Elizabeth wrote

... by my Gods Mercy & providence to mee, I was saffly Delivered, And tho' (apparently) of a dead Child, My God Raised him up to me soe Farr as the Same Night to baptize him of my Dear Father's Name, Ralph Freke, for which Mercy to him & me I beg I may Never forget to be thankfull .³⁶

During the weeks and months that followed the birth of her son, Elizabeth Freke continued to express her gratitude to God as she recounted young Ralph's perilous illnesses and accidents. For example, a month after his birth, Elizabeth wrote that Ralph

was Taken with a Through Thrush in His Mouth with which, he was Againe given over for dead, & carried Away From me in order to a Buriall; butt from this Misfortune my God Raised him up Againe, I hope to be his servant, & a Comfortt to mee, his poor Afflicted mother....³⁷

³⁵ Leigh, *The Mothers Blessing*, 293.

³⁶ Mrs. Elizabeth Freke, *Her Diary, 1671 To 1714*, ed. Mary Carbery (Cork: Guy and Co., 1913), 24. See also *The Diary of Elizabeth Freke, 1671-1714* in *English Women's Voices, 1540-1700*, ed. Charlotte Otten, 259.

³⁷ Mrs. Elizabeth Freke, *Her Diary*, 25.

While religious faith and the experience of pain influenced women's perceptions of childbirth, the fear of death also greatly affected their thoughts. Perhaps this can be seen most clearly in the writing of Elizabeth Joscelyn, a Puritan woman who wrote *A Legacy to Her Unborn Child*.³⁸ At the age of six, Elizabeth lost her mother and her maternal grandfather William Chaderton, who served as the Bishop of Lincoln, assumed the role of guardian.³⁹ Elizabeth married Taurell Joscelyn when she was twenty, and became pregnant six years later—a pregnancy that would result in the birth of a daughter she would not live to raise. Before her pregnancy, Elizabeth immersed herself in the study of history, language and the Bible. She perceived herself as a pious woman who lived a godly life and who wanted her unborn child prepared for the same religious upbringing. In preparation for the birth of her child, Elizabeth ordered a winding-sheet while she wrote her *Legacy*, which was unfinished when the baby was born a month early. After the baptism of the baby girl named Theodora, Elizabeth sent for the winding-sheet that she wrapped around her, and died nine days later from a high fever.⁴⁰ Joscelyn's behavior before the birth of her child reflected not only knowledge of the dangers of childbirth, but also a devotion to her religious faith that required an individual to prepare for death during one's life. One of the most important responsibilities Puritan mothers possessed was the religious indoctrination of their young children, and Elizabeth Joscelyn made a serious effort to provide for the spiritual training of her child.

³⁸ Elizabeth Joscelyn, *The Mothers Legacie, To Her Unborn Childe, London, 1624* in *The Early Modern Englishwoman: A Facsimile Library of Essential Works*, eds. Betty S. Travitsy and Patrick Cullen, vol. 8 (Burlington: Ashgate, 2001), 1-114. Joscelyn did not finish her legacy at the time of her death in 1622. Thomas Goad, a minister and close friend of Elizabeth, completed the manuscript two years later.

³⁹ Elizabeth's mother separated from her husband, Richard Brooke. For background about the life of Elizabeth Joscelyn and a discussion of the preparation of her manuscript, see S. Brown, ed., *Women's Writing in Stuart England*, 91-105.

⁴⁰ S. Brown, ed., *Women's Writing in Stuart England*, 100.

Birth and the Role of the Midwife

The physical environment of the birth room and the emotional support for the mother in labor reflected the integral role women played in childbirth. Although male physicians wrote manuals advising women about childbirth, and civil and religious authorities attempted to regulate the practice of midwifery, the management of childbirth remained a female experience, supervised by a midwife. While the paucity of medical understanding contributed to the fear of death and in some cases, high mortality rates among mothers, women prepared themselves for the birth of their infants. As male physicians challenged the female sphere of childbirth, educated and assertive midwives such as Jane Sharp⁴¹ and Elizabeth Cellier⁴² criticized such attempts to dominate a practice they believed belonged to women.

For the majority of women among elite families in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, childbirth was a domain where women made decisions and offered comfort, primarily in the absence of male physicians.⁴³ The social space of the birth was a

⁴¹ In 1671, Jane Sharp published a text of 418 pages entitled *The Midwives Book or the Whole Art of Midwifery Discovered. Directing Childbearing Women How to Behave Themselves in Their Conception, Breeding, Bearing and Nursing of Children*. See Jane Sharp, *The Midwives Book: Or the Whole Art of Midwifery Discovered*, ed. Elaine Hobby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁴² Elizabeth Cellier, *To Dr.—An Answer to His Queries Concerning the Colledg of Midwives* (London, 1688), Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1983, 1457:3, 1-8.

⁴³ By the end of the seventeenth century, male physicians began to assist with childbirth among the upper classes. Before this, physicians were content to let midwives control the birthing process. It was not until the late sixteenth century, when William Harvey wrote the first original English work on midwifery, *De Generatione Animalium* (translated into English two years later), did physicians pursue a scientific study of the field of obstetrics. The introduction of the forceps by the Chamberlans in the late sixteenth century further enhanced the role of male physicians in the birthing process. See J. Towler and J. Bramall, *Midwives in History and Society* (London: Croom Helm, 1986): 71-81; J. Donnison, *Midwives and Medical Men: A History of the Struggle for the Control of Childbirth* (London: Historical Publications, 1988).

collective female realm with the midwife and other women ready to provide assistance.⁴⁴ When the expectant mother first experienced labor pains, a protocol ensued which involved the husband's responsibility to send for the midwife and other women. In addition to female family members, other invited women known as 'gossips' came to the mother's bedside. Interestingly, the term gossip was an alteration of 'god-sib' or 'god-sibling,' which was an individual invited to witness the birth for the future purpose of the child's baptism.⁴⁵ The lying-in chamber was the space where the birth took place, and the midwife and other female attendants prepared the room for the actual birth and for the period afterwards, in which the mother rested and remained in bed for approximately two to three weeks. While the health of the mother determined her stay in the room, after seven to ten days, the mother could move to other parts of the house, and after a month, she could leave the home.⁴⁶

The dimly lit room where the mother gave birth contained candles or a fireplace providing light, and all outlets to other parts of the house remained closed. For the birth, only the women were present, and the husband remained in a separate room. Under the supervision of the midwife, the women prepared the mother's caudle, which was a special drink consisting of ale or wine, warmed with sugar and spices, and given to the woman in labor.⁴⁷ In most circumstances, the expectant mother knew the midwife who was a woman of good character and more importantly, possessed the approval of the

⁴⁴ Adrian Wilson, "The Ceremony of Childbirth and Its Interpretation" in *Women as Mothers in Preindustrial England*, ed. Valerie Fildes (London: Routledge, 1990), 73.

⁴⁵ Wilson, "The Ceremony of Childbirth and Its Interpretation", 70-71.

⁴⁶ Wilson, "The Ceremony of Childbirth and Its Interpretation", 74-6.

⁴⁷ Wilson, "The Ceremony of Childbirth and Its Interpretation", 73.

church.⁴⁸ Within the birthing chamber, the expectant mother also had other women present such as a female relative or close friend who were already mothers.

Church and state supported the regulation of midwifery. During the reign of Henry VIII, the Act of 1512 provided for the supervision of medicine and surgery. The Act of 1512 did not specifically cite midwifery, but governed midwives under the law because they practiced a manual art, which the government considered a part of surgery. The Church enforced the new law, and midwives had to apply for a certificate at the Bishop's Court in the particular diocese. In 1558, Bishop Bonner issued the first official recorded certificate. At least four women presented the midwife and they had to attest to her midwifery skill and confirm her faith and obedience as a Catholic.⁴⁹ The midwife had to take an oath to abide by the teachings of the Church, and safely deliver the fetus in the presence of other women. Tudor regulation and Church enforcement of the 1512 Act, demonstrate that childbirth was considered so important an event as to merit the attention of these two powerful institutions.

Circumstances did not always permit prospective parents to be prepared for the birth of a child. In an account of the birth of her nephew, Francis Danby,⁵⁰ Alice Thornton recounted how her sister, Lady Danby, could not get her old midwife because the plague had prevented the skilled woman from leaving her town in Richmond. Therefore, Alice, her Aunt Norton, and Lady Armitage were present when Dame Sworre

⁴⁸ Donnison, *Midwives and Medical Men*, 18-9; J. Towler and J. Bramall, *Midwives in History and Society*, 55-62.

⁴⁹ W.S.C. Copeman, *Doctors and Disease in Tudor Times* (London: Dawson's of Pall Mall, 1960), 48. See Thomas Forbes, "The Registration of English Midwives in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries." *Medical History* (1964): 235-44.

⁵⁰ Francis was the sixteenth child of Lady Danby, sister of Alice Thornton. Lady Danby had six stillbirths before the birth of Francis, and died from fever almost one month after giving birth. A. Thornton, *The Autobiography of Mrs. Alice Thornton, (1645-1662)* in *English Women's Voices, 1540-1700*, ed. Charlotte Otten, 232-3.

delivered the baby after a difficult labor.⁵¹ The mother of Simonds D' Ewes went into labor early and as a result, Cecilia D' Ewes had to employ the services of an unfamiliar midwife whose appearance greatly alarmed her to the point in which she contemplated a replacement. According to her son Simonds, however, time did not afford Cecilia this option and she “was necessitated to make use of a midwife whose neck was so distorted on the one side that when she came right forward, she appeared to look over her shoulder.”⁵² In his autobiography, D'Ewes recorded that the midwife had sensed his mother's uneasiness, and “was herself troubled at it, and, whether maliciously or casually, exceedingly bruised and hurt his right eye in her assisting at the birth.”⁵³

The Josselin family also experienced fear and a sense of vulnerability when the midwife failed to arrive on time. In his diary, Ralph Josselin, the vicar of Earls Colone in Essex, recorded the fifteen pregnancies of his wife, Jane.⁵⁴ Describing his role in summoning the women who would help Jane with the deliveries of her babies, Josselin claimed there were instances in which the midwife was missing. In 1648, when Jane gave birth to her fourth child, Ralph Josselin recorded the absence of the midwife, “My wife was delivered of her second son, the midwife was not with her, only four women and Mrs. Mary.”⁵⁵ One year later, Jane Josselin was also without the services of a

⁵¹ Thornton, *Autobiography of Mrs. Alice Thornton, (1645-1662)* in *English Women's Voices, 1540-1700*, 232-3.

⁵² Sir Simonds D'Ewes, *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Sir Simonds D'Ewes*, vol. 1, ed. James Orchard Halliwell (London: Richard Bentley, 1845), 5.

⁵³ D'Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 5.

⁵⁴ Ralph Josselin, *The Diary of Ralph Josselin, 1616-1683*, ed. Alan MacFarlane (London: Oxford University Press, 1976). Jane had ten live births and experienced five miscarriages. See also L. Beier's article, “In Sickness and in Health: A Seventeenth-Century Family's Experience,” in *Patient and Practitioners: Lay Perceptions of Medicine in Preindustrial Society* ed. R. Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 101-28. Beier addresses the medical experiences of the seventeenth-century Josselin family as related by the father, Rev. Ralph Josselin.

⁵⁵ Josselin, *Diary*, 111.

midwife, and her husband recorded the following account about the birth of their third son:

My dear wife had been very ill for three weeks; now towards night pains come fast on her and she was delivered before nine of the clock of her fifth child and third son. My wife was alone a great while with our good friends Mrs. Mary Church and her mother; some few women were with her but the midwife not, but when God commands deliverance there is nothing it hinders.⁵⁶

The midwife relied on her experience, gained from assisting an accomplished midwife. Maturity and the ability to maintain an image of respectability, competence and common sense, were the most important determinants in the selection of the midwife for members of the upper and middle classes.⁵⁷ The financial resources and higher levels of literacy of the elite members of society enabled them to acquire the services of respected midwives. In a study of the lives of seventy-six midwives who served London parishes, historian Doreen Evenden concluded that the midwives were competent, well paid and respected.⁵⁸

Upper-class women knew of and sought after the services of respected midwives. Upon the impending birth of her first child, Joan Thynne instructed her husband, "If my sister be in London, I pray you entreat her to provide me of a good midwife for me against Easter or a ten or twelve days after, for I think my time will be much thereabout."⁵⁹ In her diary, Mrs. Elizabeth Freke described her difficult labor of four to five days in which she had the services of four midwives, one of whom was a

⁵⁶ Josselin, *Diary*, 165.

⁵⁷ Margaret Pelling, *The Common Lot: Sickness, Medical Occupations and the Urban Poor in Early Modern England* (London: Longman, 1998), 193-4. Although more accessible among the upper and middle classes, midwives were also available to the poor. Pelling examined the Norwich census for the poor and found one woman, Joan Watts, described as a midwife. Pelling does not believe midwifery among the poor was limited to this scale.

⁵⁸ Doreen Evenden, *The Midwives of Seventeenth-Century London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁵⁹ Joan Thynne, *Two Elizabethan Women: Correspondence of Joan and Maria Thynne, 1575-1611*, 6.

male midwife. At her father's house in Hannington, Elizabeth gave birth "Aboutt three in the Noone" after "4 or 5 days in Labour of him, and had for him Fowre Mid-Wifes about mee when he was borne."⁶⁰ What was unusual about Elizabeth Freke's delivery, was the claim made by the male midwife "Affirming he had bin Long dead" to her husband, aunt, sister and Lady Thinn.⁶¹ While the male midwife had announced that the baby was dead before the actual birth, Mrs. Mills, a respected midwife, who came with Lady Thinn, "safely delivered" Elizabeth's baby. Upon the birth of a healthy son, Elizabeth expressed her joy by naming the newborn after her father Ralph, and thanking God for his "mercy and providence to mee."⁶²

Sometimes, upper-class women assisted poor mothers in childbirth as in the case of Mrs. Elizabeth Walker. Wife of the Anthony Walker, Rector of Fyfield, Elizabeth used her medicinal skills to help the sick and to assist women in childbirth. Her husband fondly remembered her charitable acts in her diary, which he completed after her death in 1690:

Next to the Charity of her Purse, was that of her Pains and Kindness, of her getting and improving Skill to assist the infirm and indisposed by inward Sicknes, and outward Wounds and Sores: She had a competent good measure of Knowledge both in Physick and Chyrurgery.... Another object of her painfull Charity was, Women Labouring with Child, whom she would rise at any hour of the Night to go too, and carry with her what might be usefull to them, having good Skill, and store of Medicines always ready by her for such occasions....⁶³

During her life, Elizabeth Walker had kept a diary that she kept from her spouse until her death. Anthony Walker added to the diary, indicating Elizabeth's words by the use of

⁶⁰ *Mrs. Elizabeth Freke, Her Diary*, 24.

⁶¹ *Mrs. Elizabeth Freke, Her Diary*, 24.

⁶² *Mrs. Elizabeth Freke, Her Diary*, 24.

⁶³ Walker, *The Holy Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Walker*, 179-80.

quotation marks. The diary provides an account of Elizabeth Walker's eleven pregnancies and miscarriages, as well as descriptive accounts of events such as the plague of 1665 and the fire of 1666.

When the time came for the birth of his fourth son, Simonds D'Ewes recounted the difficulty he and his wife experienced in the process of keeping nurses during and after the birth. The D'Ewes family unexpectedly lost the service of two nurses immediately after the birth, and this state left them little choice but to hire a poor woman whom they did not know very well. In his account, D'Ewes claimed, "fearing we might lose him as we had done our first, we were fain to pitch upon a poor woman who had been much misused and almost starved by a wicked husband."⁶⁴ After two years, however, D'Ewes dismissed the "proud nurse with a fretting and wayward disposition," when "our most sweet and tender infant, who fell into fits of convulsions, under which, having at several times suffered extremely, it died at last of them, being near two years old."⁶⁵

Scholars have debated the extent to which elite women in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England feared childbirth. Adrian Wilson has argued a distinction exists between fear of pain and fear of death.⁶⁶ In order to support his belief that women did not greatly fear death in childbirth, Wilson claimed there was a scarcity of substantial evidence from the diaries and letters of women and men in the early modern period. Furthermore, Wilson cited evidence provided by Roger Schofield in his study of maternal death in childbirth. Schofield concluded maternal mortality rates were not high enough

⁶⁴ D'Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 108.

⁶⁵ D'Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 108.

⁶⁶ Adrian Wilson, "The Perils of Early Modern Procreation: Childbirth With or Without Fear?" in *Childbirth: Changing Ideas and Practices in Britain and America 1600 to the Present*, eds. P. Wilson, A. Dally and C. King (Washington, DC: Garland Series, 1996), 138.

to warrant fear among women, especially elite women in London where the data was most conclusive.⁶⁷ Despite such claims, other historians such as Linda Pollock acknowledged Schofield's statistics, but also believed women feared childbirth as a "very conspicuous single cause of mortality which a prospective mother had several long months to contemplate."⁶⁸ Furthermore, Patricia Crawford concluded women were aware of the perils of childbirth and exchanged stories of birth experiences.⁶⁹ Emphasizing the communal nature of childbirth, Sara Mendelson firmly believed women did fear dying in childbirth, and the female environment of the birth chamber perpetuated an atmosphere of anxiety in which their most alarming trepidation became visible and shared.⁷⁰

In addition to this conspicuous example of maternal mortality, medical ignorance sustained an atmosphere of uncertainty and fear among women who had many occasions to see and to ponder the challenges of childbirth. The primitive state of medicine in the field of obstetrics failed to provide women with information to allay their fears, and not surprisingly, women turned to the Church in order to bring meaning to their experiences in childbirth. Neither understanding the physical changes and demands of pregnancy nor receiving the medical services of skilled practitioners, women accepted the will of God in their precarious conditions as well as in the survival of their infants.

Women died from infection and other complications in the birthing process without a relevant diagnosis or explanation. Accounts of births from women such as

⁶⁷ Roger Schofield, "Did the Mothers Really Die? Three Centuries of Maternal Mortality in 'The World We Have Lost'" in *The World We Have Gained: Histories of Population and Social Structure*, ed. L. Bonfield, R. Smith and K. Wrightson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 233.

⁶⁸ Linda Pollock, "Embarking On A Rough Passage: The Experience of Pregnancy in Early-Modern Society," in *Women as Mothers in Preindustrial England*, ed. Valerie Fildes, 46-9.

⁶⁹ Patricia Crawford, "The Construction and Experience of Maternity in Seventeenth-Century England," in *Women As Mothers*, ed., Fildes, 22-3.

⁷⁰ Sara Mendelson, "Stuart Women's Diaries and Occasional Memoirs," in *Women in English Society, 1500-1800*, ed. Prior (New York: Methuen, 1985), 196-97.

Jane Josselin, Alice Thornton and Elizabeth Freke illuminate their frightful experiences in giving birth, and the lack of medical understanding of the period only added to their fears. Childbirth remained the private domain of women and public examination of the female body in reproduction continued to be impure. Therefore, female gynecology was rife with notions of ominous menstrual cycles, diseased wombs, hysteria, and most importantly, a lack of scientific investigation. In her study of gynecology and ideology in seventeenth-century England, Hilda Smith concluded, “Gynecology was a combination of ignorance about internal medicine, bias against women, and an almost total reliance on the ancients.”⁷¹

Death in childbirth remained a serious concern for women as the “the maternal mortality rate in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries may have been as high as 25 per 1000 birth events.”⁷² Women died from complications midwives and doctors did not have the background or skills to treat. An example of this was puerperal fever that killed Katherine Parr in 1548.⁷³ One year after the death of King Henry VIII, Katherine married Thomas Seymour and became pregnant at the age of thirty-five. After giving birth to a daughter, Mary, on August 30, Katherine died six days later of ‘childbed fever,’ an infection that also claimed the life of her late sister-in-law Jane Seymour. Death in childbirth also confounded noted physicians as Sir Robert Sibbald, founder of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh and Physician to Charles II. In his *Memoirs*, Robert Sibbald reminisced how his only sister Geels “died five hours after she had borne a

⁷¹ Hilda Smith, “Gynecology and Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England,” in *Liberating Women’s History: Theoretical and Critical Essays*, ed. Berenice Carroll (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976), 99.

⁷² Audrey Eccles, *Obstetrics and Gynaecology in Tudor and Stuart England* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1982), 125.

⁷³ Christine Coch, , “‘Mother of My Contreye’: Elizabeth I and Tudor Constructions of Motherhood,” *English Literary Renaissance* 26 (Autumn, 1996), 430.

son... and my mother occasioned so much griefe, that with it, and regret for her daughter, she contracted sickness and dyed.”⁷⁴

When Arabella Wentworth died during her fourth pregnancy, her parents Anne and John Holles blamed her husband Sir Thomas Wentworth for his failure to prevent the long, difficult trip to the country. According to her parents, Arabella had been advised by her doctor not to make the journey; however, she ignored the directions and experienced a premature confinement that eventually proved fatal. In a grief-stricken letter to his son John Holles, Arabella’s father lamented over what he believed, the unnecessary death of his daughter, who had now left behind “three mother-less children.”⁷⁵ Thomas Wentworth was clearly held responsible for the deaths of Arabella and her infant because “if her husband had loved her more, and his conviency less, then might shee have yet been with him and us, for Doctor Morre tould him her weakness, and his feare of her, if shee went that long journey into the country.”⁷⁶

Despite the perilous conditions surrounding childbirth, texts on midwifery were published for literate midwives who had relied on apprenticeship for their preparation. Although the advent of printing made texts more available and cheaper for midwives, male physicians of the universities continued to regard these women as inferior. In 1513, Eucharius Rösslin, the physician of the city of Worms, published a book on midwifery entitled, *Der Rosengarten*, later translated into English as *The Rose Garden for Pregnant Women and Midwives*. According to Wendy Arons, the publication of the text ended the 1,400-year hiatus in medical literature on pregnancy and childbirth; Rösslin received the

⁷⁴ Robert Sibbald, *The Memoirs of Sir Robert Sibbald*, ed. Francis Paget Hett (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 68.

⁷⁵ Holles, *Letters of John Holles, 1587-1637*, vol. 3, 432.

⁷⁶ Holles, *Letters of John Holles, 1587-1637*, vol. 3, 432.

title of “Europe’s Midwives’ Teacher” and became the authority on midwifery in Europe until the early eighteenth century.⁷⁷

A supervisor of midwives, Rösslin believed an instruction manual would provide necessary information and training for negligent midwives.⁷⁸ There were twelve chapters in Rösslin’s manual culled from his reading of the ancient texts of Hippocrates, Galen, Soranus, and Averroes from what he learned at the university. Rösslin wrote estimating the time of delivery; assessing which deliveries were hard and which were easy; removing the afterbirth; and bringing a dead baby out of the womb.⁷⁹ By 1540, Richard Jonas translated Rösslin’s manual into English entitled *The Byrth of Mankynde*. Twelve years later, Thomas Raynalde, a physician and printer, produced a second English translation of the *Byrth of Mankynde* in 1552. It would be difficult to assess the impact of the *Byrth* upon English midwives because the text reiterated the ideas of the ancients and increased the tension between midwives and male physicians. By the seventeenth century, translations of the works of Jacques Guillemeau and William Harvey provided new knowledge for midwives and male physicians who increasingly became more active in the field of childbirth.⁸⁰

In an effort to aid midwives, Nicholas Culpeper wrote *A Directory for Midwives: Or, A Guide for Women, in Their Conception, Bearing, and Suckling Their Children* in

⁷⁷ Eucharius Rösslin, *When Midwifery Became the Male Physician’s Province: The Sixteenth Century Handbook, the Rose Garden for Pregnant Women and Midwives*, translated from German with an introduction by Wendy Arons (London: McFarland & Co., 1994). See also *Eucharius Rösslin, The Birth of Mankind, otherwise named The Woman’s Book “newly set forth, corrected, and augmented”* by Thomas Raynalde, London, 1545 in *Daughters, Wives, and Widows*, ed. Klein, 177-203.

⁷⁸Hilary Marland, “Stately and Dignified, Kindly and God-fearing: Midwives, Age and Status in the Netherlands in the Eighteenth Century,” in *The Task of Healing: Medicine, Religion and Gender in England and the Netherlands, 1450-1800*, eds. H. Marland and M. Pelling (Rotterdam: Erasmus Publishing, 1996), 278.

⁷⁹ Rösslin, *When Midwifery*, 44-6, 67-87.

⁸⁰ Donnison, *Midwives and Medical Men*, 21.

1651. On his title page, Culpeper described himself as a “Gentleman Student in Physick and Astrologie.”⁸¹ As a physician, Culpeper wanted to provide a manual of self-help for women and midwives. His work was similar to other medical texts of the period and included information such as a description of the genital organs of women and men; the development of the baby within the womb; obstacles to conception; a guide for women during labor; and directions for lying-in and nursing.

Culpeper also included moral and religious warnings throughout his medical text as he advised women: “Learn to know your first evil, which was pride. To be humbled for it. To look after a Spiritual Being, seeing your natural is so defective.”⁸² Despite his moral and religious overtones, Nicholas Culpeper was one of the few English physicians in the seventeenth century to speak out against the entry of men into the field of midwifery. He also voiced his disagreement with the elitism of physicians and their control over recipes for medication. Culpeper claimed his purpose in writing the guidebook was to instruct women and midwives who really needed the information.

There were also competent midwives who shared Culpeper’s goals to improve the art of midwifery and to discourage men from dominating the field. Jane Sharp, an articulate midwife who possessed thirty years of experience, composed a manual for midwives because she “often sate down sad in the consideration of the many miseries women endure in the hands of unskilled midwives; many professing the art (without any skill in anatomy). . . .”⁸³ Jane Sharp’s manual of six books contained information that not

⁸¹ Nicholas Culpeper, *A Directory for Midwives: Or, A Guide For Women, In Their Conception, Bearing and Suckling Their Children*, 1651. Reprint London: S. Ballard, R. Ware, S. Birt, C. Hitch, L. Hawes and J. Hodges, in *Renaissance Woman: A Sourcebook*, ed. Kate Aughterson (London: Routledge, 1995), title page. For analysis of Culpeper’s “Radical Book” consult Chapter 5 in Mary E. Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies: The Politics of Reproduction in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁸² Culpeper, *A Directory*, 166.

⁸³ Sharp, *The Midwives Book*, dedication.

only described the anatomical features of men and women, but also prepared new parents for the event of childbirth and care of the infant. Book One provided a description of the generative parts of both sexes; Book Two addressed what was needed for the procreation of children; Book Three examined complications in the conception of a child; Book Four explained the conduct of labor; Book Five discussed how women must be governed in childbirth; and the Final Book examined the strangling of the womb, rules for the selection of the nurse, and cures for the diseases of young children.

Sharp's acknowledgment of the conflict between the midwife with practical experience and the physician whose knowledge was primarily theoretical, influenced other female midwives such as Elizabeth Cellier, a Restoration woman who believed midwifery belonged to women. In 1688, Cellier made her views public with the pamphlet, *To Dr.--, An Answer to His Queries Concerning the Colledg of Midwives*, which described women's roles in midwifery during the ancient period of Egypt, the classical era of Greece, and the medieval and early modern periods. Emphasizing the historical and practical experience of female midwives, Cellier maintained midwives had organized themselves and did not need male physicians to govern them. The more experienced midwives taught and supervised other women, and Cellier concluded, "I hope, doctor, these considerations will deter you from pretending to teach us midwifery."⁸⁴

Tension between traditional midwifery and male-dominated medical and technological developments in obstetrics increased in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Man-midwives gradually gained recognition for their skills and reproductive knowledge among the middling and elite classes who accepted their public image as

⁸⁴ Cellier, *To Dr.*, 6.

scholars as well as their more sympathetic manners within the private world of the expectant mother.⁸⁵ Though midwives resented the increasing prevalence of man-midwives, they did continue to work consistently throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁸⁶

Regardless of the struggle between the male physicians and their assertive female adversaries, midwives continued to administer the physical care of mothers and their infants. Working within the patriarchal structure of society and complying with the powerful voice of religion, midwives prepared women for birth and provided instruction for infant care. In her manual for midwives, Jane Sharp described the treatment of the new mother after the delivery of the baby. The midwife carefully cut the navel string of the newborn,⁸⁷ tied it and applied cotton or lint to keep the navel warm. The midwife then washed the child, and after clearing the infant's nostrils, she opened and cleaned the anus so the bowels functioned.⁸⁸ After cleaning the birth fluids from the body of the newborn, the midwife swaddled the infant in cloth and laid the baby in the cradle.⁸⁹ Sharp advised the midwife to place the baby's cradle in "a darkish and shadowy place and let the head lie a little higher than the body."⁹⁰ Within the dimly lit lying-in chamber, the midwife cleaned the new mother of the afterbirth and safely disposed the placenta, generally buried beneath the house presumably to ensure fertility for the couple.

⁸⁵ Lisa Forman Cody, "The Politics of Reproduction: From Midwives' Alternate Public Sphere to the Public Spectacle of Man Midwifery," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32 (1999): 477-95.

⁸⁶ See Doreen Evenden, *The Midwives of Seventeenth-Century London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); and Adrian Wilson, *The Making of Man-Midwifery: Childbirth in England, 1660-1770* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

⁸⁷ Sharp, *The Midwives Book*, 212-6

⁸⁸ Sharp, *The Midwives Book*, 272.

⁸⁹ According to Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 82, the practice of swaddling continued beyond the seventeenth century and gradually received less attention in later childbirth manuals.

⁹⁰ Sharp, *The Midwives Book*, 272.

According to Jane Sharp, a woman had to stay awake for at least four hours after giving birth and the midwife should provide her with fluids such as nourishing broth or caudle.⁹¹

A customary practice, which involved the new mother after the period of lying-in had ended, was churching or the religious ritual presenting a woman to society. Immersed in a history of powerful religious theory and symbolism, churching reflected the Catholic belief in the rite of purification for the new mother who had completed her private matter of giving birth and now entered the public domain of the church community. Prior to the Reformation, a woman wore a white veil, carried a white candle, and met the priest outside the church where he sprinkled holy water on her. She entered the church with female family members and friends, the midwife, the nurse carrying the new baby, and sometimes the husband and male relatives. Churching remained a female affair despite the transformations it underwent under the Anglican and Puritan religions. Instead of a ritual of purification, churching became a rite of thanksgiving for members of the established church who also amended Catholic practices. For example, Anglicans did not mandate holy water or candles, and wearing a veil became optional. Anglican women such as Mary Verney continued to follow this practice and recorded the event as a matter of routine in their writings. In a letter to Mary's husband Ralph Verney, family physician and close friend Dr. Denton reported that Mary was "churcht and well, but looks ill enough..."⁹² Conversely, Puritans were adamant in their opposition to churching, and believed this ecclesiastical ceremony reflected Jewish, popish and

⁹¹ Sharp, *The Midwives Book*, 211.

⁹² Verney, *Memoirs*, vol. II, 272.

superstitious practices.⁹³ Without any formal ceremony, Puritan women privately were thankful for a safe delivery and acknowledged God's divine hand.

Breastfeeding: Prescriptive Advice and Practice

Humanists and Protestants, especially Puritans, believed the spiritual and physical welfare of the new baby was dependent on the mother's decision to breastfeed her own child. This view, however, was contrary to the intentions of elite English families who wished to produce many offspring and free their wives from the responsibilities of breastfeeding. In addition to societal norms, women decided not to breastfeed for medicinal reasons; in other cases, mothers pursued the same practices that their parents chose in rearing them. While there existed some unfortunate accounts involving the employment of wetnurses, the prevalence of wetnursing and the strong ties that developed between nurses and the families, provide a generally favorable report of this practice.

The Puritans voiced the strongest opposition against wetnursing, and their ministers William Gouge, William Perkins and Robert Cleaver wrote in support of maternal breastfeeding. In the dedication of his comprehensive work examining the duties of Christian life, Gouge announced the spiritual edification of his followers as the significant calling of his ministry.⁹⁴ In his sixth treatise, where he outlined the duties of parents, Gouge advised women to breastfeed their children and to fulfill their duties as Christian mothers who have followed God's directions. According to Gouge, "... the

⁹³ Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 198. See chapter nine, "Purification, Thanksgiving, and the Churching of Women" for an informative account of the historical roots of the practice of churching as well as conflicting contemporary viewpoints of the significance of this ritual.

⁹⁴ Gouge, *Domesticall Duties*, 2.

milk of the breast is fit for young babes, and with it they are to be nourished.”⁹⁵ Drawing on examples such as the mother of Moses; Sarah and her son, Isaac; and the Virgin Mary and Jesus; Gouge instructed women on the virtues of “giving suck to their infants,” and he explicitly underscored the utilitarian and spiritual purposes of the breasts as a part of the woman’s body.⁹⁶ Far from adding to the physical beauty and vanity of women, God gave females breasts “to containe and hold milke, and nipples unto them fit to have milk drawn from them.”⁹⁷ Gouge reminded women that their breasts were “directly given for the child’s food that commeth out of the wombe; for till the child be borne, there is no milk in the breasts: anon after it is borne, milke ordinarily floweth into the breasts; yea a greater part of the meat which they eat turneth into milke.”⁹⁸ Gouge concluded that if women “make this admirable worke of God’s providence to be in vaine, that drie up this spring, and suffer not their children to partake of the benefit of it.”⁹⁹

In addition to the religious merits of maternal breastfeeding, Gouge attempted to convince women that nursing their infants would result in an intimate and rewarding relationship:

Together with the milke passeth some sinacke of the affection and disposition of the mother; which maketh mothers to love such best as they have given sucke unto yea and of times such children as have sucked their mothers breasts, love their mothers best: yea we may observe many who have sucked others milke, to love those nurses all the daies of their life.¹⁰⁰

Gouge concluded maternal breastfeeding created a bond between mother and infant, which was so profound that this connection remained with them as the child matured.

⁹⁵ Gouge, *Domesticall Duties*, 507.

⁹⁶ Gouge, *Domesticall Duties*, 510-1.

⁹⁷ Gouge, *Domesticall Duties*, 511.

⁹⁸ Gouge, *Domesticall Duties*, 511.

⁹⁹ Gouge, *Domesticall Duties*, 511.

¹⁰⁰ Gouge, *Domesticall Duties*, 512.

Unlike a wetnurse, a mother took more of an interest in the care of her child and as a result, Gouge stated that children were cleaner; less likely to succumb to disease; and more secure because their mothers would hear their cries.¹⁰¹

As a Puritan minister, William Gouge was not blind to the reasons why mothers did not breastfeed their children. He acknowledged that some women found breastfeeding painful and, as a result, refrained from nursing their children. To this complaint, Gouge reminded women that they were able to withstand the pains of childbirth and the practice of breastfeeding paled in comparison. Furthermore, Gouge instructed women if they “would with cheerfulness set themselves to performe this duty, much of the supposed paine and paines would be lessened.”¹⁰²

In other instances, William Gouge recognized the roles in which husbands played in convincing their wives to send their offspring out to nurse. Gouge urged fathers to be supportive of their wives and to abandon their selfish reasons for encouraging the use of wet nurses.¹⁰³ Fathers were reminded to “endure some disturbances as well as their wives, and so much the rather that they may the more pittie their wives, and afford them what helpe they can.”¹⁰⁴ Most perceptively, Gouge was aware of the husband’s pressure to send the infant away to the wetnurse. In fact, he urged women to try to convince their husbands of the merits of breastfeeding and to remind them of the personal selfishness involved on the part of the parent in failing to do so. According to Gouge,

Because it is a bounden duty, wives must use all the meanes they can by themselves or others to persuade their husbands to let them performe it: they must take heede that they may not this a pretext to cover their owne sloth, and loatheness to this duty: they may not make themselves

¹⁰¹ Gouge, *Domesticall Duties*, 512.

¹⁰² Gouge, *Domesticall Duties*, 115.

¹⁰³ Gouge, *Domesticall Duties*, 515-6.

¹⁰⁴ Gouge, *Domesticall Duties*, 516.

accessarie to their husband's fault by providing a nurse, and sending the childe away themselves: if their husbands will stand upon their authority, and be persuaded by no meanes to the contrary, they must be mere patients in suffering the childe to be taken away.¹⁰⁵

William Gouge's final statements on the importance of maternal breastfeeding reflect the complexity of a woman's decision to nurse her child during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England. While the Puritan minister did not believe that a woman's frail condition after childbirth or her inability to produce milk should prevent her from sending her infant to a wetnurse, he did underscore the powerful influence a woman's husband possessed in the decision to breastfeed the baby. Gouge went so far as to say that "husbands for the most part are the cause that their wives nurse not their owne children: and that partly by suffering, and partly by egging them on to put out their children."¹⁰⁶ In Gouge's opinion, "If husbands were willing that their wives should performe this dutie, and would persuade and incourage them thereto, and afford them what helps they could, where one mother now nurseth her childe, twenty would doe it."¹⁰⁷

In *Christian Oeconomie* or *A Short Survey of the Right Manner of Erecting and Ordering a Familie According to the Scriptures*, the Puritan minister William Perkins enumerated many duties required of parents to their children in his *oeconomics* or family government, but among the top four, "the mother is herselfe to give the infant sucke."¹⁰⁸ Similar to William Gouge, Perkins used biblical sources to instruct women to nurse their

¹⁰⁵ Gouge, *Domesticall Duties*, 516.

¹⁰⁶ Gouge, *Domesticall Duties*, 518.

¹⁰⁷ Gouge, *Domesticall Duties*, 518.

¹⁰⁸ Perkins, *Christian Oeconomie*, 133.

children, and he reminded them “God had given milke to women that beare children, and hath so appointed, that no meat is more naturall to the child, then the mothers milke.”¹⁰⁹

A Godly Form of Householde Gouvernement: for the Ordering of Priuate Families by Robert Cleaver also instructed women to breastfeed their own children. In addition to advising women, “it becommeth naturall Mothers, to nourish their children with their owne milke,” Cleaver cited examples from the Scriptures to instruct them:

As Sarah who nursed Isaack, though she were a Princesse, and therefore (able enough to have had others) to have taken that paines. Though she was a beautifull woman, and of graeat yeers, yet she herselfe nursed, and gave sucke to her Sonne. Also Anna, unto whom the holy Ghost hath left it recorded (as a commendation,) that she nursed her owne sonne Samuell.¹¹⁰

Juan Luis Vives encouraged mothers to breastfeed their children and to devote themselves to the upbringing of their young. This Spanish-born Christian humanist believed mothers should nurse their children and he declared, “Let her nurse what she has borne as other living things do.”¹¹¹ Vives maintained that a woman who nursed her infant would continue the nourishment of the child outside the womb and, as a result, “there is nothing more adapted to the infant than the same substance from which it was formed.”¹¹² This statement of Vives supported the belief that breast milk transmitted maternal virtue and vice; therefore, he and others insisted on mothers nursing their own children.

Since the breast milk of the mother affected the moral quality of her infant, wetnurses had to be carefully scrutinized in the event the mother could not breastfeed her own child. Parents expected wetnurses to be of good moral character, honest and

¹⁰⁹ Perkins, *Christian Oeconomie*, 135.

¹¹⁰ Cleaver, *A Godly Form of Householde Gouvernement*, 234.

¹¹¹ Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman*, 269.

¹¹² Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman*, 269.

moderate in their living, and able to guide the child along the path of godly and disciplined living. Repeating ancient authorities, the humanist Thomas Elyot, the pediatrician Thomas Phaer and the Puritan minister Robert Cleaver, all insisted the physical appearance of the wetnurse was an important indicator of her overall physical and spiritual health. A clear complexion indicated good morals and virtuous behavior; Elyot believed the body of the nurse “should be free from all sickness and deformity;”¹¹³ and Phaer concluded in the event the mother was not able to nurse her own child, the nurse should be “sobre, honest and chaste, well formed, amiable and chearefull, so that she may accustome the infant unto myrthe, no dronkarde, vycyous nor sluttysse, for suche corrupteth the nature of the chyldre.”¹¹⁴ In *A Godly Form of Householde Gouvernement*, Cleaver also asserted “The childrens bodies be commonly so affected, as the milke is which they receive.”¹¹⁵ Therefore, Cleaver warned parents to avoid “the Nurse of evill complexion, as she is affected in her bodie, or in her minde, or hath some hidden disease, the childe sucking of her breast must needes take part with her.”¹¹⁶

The Dutch humanist Erasmus instructed mothers to breastfeed their infants in his colloquy *Puerpera* or *The New Mother* (1526).¹¹⁷ In the exchange between the sagacious Eutrapelus and the young Fabulla who is sixteen and the new mother of an infant son named Cornelius, Erasmus explained the importance of nurturing an infant. When Fabulla informs Eutrapelus that her young infant is in the room with his nurse, her visitor

¹¹³ *Sir Thomas Elyot's The Book Named the Governor*, ed. John A. Major (New York: Teachers College Press, 1969), 63.

¹¹⁴ Phaer, *The Boke of Chyldren*, 33.

¹¹⁵ Cleaver, *A Godly Form of Householde*, 235.

¹¹⁶ Cleaver, *A Godly Form of Householde*, 235.

¹¹⁷ *The Colloquies of Erasmus*, 267-85. See also Jacqueline T. Miller, “Mother Tongues: Language and Lactation in Early Modern Literature,” *English Literary Renaissance* 27 (Spring, 1997), 181.

replies, “What nurse are you talking about? Has he any other nurse than his mother?”¹¹⁸

The wise Eutrapelus then proceeds to explain the reasons as to why Fabulla should nurse her own baby:

... If you would like to be a complete mother, take care of your baby’s little body so that after his mind has begun to find itself, it may have the support of good and serviceable bodily organs. Every time you hear your boy squalling, believe he is asking this of you. When you see on your breasts those two little swollen fountains, so to speak, flowing with milk of their own accord, believe that Nature is reminding you of your duty.... The better part of childbearing is the nursing of the tender baby, for he’s nourished not only with milk but by the fragrance of the mother’s body as well. He needs that now familiar, recognized fluid which he absorbed in her body and by which he grew strong.¹¹⁹

Convinced by Eutrapelus that it is better she nurses her own child, Fabulla asks him to persuade her husband Petronius, who along with others, have advised her that she is young and “should be spared nursing.”¹²⁰

Anglican scholar and Bishop Richard Allestree also believed a mother should nurse her own child and he concluded, “I cannot but look with reverence on those few Persons of Honor, who have broke thro an unreasonable Custom, and preferred the good of their Children before that fantastic priviledg of Greatness.”¹²¹ While he was Chaplain to Archbishop Cranmer, Thomas Becon published *The Catechism*, which encouraged mothers to breastfeed their own children except in circumstances when “necessity compelled her not to.”¹²²

In *A Godlie Forme of Householde Government*, Robert Cleaver provided provisions in selecting a nurse in the event the mother was unable to breastfeed the infant

¹¹⁸ *The Colloquies of Erasmus*, 272.

¹¹⁹ *The Colloquies of Erasmus*, 283.

¹²⁰ *The Colloquies of Erasmus*, 272.

¹²¹ Allestree, *The Ladies Calling in Conduct Literature for Women, 1640-1710*, vol. 3, 204.

¹²² Thomas Becon, *The Catechism*, ed. Rev. John Ayre for the Parker Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1844), 347.

herself. Cleaver was a strong advocate of women's nursing their children, however, and he concluded: "Amongst the particular duties that a Christian wife ought to performe in her familie, this is one: namely, that it belongeth to her to nurse her owne children, which to omit, and to put them forth to nursing, is both against the law of nature, and also against the will of God.." ¹²³

Elizabeth Clinton's view is interesting not only because she is a woman writing in support of breastfeeding, but also because she herself, failed to nurse her sixteen children. In her text, Clinton used biblical sources to support maternal breastfeeding, and claimed women did not lose their beauty if they decided to nurse their own babies. Although she had not nursed her own children, Clinton did share her regret of not breastfeeding her young, and suggested some of her infants may have survived if she had practiced maternal breastfeeding. Clinton's text reflected Puritan sentiments as she quoted familiar biblical sources such as Hannah, Mary and Sarah. ¹²⁴

Although she wrote in a formal and spiritual style, Clinton also revealed her personal account as to why she did not breastfeed her children. In her writing, Clinton expressed a sense of remorse and frustration as she recounted, "...it was not for want of will in myself, but partly I was overruled by anothers authority, and partly deceived by somes ill counsel, and partly I had not too well considered of my duty in this motherly office...." ¹²⁵ Clinton was typical of other members of her aristocratic circle who had large families and who utilized wetnurses. The husbands of these women were more than likely the "authority" and "ill counsel" responsible for the decision not to have mothers breastfeed their children. Minister such as William Gouge were well aware of this social

¹²³ Cleaver, *A Godly Form of Householde*, 235.

¹²⁴ Clinton, *The Countesse of Lincolne's Nurserie*, 4,5,13.

¹²⁵ Clinton, *The Countesse of Lincolne's Nurserie*, 16.

belief, and warned husbands to abandon their selfish intentions in order to support their wives and infants. Because of her insight and revelation, Clinton believed she could somehow rectify her personal failure, and support young mothers in “this good, laudable, naturall, loving duty to your children.”¹²⁶

An important aspect of the physical care of the newborn involved the decision of the mother to breastfeed her child or to send the baby to a wetnurse.¹²⁷ Among the upper classes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, parents often sent their offspring to wetnurses. Although this decision reflected the social mores of the period, there has been debate among some historians who believed mothers in the early modern period were indifferent to their children. Edward Shorter concluded mothers failed the “sacrifice test” and “good mothering is an invention of modernization.”¹²⁸ Gradually, historians¹²⁹ working on family history began to produce evidence that seriously challenged the conclusions of Lawrence Stone who believed wetnursing was one of the factors that led to “psychic numbing” in adults.¹³⁰ Examining the contents of diaries and letters, historians such as Macfarlane, Pollock and others uncovered a more attentive and loving familial environment that did not consider wetnursing an uncaring and negligent practice.¹³¹

¹²⁶ Clinton, *The Countesse of Lincolne's Nurserie*, 20.

¹²⁷ Barbara Harris points out the specific term “wetnurse” was not used until the seventeenth century; documents before this time use the word “nurse” to describe women who cared for infants and children. The first example of the use of the term “wetnurse” in the *Oxford English Dictionary* dates from 1620. See Harris, “Property, Power, and Personal Relations: Elite Mothers and Sons in Yorkist and Early Tudor England,” *Signs* (Spring, 1990): 606-32.

¹²⁸ Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England*, 408-15 and Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family*, 168-9.

¹²⁹ See Alan Macfarlane, *The Family Life of Ralph Josselin, A Seventeenth-Century Clergyman*; Linda Pollock, *Forgotten Children*; and Keith Wrightson, *English Society, 1580-1680*.

¹³⁰ Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, 101.

¹³¹ Crawford and Mendelson in *Women in Early Modern England* claim some elite women wished to nurse their infants but could be overruled by their spouses who wished to resume marital relations or to continue with procreation, 154-5.

Personal accounts and reflections among aristocratic or other elite women are rife with concerns about infant feeding and the role of the wetnurse. Mothers realized the importance of breastfeeding in the survival of their infants,¹³² and their decisions to nurse their offspring depended upon a number of variables such as physical ability, spousal influence, social and financial resources and religion. The midwife Jane Sharp concluded there could be different reasons for women's sending their infants to nurses, and as a result, parents had to be responsible in obtaining a competent and healthy woman to feed and to care for the baby.¹³³ In addition to Sharp, Nicholas Culpeper also recognized causes of lactation failure among mothers; perhaps what confounded midwives and physicians was the reality that they could not offer a remedy to this problem.¹³⁴

In her exhaustive examination of breastfeeding, Fildes suggested the decision to breastfeed became more complicated for upper-class women given the societal norms of the period. Among the upper classes, the decision to employ a wetnurse was the result of an accepted familial practice. The determination to produce offspring, particularly male heirs, was omnipresent among early modern parents who were aware that maternal breastfeeding acted as a form of contraception. In addition, there still existed the belief that it was unholy and potentially dangerous to continue conjugal relations while a woman breastfed. As a result, husbands who objected to the demands that breastfeeding placed on their wives' health and energy, also continued to believe in the traditional belief that the milk of a lactating mother would become unwholesome if she engaged in intercourse. While societal beliefs provided compelling reasons for women to send their

¹³² Crawford, "The Construction and Experience of Maternity," 23-4.

¹³³ Sharpe, *The Midwives Book*, 351-71.

¹³⁴ Valerie Fildes, *Breasts, Bottles and Babies*, 136. See also Paula A. Treckel, "Breastfeeding and Maternal Sexuality in Colonial America," 25-51; Valerie Fildes, *Wet Nursing: A History from Antiquity to the Present*.

infants to wetnurses, physical complications such as infection, the inability to produce enough milk, and the physical state of the mother also affected the actual decision to breastfeed. The medical science to instruct women and to address their concerns simply was not there during this period, and it is not surprising that Fildes concluded successful breastfeeding depended upon the confidence and mental state of the mother, and this would have been difficult for many aristocratic women.¹³⁵

The decision to send an infant to a wetnurse in spite of the ministerial and medical literature of the period suggests there may have been other factors that influenced such an action. Many elite women simply may have followed the tradition of their mothers who employed wetnurses. Believing they were providing for their infants' care as well as obeying the wishes of their husbands and catering to the demands of an aristocratic household, early modern mothers continued to use wetnurses in order to maintain the daily demands and expectations of their lives. Barbara Harris maintained aristocratic households made considerable demands on the lives of women who often supervised a large staff who attended to visiting relatives, clients and officials.¹³⁶ Aside from managing the household, upper-class mothers sometimes accompanied their husbands to estate matters, meetings of parliament, lawsuits and other familial obligations.¹³⁷ Such familial and societal expectations often meant long absences from home, and women depended on nurses and other support staff to take care of their children. Furthermore, Harris concluded, "Natural and kind motherhood did not mean that aristocratic women performed the routine, physical tasks necessary to care for their daughters themselves.

¹³⁵ Fildes, *Breasts, Bottles and Babies*, 136-7.

¹³⁶ Barbara Harris "Property, Power and Personal Relations," 611. Harris cites the households of nobility ranging in size from seventy-five to 140. Households of upper-class women beneath the nobility had a "more modest range" of twenty-five to fifty.

¹³⁷ Harris, "Property, Power and Personal Relations," 612.

Instead, they placed them in the hands of nurses and other household servants immediately after they were born, an arrangement consonant with the aristocracy's customary practice of hiring servants to perform all their routine and menial tasks."¹³⁸

The anecdotal account of Simonds D'Ewes as an infant provides an example of how his mother attempted to balance the demands of her position with the very real needs of her child. Born in 1603, Simonds D'Ewes was a difficult infant who challenged the patience and stamina of his parents. In his autobiography, D'Ewes recounted that as a baby he would often cry and experience pain from "the hurt" he received at his birth.¹³⁹ The hurt that D'Ewes referred to was the bruise on his right eye, the result of the midwife's assistance during his birth. Eventually, Simonds recovered from his bruise and sore, but he did attribute his dilated pupil and loss of vision in his right eye to this incident.¹⁴⁰ He referred to Cecilia D'Ewes as a loving mother who cared for and anguished over her son's "continual disquiet."¹⁴¹ According to D'Ewes, she nursed him for twenty weeks, and would have continued to do so if her husband had not decided that their son's constant demands made it impossible for them to travel and for him to take care of his business.

After staying at his wife's estate at Coxden for some time, Paul D'Ewes had to leave in order to take care of business in London and his household at Suffolk. His wife and child accompanied him but the trip proved to be too much for both father and son. In his autobiography, D'Ewes recalled, "Neither my mother's breast, nor her maid's singing, nor the soft pillows on which they laid me, nor all the means they could use,

¹³⁸ Harris, *English Aristocratic Women*, 29.

¹³⁹ D'Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 24.

¹⁴⁰ D'Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 5.

¹⁴¹ D'Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 24.

could procure my quiet.”¹⁴² It was at this point that Paul D’Ewes decided he would employ a wet nurse; against his wife’s wishes, he hired “a careful and fitting nurse” who D’Ewes referred to as the wife of Christopher Way, a tradesman from Dorchester.¹⁴³ In an intimate and emotional account, D’Ewes described how his mother stayed with him until she felt confident of his safety and well-being with the wetnurse. Cecilia’s father remained with his grandson and his wetnurse at the family home at Coxden, and in an account provided by D’Ewes, “grandfather Simonds comforted my mother, his dear and only daughter, what possibly he could, and promised her to have a faithful and tender care over me.”¹⁴⁴

Many wetnurses were wives of artisans and tenant farmers who lived in the countryside and were carefully selected by the families.¹⁴⁵ It was a common practice for a family in the city to choose a wetnurse in the countryside because they believed the environment was healthier; similarly, families living in rural communities, selected wetnurses from nearby villages. Although compensation remained a valuable incentive, wetnurses often developed a close relationship with the children and families they served. In some instances, wealthy families had wetnurses come to their homes, as was the case of Lady Brilliana Harley. In 1626, Lady Harley described in one of her letters how the nurse weaned her eighteen-month-old son, in order to nurse the newborn in the family.¹⁴⁶ In his *Memoirs*, Sir Robert Sibbald (1641-1722) fondly reminisced about his nurse, Bessie Mason “who was a good country woman, who had all her days a tender affection for me I sucked till I was two yeers and two months old, and could run up and down

¹⁴² D’Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 25.

¹⁴³ D’Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 25.

¹⁴⁴ D’Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 26.

¹⁴⁵ Valerie Fildes, *Breasts, Bottles and Babies*, 156-7.

¹⁴⁶ Eales, *Women in Early Modern England*, 69-70.

the street, and speake, because my older brothers and sisters had dyed hectick; which long suckling proved, by the blessing of God, a mean to preserve me alive.”¹⁴⁷

Fildes concluded children and their families often remembered their wetnurses, and nurses continued to take care of them during their lives.¹⁴⁸ The following verse by Alexander Pope reveals his close relationship with his nurse, Mary Beach, who not only breastfed him as an infant but also remained a part of his life for almost three decades. When Mary died, Pope created the following memorial to her, showing his close relationship to her:

To the memory of Mary Beach,
who died Nov.25, 1725, aged 78.
Alex. Pope, whom she nursed in his infancy,
and constantly attended for twenty-eight years,
in gratitude to a faithful old servant erected this stone.¹⁴⁹

Physical concerns may have also shaped the mother’s decision not to breastfeed. In the sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries, there still existed fear about colostrums, which was traced to the physical appearance of the fluid that had a different color and consistency. In addition, physicians and midwives warned about the impurity of this discharge, and believed this fluid was harmful to the infant. Unlike poor women who had no choice but to immediately put their babies to the breast, elite mothers were more likely to follow the advice of their physicians who warned them about colostrums, therefore waiting a few days and making the process of breastfeeding more difficult. “Milk fever” or what would be identified today as a breast infection was a common ailment confronting mothers who wished to breastfeed. In her memoirs, Lady Ann Fanshawe recounted how her mother was sick with a fever “three months after I was born—which

¹⁴⁷ Sibbald, *Memoirs*, 51.

¹⁴⁸ Fildes, *Wet Nursing*, 100.

¹⁴⁹ Fildes, *Wet Nursing*, 100.

was the occasion she gave me suck no longer.”¹⁵⁰ Lady Fanshawe’s recollection, in addition to published and private recipe books, supports the prevalence of this condition among women in the early modern period.¹⁵¹

The case of Elizabeth Cholmley provides an unusual account of a family’s decision to send their newborn son to a wetnurse, shortly after the loss of their young daughter. What makes this particular story different is not the deep empathy Hugh Cholmley felt for his grieving wife, but his decision to test the intimate connection between a mother and her child. After his wife Elisabeth Cholmley gave birth to the couple’s fourth child, Hugh, in July 1632, the family decided to leave their estate at Fryleing, and place the two-month-old baby boy in the care of a wetnurse who lived in one of the farmhouses on the estate. Sir Hugh’s decision to leave the baby and the estate was the result of his concern for the physical and emotional well-being of his wife. Elisabeth still mourned the loss of her daughter, Elisabeth, who had died at the age of four, three weeks before the birth of baby Hugh. Sir Hugh Cholmley made arrangements with the wetnurse Guddy Dickeson, and took his wife and elder son, William, to another residence in order to “remove the death of our girl.”¹⁵²

The family returned when the baby was six-months-old, and their homecoming revealed an unusual sequence of events with the reunion of baby Hugh and his mother. Before his arrival, Sir Hugh had asked the wetnurse to dress her baby in Hugh’s clothes and the Cholmley child in the clothes of the other baby boy. Why Sir Hugh instructed the wetnurse to do this became clear when he recounted that he had told his wife their baby

¹⁵⁰ Lady Ann Harrison Fanshawe, *The Memoirs of Ann Lady Fanshawe, Wife of the Right Honourable Sir Richard Fanshawe, 1600-72* (London: John Lane, 1907), 18.

¹⁵¹ Salmon, “The Cultural Significance of Breast-Feeding,” 18.

¹⁵² Cholmley, *Memoirs*, 92. The Cholmley’s second son, Richard, had died in 1628 at the age of five.

had gray eyes just like those of their beloved little Dicke who had died at the age of five. In actuality, the Cholmley baby had dark eyes and the nurse's boy had the gray eyes, but Hugh Cholmley remembered how much his wife loved the eyes of her deceased child. Such deception did not separate Elizabeth Cholmley from baby Hugh as her husband described how the nurse first gave his wife the gray-eye baby whom Elizabeth smothered with kisses, but upon seeing her own boy, instinct came over her and "as soone as ever my deare wife cast her eie upon him she gave a start and all her blood comeing in to her face, she said, o lord sweet heart this is my boy and running to him caught him in her armes and kissed him with much more earnestness."¹⁵³

The birth of Anne and Simonds D'Ewes' first child provides a glimpse of the faith parents placed in those who advised them as well as the limited state of medical knowledge concerning childbirth and infant care. When Anne D'Ewes, wife of Simonds D'Ewes, gave birth to her first son, her husband described the birth of the infant as "a safe delivery," but their happiness was brief as the baby boy died fifteen days later.¹⁵⁴ A careful reading of Simonds D'Ewes account of his son's illness and the effect this tragedy had on the family reveals the uncertainty surrounding the care and treatment of infants as well as the profound sense of sadness and loss felt by parents. D'Ewes recounted that he and his wife "feared it perished by the cursed ignorance or neglect of such as were employed about my wife during her lying-in, for it was a goodly sweet child born."¹⁵⁵ However, the bereaved father did admit his wife "having some resolution to be a nurse, it was fatally advised by such as were about her, that the child should not suck any other till her breasts were fully drawn and made fit for it, during which time it was so weakened,

¹⁵³ Cholmley, *Memoirs*, 92.

¹⁵⁴ D'Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 44-5.

¹⁵⁵ D'Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 45.

as it afterwards proved to be the cause of its ruin.”¹⁵⁶ Both mother and father were unaware of the weakening condition of their son until thirteen days later when D’Ewes recorded the events that culminated in his death. When his son, Clopton, died, Simonds D’Ewes wrote in his autobiography, “my dearest and myself could not refrain from many tears, sighs, and mournings.”¹⁵⁷

The difficult decision to leave her newborn son with his wetnurse and accompany her husband to Ireland, indicated not only the complex situation elite mothers such as Elizabeth Freke sometimes found themselves in, but also the precarious position of leaving a child with an individual whose self-interest may take precedence over the welfare of the child. Elizabeth Freke, weak from her delivery and ambivalent about her trip to Ireland with her husband, departed from England and arrived in Young-hall, where “Mr. Freke and his Mother Carried me to Rustilian.”¹⁵⁸ Despite the inauspicious circumstances surrounding the birth of Ralph Freke, his concerned and pious mother left him with a nurse when he was ten weeks old. Unhappy in Ireland but obedient to the wishes of her husband, Elizabeth stayed until she was summoned by her father to return to England to attend to her sick infant son. Young Ralph Freke had lived in the home of his nurse, located near the residences of Elizabeth’s father and sister. According to his mother’s account, the baby had broken his leg when he was about six-months-old and the nurse failed to reveal this condition for nearly four months. In her diary, Elizabeth described the circumstances surrounding her son’s condition:

... my son being Cripled by the Carelessness of his Nurse, & Aboutt 14 of December brok his Legg short In the Hackle Bone, which she kept pryvatte for neer a quarter of A yeare Til A Jelley was Growne between

¹⁵⁶ D’Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 45.

¹⁵⁷ D’Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 46.

¹⁵⁸ *Mrs. Elizabeth Freke, Her Diary*, 25.

Itt; She keeping him in his Cradle, & everybody believed he was Breeding of his Teeth, hee having Two att eighteen weeks old, & att that Age Could Stand Almost a Lone till this Misfortune befell him.¹⁵⁹

Upon discovering the condition of young Ralph, Elizabeth's father and sister had fired the nurse and had the bone set. Recovering at his grandfather's home, Ralph was attended by his new nurse, "wher he Lay Aboutt A quarter of A yeare in Lapp after the Bone was sett, nott Able to stir hand or foot."¹⁶⁰ When the young child failed to thrive, it was at this time that Elizabeth's family summoned her to England. Elizabeth Freke recounted, "all expected hee would be a Cripple or dye of his Legg, he having bin given over by Doctters & Surjans."¹⁶¹ When Elizabeth saw her son, she took care of him and reported, "By Gods blessing I Recovered him from his Crutches with my poor Weak endeavours, & Now, I thank my God, he is strait & goes well & noe signe of these Misfortunes."¹⁶²

Another instance of negligence on the part of the wetnurse can be discovered when she sometimes tried to conceal accidents or sickness from the parents in order to maintain her employment. In 1639, lawyer John Bramston (1611-1700) blamed the death of his second son John on the negligence of his nurse who let the young boy "catch the itch of her children, or had some other way negligently tended him that he brake out, and she, to cure it hastily that wee might not know it, applied, as she sayd, burnt or fried butter, on browne paper."¹⁶³ Such treatment proved fatal to the toddler who "grew a

¹⁵⁹ Mrs. Elizabeth Freke, *Her Diary*, 25.

¹⁶⁰ Mrs. Elizabeth Freke, *Her Diary*, 25.

¹⁶¹ Mrs. Elizabeth Freke, *Her Diary*, 25.

¹⁶² Mrs. Elizabeth Freke, *Her Diary*, 26.

¹⁶³ John Bramston, *The Autobiography of Sir John Bramston, K.B., of Skreens, in the Hundred of Chelmsford* (London: John Bowyer Nichols and Son, 1845), 104. This was the second son named John who had died. Bramston and his wife Alice had lost their first son when he was six months old, a half hour

great soare on the brest,” and although his parents hired “a very good surgeon, he could not cure him, nor saue his life.¹⁶⁴

The decision to breastfeed one’s child remained personal as well as complicated for upper-class women in England during the early modern period. Beyond the significant medical, social and religious issues concerning breastfeeding, mothers negotiated with their families and with themselves in the decision to send their newborns to wetnurses. Wrestling with their strong maternal instincts while coping with the uncertainty of the fate of their babies under another woman’s care, mothers were forced to discover their voices, often in the midst of a male audience. How mothers managed depended on their resolve, the individual relationships they developed with their spouses, and the state of wetnursing.

Swaddling and Children’s Clothes

Swaddling was an important aspect of infant care, encouraged by religious and medical authorities, and practiced by mothers who believed they were keeping their infants warm and secure. As the children grew, parents dressed them to accommodate their activities, selecting clothes that reflected their class and gender.

Often cited by modern historians such as Lawrence Stone¹⁶⁵ as a practice indicative of uncaring parents, swaddling was practiced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in order to make sure the infant was warm and his or her limbs were straight. Midwives such as Jane Sharpe advised mothers and nurses to pay close attention to swaddling:

after he was baptized. The couple had six sons and four daughters; three daughters and one son made it to adulthood.

¹⁶⁴ Bramston, *The Autobiography of Sir John Bramston*, 104.

¹⁶⁵ Lawrence Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, 162-3.

... but in the swaddling of it be sure that all parts are bound up in their due place and order gently, without any crookedness, or rugged foldings; for infants are tender twigs, and as you use them, so they will grow straight or crooked: wipe child's eyes often, to make them clean, with a piece of linen or silk; and lay the arms right down by the sides, that they might grow right, and sometimes with your hand stroke down the belly of the child toward the neck of the bladder, to provoke it to make water.¹⁶⁶

In her comprehensive study of children's dress from 1500-1900, Anne Buck detailed the process of swaddling and indicated that warmth and security were the primary concerns of the parents and nurses. Perceiving parents as caring individuals who were mindful about the security and well-being of their infant, Buck convincingly concluded, "Considering the time and trouble it must have been to swaddle and unswaddle a child it hadly showed lack of care unless the instruction 'shift the clothes often' was ignored."¹⁶⁷

In addition to medical advice, religious leaders instructed mothers to swaddle their infants. The Puritan minister, William Perkins, advised mothers "to give the infant sucke, and to wrap it up in swaddling clothes."¹⁶⁸ Swaddling also enabled parents not only to guide the physical development of their infants but also to shape their moral virtue. In doing so, Cleaver advised mothers to swaddle their babies to insure use of the right hand over the left one, and in some cases, cut the string holding the tongue to the mouth so that the infant's speech and sucking capabilities would grow freely:

By experience we can see that mothers in swaddling their little ones, doe lay their limes right, each in his place: likewise, if a child be given to be left handed, they chide him, yea, for sometimes they bind it up, or otherwise refraine from the use of it, that hee may be accustomed to use his right hand. Also, if the child have some string under his tongue, they cut it, lest it should hinder his speech: much more then ought they to

¹⁶⁶ Sharpe, *Midwives Book*, 272.

¹⁶⁷ Anne Buck, *Clothes and the Child*, 24. Also see Ruth P. Rubinstein, *Society's Child: Identity, Clothing and Style* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2000).

¹⁶⁸ Perkins, *Christian Oeconomie*, 135.

beware, that through their negligence the vices of the soule doe not increase. For it is the dutie of the parents, even in the infancie, to begin to shape and frame the soule unto virtue.¹⁶⁹

When the toddler became ambulatory, parents traded in the long gowns or mantles for short clothes usually referred to as *coates*, which they wore during their daily activities. In an account of his life, Puritan minister Adam Martindale fondly remembered “being a little boy in coates” as he stood next to his older sister as she took care of her chores at a nearby watering pool.¹⁷⁰ According to Buck, the stages of having long clothes and short clothes were normal for all children until the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁷¹ When the child started to wear short clothes, the family usually celebrated this event and gave the baby a gift, usually a piece of coral on a chain, which marked the special occasion with a charm, and served as an adequate teething ring.

Familial accounts seldom mention the clothing of young children, possibly because of its functional nature. Upper classes may have used fabrics that were more expensive in the creation of children’s clothes, but clothing did not appear to define a young person as much as his piety and moral development did. Although Philippe Ariès claimed parents perceived their children during this period as miniature adults and dressed them in adult-like clothing, Linda Pollock has argued that Ariès placed “too much weight on the evidence.”¹⁷² Instead, Pollock has raised the issue of parental views of fashion, including changing whims and tastes. In addition, Pollock has contended, “Although the acquisition of adult clothing was seen by parents to mark a stage in

¹⁶⁹ Cleaver, *A Godlie Forme of Householde Gouvernment*, 251.

¹⁷⁰ Martindale, *Diary*, 4.

¹⁷¹ Buck, *Clothes and the Child*, 59.

¹⁷² Pollock, *A Lasting Relationship*, 57.

growing up, it was only one of a series of such stages, and did not mark the end of childhood.”¹⁷³

David Stannard also challenged Ariès and historians of New England such as Michael Zuckerman¹⁷⁴ and John Demos¹⁷⁵ in their assertions that parents perceived children as small adults because there had been no distinction in their attire.¹⁷⁶ Without examining the cultural beliefs and perspectives existing at this time, Stannard ascertained the use of clothing as an indication of the absence of childhood is a flawed conclusion. Instead, Stannard stated that there existed different explanations as to why children wore the clothing that they did in early modern period. Similar to their continental peers, children in New England wore long gowns opening in the front until they were six or seven; afterwards, they were dressed in clothing imitating the styles of their parents.¹⁷⁷ In contrast to Ariès and his supporters, however, Stannard did not believe this marked an end to childhood; instead, he concurred with Alan Macfarlane¹⁷⁸ who proposed that it was at this age that parents decided to distinguish between the sexes when it came to dressing their children.¹⁷⁹

Play and Discipline

Mothers encouraged children to play in order to develop important social and physical skills. As they interacted with their peers and with adults, children were also

¹⁷³ Pollock, *A Lasting Relationship*, 57.

¹⁷⁴ Michael Zuckerman, *Peaceable Kingdoms: New England Towns in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Random House, 1970).

¹⁷⁵ John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970).

¹⁷⁶ David Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death: A Study in Religion, Culture, and Social Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 44-46.

¹⁷⁷ Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death*, 46.

¹⁷⁸ Macfarlane, *The Family Life of Ralph Josselin*, 90-91.

¹⁷⁹ Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death*, 46.

taught discipline, not as a harsh exercise, but as an educative experience that would clearly guide them as children and future adults.

Children in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England enjoyed playing with toys and engaging in games. According to Nicholas Orme, children's play was self-motivated as well as directed by their parents.¹⁸⁰ A closer examination of children's play shows their imitation of parental values and behaviors as well as a desire to master conventional activities and sports. Sometimes children disobeyed conventional norms and therefore, needed to be disciplined by their parents. Guided by such principles as moderation, self-discovery and virtue, children learned not only to realize their mistakes, but also to learn from them in order to become virtuous Christians.

The toys children played with reflected their individual personalities or sometimes parents gave toys to children for an educational purpose.¹⁸¹ The earliest toy of childhood was the rattle; in 1519, Tudor schoolmaster William Horman made the first reference to this toy in his book *Vulgaria* that included English and Latin translation sentences for schools.¹⁸² The English gentleman and writer Richard Brathwait (1588-1673) reminisced about his early days of play as a child "snitching orchard fruit, seeking popularity with his playmates, thinking of himself 'a brave youth' with a toy gun, hobbyhorse, and rattle."¹⁸³ Before 1700, dolls called poppets or puppets existed and they were usually made of cloth. Orme has cited the English Crown as setting a duty of 6s 8d per gross of imported "puppets or babies for children."¹⁸⁴ Interestingly, many of the imported dolls

¹⁸⁰ Nicholas Orme, "Child's Play in Medieval England," *History Today*, (October, 2001), 49.

¹⁸¹ Nicholas Orme, "The Culture of Children in Medieval England," *Past and Present*, (August, 1995), 51.

¹⁸² Orme, "Culture of Children," 51.

¹⁸³ Richard Brathwait, "Holy Memorials" in *Female and Male Voices in Early Modern England: An Anthology of Renaissance Writing*, eds. Betty Travitsky and Anne Lake Prescott (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 11.

¹⁸⁴ Orme, "Culture of Children," 52.

consisted of wood or wax so that merchants could safely transport them.¹⁸⁵ Other toys of the medieval and early modern period included tops, toy carts, balls and hobby-horses. Children also possessed toys that were fashioned after everyday objects used by their parents. For example, Orme has maintained tea sets, small cauldrons, jugs and small cutlery were favorite items for children to imitate the actions of adults in their family.¹⁸⁶ In addition, boys and girls played with miniature mothers, dads, children, and other figurines that included toy soldiers. Keith Thomas maintained there was no shortage of toys for children in the early modern period.¹⁸⁷ Astutely pointing out the fragile and fleeting nature of toys, Thomas claimed there was no reason to believe they did not exist. The toys children played with included tops, hoops rattles, balls, trumpets, marbles, hobbyhorses, paint boxes, alphabetical bricks, and kites with paper streamers.¹⁸⁸

Sometimes children elected not to play with the conventional toys of their peers, and chose to remain in the company of adults. Such was the case of Lucy Hutchinson, wife of the nonconformist Colonel John Hutchinson, who described her early childhood as one in which she preferred to remain with adults and listen to their conversation rather than play with children. In fact, Lucy recounted how she went out of her way to make other children reject her:

I despised play among other children and when I was forc'd to entertaine such as came to visitt me, I tir'd them with more grave instructions than their mothers, and pluckt all their babies to pieces, and kept the children in such awe, that they were glad when I entertain'd myselfe with elder company.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵ Orme, "Culture of Children," 52.

¹⁸⁶ Orme, "Culture of Children," 54.

¹⁸⁷ Keith Thomas, "Children in Early Modern England," in *Children and Their Books: A Celebration of the Works of Iona and Peter Opie*, eds. Gillian Avery and Julia Briggs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 58.

¹⁸⁸ Thomas, "Children in Early Modern England," 58.

¹⁸⁹ Hutchinson, "The Life of Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson, Written by Herself," 288.

As an alternative, Lucy selected to listen to the conversations of her father and his company or visit her mother in the drawing room so that she could be “very attentive to all, and gather’d up things that I would utter againe, to greate admiration of many that tooke my memory and imitation for witt.”¹⁹⁰

During the early modern period, children were also engaged in games, many of which modeled the activities of adults. Board games were popular, and parents considered chess both educational and symbolic of the ranks of society and their duties.¹⁹¹ There were also games that required physical activity such as singing and dancing for young boys and girls; ball games for older boys included tennis, football and handball. Boys also engaged in paramilitary activities such as archery and dueling with play swords. In fact, a 1512 royal statute ordered boys to join the system whereby adult men practiced archery; therefore, every man with boys in his house, seven to seventeen, had to provide them with two arrows and a bow and raise them to shoot, thus integrating play and military training.¹⁹² After the failure of the earlier statute commanding the practice of archery, and the apparent decline of the pursuit of the sport, Ascham believed that the government needed to make a concerted effort to teach the skills of archery. Later on, Roger Ascham appealed to the gentlemen of England when he wrote *Toxophilus* (1545), referring to archery as “a honest pastime for the mind; how wholesome an exercise for the body; not vile for great men to use....”¹⁹³ Despite the personal and

¹⁹⁰ Hutchinson, “The Life of Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson, Written by Herself,” 288.

¹⁹¹ Orme, “Culture of Children,” 60.

¹⁹² Orme, “Culture of Children,” 63.

¹⁹³ Roger Ascham, *The Whole Works of Roger Ascham*, ed. Rev. Dr. Giles, vol. II (London: John Russell Smith, 1864), 6. Also see Lilly C. Stone, “English Sports and Recreations,” in *Life and Letters in Tudor and Stuart England*, eds. Louis B. Wright and Virginia A. LaMar (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962), 432.

public emphasis on archery, men and boys pursued different ball games such as bowling, handball, cricket and football.

Children in early modern England played various games that might seem familiar today. Put-die was a game consisting of dice and instead of numbers, there were letters on each die—P, T,H, and L on the four sides, and A and D on the two ends. Once the dice were tossed in the air, the letter that appeared would determine the number of marbles won or lost from the pool. Another game played by children was blind egg in which a blindfolded child would try to break the lined-up bird eggs with a stick. Finally, hoodman-blind was a variation of blind man’s bluff, a game that is similar to tag and played in a large enclosed area.¹⁹⁴ Such activities provide evidence of parental endorsement by allowing children to pursue games that were spontaneous and fun.

Play was only one aspect of the social development of children; discipline was also an integral component, which contributed to the growth of the individual. Parents disciplined their children so that they would become modest, obedient and virtuous individuals. Although Lawrence Stone suggested parents were guilty of “the deliberate breaking of the child’s will,”¹⁹⁵ evidence found in personal writings, funeral sermons, memoirs and autobiographies, challenges this position. While there may be some accounts of parental cruelty or overzealous school instructors whipping students, writings of children, parents, clerics and teachers do not support this stereotype.

In treatises created by humanists such as Elyot, Ascham, and Mulcaster, parents were instructed to use reason and moderation in the discipline of their offspring. In the first book of Ascham’s *Schoolmaster*, entitled “Teaching the Bringing Up of Youth,”

¹⁹⁴ See Lilly Stone for a listing and description of games, “English Sports and Recreations,” 429-479.

¹⁹⁵ Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, 101.

parents and teachers were told to be firm, and to expect honesty and hard work from children, but they are also advised to be gentle, moderate and rational with their emotions, and to praise their pupils.¹⁹⁶ Also writing in the sixteenth century, Sir Thomas Elyot directed parents to display good example so that children “may be instructed without any violence or enforcing.”¹⁹⁷ As the newly appointed headmaster of Merchant Taylors Grammar School in 1561, Richard Mulcaster greatly influenced the educational future of England with his scholarly and diligent administration and writings. Mulcaster also addressed the issue of discipline, clearly stating that while punishment was necessary in cases where rules were deliberately broken, clarification of the rules and encouragement when learning would prevent unnecessary reprimand.¹⁹⁸ Mulcaster plainly revealed his position on corporal punishment by writing, “I do think gentleness and courtesy towards children more needful than beating.”¹⁹⁹

Religious authorities advised parents to be moderate in their use of the rod or birch. William Gouge directed parents to point out the “fault committed by their child,” and to make sure that “correction must be used for instruction.”²⁰⁰ Furthermore, Gouge cautioned parents, “Correction must be given in a milde moode, when the affections are well ordered, and not distempered with choler, rage, furie and other like passions.”²⁰¹ Most importantly and perhaps most insightful, Gouge counseled, “Correction by word must goe before correction by the rod.”²⁰² Puritan Robert Cleaver agreed with Gouge’s advice to parents as they guided their children to pursue a virtuous existence and avoid

¹⁹⁶ Roger Ascham, *The Whole Works of Roger Ascham*, ed. Rev. Dr. Giles, vol. III, 88-93.

¹⁹⁷ Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Book Named the Governor*, 68.

¹⁹⁸ Richard Mulcaster, *The Educational Writings of Richard Mulcaster (1532-1611)*, ed. James Oliphant (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1903), 32, 113-17.

¹⁹⁹ Mulcaster, *Educational Writings*, 117.

²⁰⁰ Gouge, *Domesticall Duties*, 554-5.

²⁰¹ Gouge, *Domesticall Duties*, 556.

²⁰² Gouge, *Domesticall Duties*, 556.

willful and disobedient behavior. Cleaver reminded parents, “For as the common Prouerbe is *Byrch breaketh no bones*; neither doth moderate correction bring danger of death: but oftentimes it bridleth and keepeth backe the childe, and otherwise would runne headlong into hell, and so is a meane to save his soule.”²⁰³ In his instruction to parents, Thomas Becon advised, “use of moderation in correcting children,” and he condemned those who rage against children by referring to such parents as “butchers rather than fathers.”²⁰⁴

The most convincing evidence supporting the steadfast and caring nature of parental discipline can be discovered in the writings of families. Reverend Oliver Heywood recalled how his wife Elizabeth carefully instructed her sons in their religious education and reprimanded them when they played during prayers.²⁰⁵ As the mother of six children, Elizabeth Cholmley took an active interest in their religious education and although her husband recounted that she had indulged her children at times, Elizabeth guided them by being “a trew daughter of the Church of England dyeing in profession of that faith booth in doctrine and discipline....”²⁰⁶ The youngest of fourteen children, Roger North experienced a difficult childhood with the exception of the comfort he found with his mother. Plagued by the frugal and maddening behavior of his grandfather and the ill temper of his father who agonized over family finances, young Roger regarded his mother with tenderness and respect. Although Roger North remembered his mother Ann as a firm disciplinarian, he also recalled her as one who chose to shape the morals of her children by displaying good example and reading edifying selections of literature. Roger

²⁰³ Cleaver, *A Godly Forme of Householde Gouernment*, 264.

²⁰⁴ Becon, *The Catechism*, 355.

²⁰⁵ Reverend Oliver Heywood, *His Autobiography, Diaries, Anecdote and Event Books*, ed. Turner, Horsfall (Brighouse, England: A.B. Bayes, 1872), vol. 1, 63.

²⁰⁶ Cholmley, *Memoirs*, 121.

explained, “she took perpetuall care wee should contract no ill habits by conversing with servants, especially lying, which she allwais preacht against, as well as hardly forgave... she shew how virtue may be mixt with delight, she used to tell us tales, always concluding in morality.”²⁰⁷

What is interesting about Roger North’s account of his mother as a disciplinarian is his ability to extol her attributes and at the same time rationalize her use of the rod. According to her son, Ann North sometimes yielded to the whims of her children and, upon sensing this compliance, her children decided to test the rules. Roger North recollected, “it breeds such a willfulness, that it becomes almost desperate to cross them. We had stubborne spirits, and would often set up for ourselves, and try the experiment, but she would reduce us to terms by the smart of correction.”²⁰⁸ It would be shortsighted to cast Ann North as someone who beat her children; instead, one must view her actions within the particular set of circumstances and at best, question her failure to follow the suggestions of clerics and scholars who advised administration of discipline in a consistent manner. Interestingly, later on in his life, Roger wrote of his mother in a letter to his sister Anne:

I thinck ther never was such an example in the world as our mother, who was no Hector, but never appeared disturbed, during all her painfull nursings which she had with so many of us, and more with my father, so that although she was as tender as possible, one would have thought she had a heart of brass. I have heard the terrible wounds made up, after the work done she would swoon, but rubb’d thro the work like a lyon.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ *Notes of Me: The Autobiography of Roger North*, ed. Peter Millard (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 82.

²⁰⁸ North, *Notes of Me*, 81-2.

²⁰⁹ North, *Notes of Me*, 5.

Funeral sermons also provide evidence of parental moderation and piety when disciplining children. In 1658, Thomas Froyssell, Minister of Clun in Shropshire, not only reminded his audience of the love Sir Robert Harley possessed for his children, but also shared with them the perception that Sir Robert “would never bear with any evil in any of his children and he would often say to them, I desire nothing of you but your love and that you keep from sin.”²¹⁰ Nathaniel Parkhurst reminded Elizabeth Brooke’s daughter Mary, that her mother “was watchful, restraining her children from evil, and bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. She constantly endeavoured to instill in their minds and principles of Justice, Holiness and Charity.”²¹¹ At the funeral of Lady Elizabeth Alston, William Dillingham spoke of her diligence to provide Christian morals for her children, and described Elizabeth as a “most tender and careful Mother, whom she did not satisfy herself to have once brought forth, but she travailed again of them, that Christ might be formed in them.”²¹² Mrs. Elizabeth Bury also supported the practice of “wisdom and love” in the discipline of a child.²¹³ Collected from her diary, Rev. William Tong published an account of Elizabeth Bury’s life as well as a funeral sermon. In her writing, Elizabeth advised parents to be watchful of the conversation of their children, “and whatever you find faulty, show them the Evil of it, rather than charge them with

²¹⁰ *Letters of The Lady Brilliana Harley*, xxxiii.

²¹¹ Nathaniel Parkhurst, *The Faithful and Diligent Christian Described and Exemplified or, a Sermon Preached at the Funeral of the Lady Elizabeth Brooke, the Relict of Sir Robert Brooke Kt. Of Cockfield Hall in Foxford, Suffolk, With an Appendix, Containing Some Observations, Experiences, Rules for Practice, Found Written with Her Ladyship’s Own Hand* (London: John Harding, 1684), Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1971, 395:1, 67.

²¹² William Dillingham, *A Sermon at the Funeral of the Lady Elizabeth Alston, Wife of Sir Thomas Alston, Knight and Baronet, Preached in the Parish-Church of Woodhill in Bedford-shire, September 10, 1677* (London: Jonathan Robinson, 1678), Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1976, 625:10, 40.

²¹³ Tong, William, *An Account of the Life and Death of Mrs. Elizabeth Bury, Who Died May the 11th, 1720. Chiefly Collected out of Her Own Diary Together with Her Funeral Sermon, May 22, 1720* (London: J. Penn, 1721), 177-8.

it.”²¹⁴ Elizabeth Bury also emphasized the need to be consistent and to speak to children in language they could understand.

During the infant and early childhood years, mothers played an active role in the formation of the young child; as the child matured as a teen and young adult, the father’s role increased in importance. Religious leaders and humanists reminded parents about the dangers of indulgence in childrearing. Such permissiveness would deprive young people of the ability and necessity to develop valuable attributes that would enable them to live meaningful and successful lives. While humanists and clerics frowned upon indulgence, parents combined love, piety and clarification to discipline their young and prepare them for adulthood. Perhaps the Lutheran theologian Justus Menius (1499-1558), correctly summarized what Steven Ozment labeled “the parental mandate of an age” when he concluded:

The diligent rearing of children is the greatest service to the world, both in spiritual and temporal affairs, both for the present life and for posterity. Just as one turns young calves into strong cows and oxen, rears young colts to be brave stallions, and nurtures small tender shoots into great fruit-bearing trees, so we must bring up our children to be knowing and courageous adults, who serve both land and people and help both to prosper.²¹⁵

Names for Children

The selection of a child’s name among upper class families in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England reflected an affectionate practice in which religion and remembrances were significant influences. An examination of the process of naming children can provide valuable insight into the cultural values of the period as well as can

²¹⁴ Tong, *An Account of the Life and Death of Mrs. Elizabeth Bury*, 177-8.

²¹⁵ Steven Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled: Family Life in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983), 132.

elucidate familial relationships.²¹⁶ While the determination of a child's name placed the girl or boy in relation to other members of the family, the sources of children's names could be traced to religious, political or personal beliefs perpetuating the lineage, conveying an intimate and spiritual relationship between godparent and child or parent and child, or memorializing a revered family member.

In his study entitled *Names and Naming Patterns in England, 1538-1700*, Scott Smith-Bannister cautions against the formulation of piecemeal conclusions regarding the practice of naming children.²¹⁷ As a result of his quantitative analysis of name-sharing practices during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Bannister concludes that one of the most significant developments was the transition from naming children after their godparents to selecting a name in honor of the parents.²¹⁸ In the post-Reformation world, parents, particularly mothers, assumed greater responsibility for the religious education of their children. Where the godparents once held this duty, parents now believed it was their obligation to nurture the spiritual development of their offspring.²¹⁹ This spiritual connection not only moved families away from the control of religious institutions, but also resulted in a more intimate connection between parent and child. To commemorate this bond, children received their parents' names or in some instances, sons or daughters received the name of a revered relative.

²¹⁶ Daniel Scott Smith, "Child-naming Practices, Kinship Ties, and Change in Family Attitudes in Hingham, Massachusetts, 1641 to 1880," *Journal of Social History*, 18 (Summer, 1985), 542.

²¹⁷ Scott Smith-Bannister, *Names and Naming Patterns in England*, 183. See also Gloria Main, "Naming Children in Early New England," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 27 (Summer, 1996): 1-27.

²¹⁸ Bannister, *Names and Naming Patterns in England*, 184.

²¹⁹ For a discussion of the changes in the post-Reformation period covering the relationship and responsibilities of godparents see William Coster, "From Fire and Water: The Responsibilities of Godparents in Early Modern England," in *The Church and Childhood: Papers Read at the 1993 Summer Meeting and the 1994 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. Diana Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 301-311.

When his only sister Geels for instance, died shortly after giving birth to a son, Robert Sibbald recounted how he held the baby “up to the minister, and he was called Robert after me, for I came from the internment of his mother to the church where he was christened.”²²⁰ Later on, Sibbald named his daughter Katerin, after her maternal grandmother.²²¹ This transition in name-sharing practices is also apparent in such diaries as Simonds D’Ewes, who meticulously described the thought process involved in the selection of names for his children. As the proud father of his first son, D’Ewes described the baptism of his child who received the name of Clopton, “to perpetuate in him, if God had so pleased, his mother’s name and family.”²²² At the christening, the D’Ewes had three witnesses of the surname—Walter Clopton, Esq. his wife’s uncle; Thomas Clopton, gentleman; and Mary Clopton, the widow of William Clopton.²²³ Two years later, upon the birth of twin boys, D’Ewes and his wife followed an accepted practice of naming their children after revered family members. The older twin received the name of Geerardt, after his paternal great grandfather; the parents named the younger boy Adrian, after his paternal great grandfather’s father.²²⁴ Unfortunately, both boys died within three days of their birth. A year later in 1633, Simonds D’Ewes and his wife Anne christened their fourth, newborn son Clopton, a name deeply meaningful to the family.²²⁵

While many families named infants after revered family members, some parents provided a new baby with the name of an older sibling who had died. Such was the case

²²⁰ Sibbald, *Memoirs*, 68.

²²¹ Sibbald, *Memoirs*, 72.

²²² D’Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol.2, 45.

²²³ D’Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 45.

²²⁴ D’Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 89.

²²⁵ D’Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 107.

with John Martindale who was born in 1660; one year after his eight-year-old namesake had died. According to his father,

He was a beautifull child, and very manly and courageous for his age; of which this may passe for one specimen: We had a wanton tearing calfe that would runne at children to beare them over. This calfe he would encounter with a sticke in his hand, when he was about two yeares old, stand his ground stoutly, beat it backe, and triumph over it, crying *caw, caw*, meaning he had beaten the calfe. I doe not think one child of 100 of his age durst doe so much.²²⁶

However, this “gallant boy, which was sweet company to his poore mother... and refreshing to me at my returne,”²²⁷ would die shortly after celebrating his third birthday. His bereaved parents accepted God’s will, but did pose the question as to whether they “had offended God by striving with his Providence to have a John.”²²⁸ According to Simonds D’Ewes, his father “was called Paul also, although his older brother had been so named.”²²⁹ One year after their beloved Ann died at the age of nine, Sir Richard and Lady Ann Fanshawe named their sixth daughter by the same name. In her memoirs, Lady Ann wrote, “In 1655, I was delivered of a daughter whom we named Ann, to keep in remembrance her dear sister whom we had newly lost.”²³⁰ Further analysis of the practice of naming a child after a deceased sibling can reflect familial desires to remember the deceased member. Such a practice may reflect the intense grief of the parents upon the loss of a child and, in giving another child the same name, perpetuate the memory of the deceased offspring.

²²⁶ Martindale, *Diary*, 154.

²²⁷ Martindale, *Diary*, 154.

²²⁸ Martindale, *Diary*, 154.

²²⁹ D’Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 8. The first Paul died in infancy in 1563 and the second son, Paul, was born in 1567.

²³⁰ Lady Ann Harrison Fanshawe, *The Memoirs of Ann Lady Fanshawe*, 84-5.

Although many parents did not follow the directives of their ministers to name their children after biblical figures, some mothers and fathers submitted to the powerful directives of their ministers. During Richard Greenham's tenure in the parish of Dry Drayton, the incidence of biblical names for baptism increased during the 1570's. Greenham, a nonconformist minister, favored the use of biblical names, and evidence of his policy can be found in 1575, when nine of the ten children baptized received biblical names.²³¹ With the exception of Thomas, a traditional parish name, the remaining children were Peter, Appia, Daniel, Ursula, Nathaniel, Samuel, Josiah and two Sarahs.²³² Afterwards, other biblical names emerged such as Deborah, Rebecca, Jehosabeths, Hannah's, Gemimah, Solomon, and Manasses. Moses, Joshua, Eunice, Lot and Bathsheba. When Greenham left the parish, the population returned to the practice of selecting traditional names from the saint's such as William, Henry, John, Elizabeth, Alice and Margaret.²³³

Dorothy Leigh agreed with Richard Greenham in the use of religious names for children. In chapter nine of the *Mother's Blessing*, Leigh instructed her sons:

to name your children after the names of the Saints of God, which may bee a meanes to put them in mind of some vertues which those Saints used; especially, when they shal read of them in the Bible: and seeing many are desirous to name both their owne children and others after their owne names, this will be a meanes to increase the names of the Saints in the Church, and so none shall have occasion to mislike his name, since hee beareth the name of such a Saint as hath left a witness to the world, that hee lived and dyed in the true faith of Jesus Christ. The names I have

²³¹ Eric Josef Carlson, "Practical Divinity: Richard Greenham's Ministry in Elizabethan England," in *Religion and the English People, 1500-1640: New Voices, New Perspectives*, ed. Eric Josef Carlson (Kirksville, Missouri: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1998), 183. Some of the parishioners continued to keep traditional naming patterns, but Greenham's influence was great and Carlson has attributed this to the prevalence of Biblical names.

²³² Carlson, "Practical Divinity," 183.

²³³ Carlson, "Practical Divinity," 183.

chosen you are these: Philip, Elizabeth, James, Anna, John and Susanna.²³⁴

The anecdotal account of how Bulstrode Whitelocke received his name reveals how seriously families chose names regardless of opposition. At the christening of Bulstrode Whitelock in 1605, James Whitelocke insisted that his son receive the maiden name of his mother Elizabeth. When the infant's father and the godparents, an uncle and his paternal grandmother, were asked to select another name, James Whitelocke responded, "Elizabeth, and bid them choose which they would of those two names, for he was resolved that the child should beare his mothers name, whereupon he was christened Bulstrode."²³⁵

Illness and Medicinal Recipes

Illness evoked expressions of anxiety, pain, grief and later, acceptance among families. While it was too early for the benefits of inoculation and the use of antibiotics, families, especially women, confronted infectious diseases with primitive medical knowledge. One of the important roles mothers played in the family was to care for the sick by implementing their skills of physick and chirurgery. Armed with herbs, cooking pots and medicinal recipes that were passed down by generations of women, mothers, sisters and wives cared for their families. While some female writers such as Grace Mildmay, Mary Trye and Hannah Woolley emerged as leaders in medicinal remedies, they were often overshadowed by "male experts" such as John Partridge and Gervase

²³⁴ Leigh, *The Mother's Blessing*, 28-9.

²³⁵ *The Diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke, 1605-1675*, ed. Ruth Spalding (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 43. The sixth son of Dudley and Anne North (parents of Roger North) also received his mother's maiden name of Montagu as his first name.

Markham who kept a close ear to female oral culture and a watchful eye on their medical supplies.

As the caretakers of family healthcare, women addressed and monitored familial accidents and illnesses. This particular role was not new to women who worked as healers from antiquity forward, caring for the sick and creating new herbal remedies for various ailments and conditions. John Riddle's research on women as healers specifically focuses on their activities dating from ancient Egypt, when women were particularly concerned with the formulation of herbal recipes that would be useful for contraception.²³⁶ By the sixteenth century, women could boast of an extensive collection of recipes to regulate fertility. Skill in "kitchen physick" was also demonstrated by women who compiled receipts for specific illnesses and conditions. Such recipes were often shared among households, where women compared ingredients, related medicinal discoveries and attended to medical needs of family members and neighbors.²³⁷ In the seventeenth century, Sarah Jinner of London and Mary Holden of Sudbury created medical almanacs filled with medicinal advice and recipes for individuals, particularly women, to consult.²³⁸

Although mothers and fathers resigned themselves to the fact, that sickness was God's will or that their children were now safe in heaven, their words reveal their sense of loss and frustration in the event that illness resulted in death. The parents of Gervase

²³⁶ See John Riddle, *Eve's Herbs: A History of Contraception and Abortion in the West* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1997).

²³⁷ Rebecca Tannenbaum, *The Healer's Calling: Women and Medicine in Early New England*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002).

²³⁸ See A.S. Weber, "Women's Early Modern Medical Almanacs in Historical Context," *English Literary Renaissance* 33 (November, 2003): 358-402.

Holles experienced a deep sense of loss when their one-year-old son, John died shortly after the birth of a second son. In his family chronicle Gervase recounted:

This great comfort that my father and mother had in having two sonnes was soone over-clouded by the death of my brother John who departed this life on the 11th day of April following, 1607. And at the same instant that my mother went to church to give God thanks for hir safe delivery of me she carried him along with hir to his funeral.²³⁹

One year later, the Holles family continued to suffer as Elizabeth Holles gave birth to a daughter who survived but one week. Shortly after the birth of Anne, her mother caught a cold and died the following week:

...the death of my mother who (after shee had beene safely brought to bed of my sister Anne on the 18th of October 1608) caught a colde herselfe and died the last day of the moneth in childebed and was buried the first of November in the north isle of the church of Grimesby close to the wall, having hir two children, John and Anne (who likewise died on the 25th October a few days before hir), lying at hir feet under a freestone betweene hir tomb and the crosse wall, leaving my poore father in a short time deprived of all the comfortes he had, excepting me a little childe of about a yeare and a halfe olde.²⁴⁰

Accounts of illnesses among upper-class families in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England revealed a fear of the unknown malady as well as an acknowledgement of God's divine nature in the course of everyday events.²⁴¹ Each personal outlook can appear paradoxical, but to the early modern mentality, this was the nature of life itself. Though fear and faith shaped their reason, families did feel profound sorrow in circumstances where sickness afflicted their members and death robbed them of the warmth and interaction of a loved one. When his daughter, Hannah, was fourteen, Adam Martindale sadly recounted the illness which rendered her legs paralyzed and challenged

²³⁹ Gervase Holles, *Memorials of the Holles Family, 1493-1656*, ed. A.C. Wood (London: Camden Society, 1937), 195.

²⁴⁰ Gervase Holles, *Memorials*, 195.

²⁴¹ See Roy Porter, "The Patient's View: Doing Medical History from Below," *Theory and Society*, 14 (March, 1985): 175-98.

the resources and stamina of the family. In his description of Hannah's affliction, her father wrote:

Hannah . . . fell into a distemper like a fever, which tooke away the use of all her limbs, and that with such excessive paine that she was neither able to ly still, nor endure to be turned; but God, in mercie to her and us, tooke away her paine, and restored her upper body clearely, so that, for anything that belongs to head or hand, she is as active and diligent as any one needs to be; but for her lower parts—whereas she was a nimble stirring girle of ten yeares old when it tooke her—she hath ever beene so lame that she cannot stand upright, much less goe soe, nor not with crutches. It is thought the weaknesse is in her backe and thighs; yet I hope she gets some little strength every year, and she can quickly goe the length of the room.²⁴²

In a futile effort to restore mobility in Hannah's legs, her parents consulted doctors and experimented with contemporary treatments from others who pretended to possess cures.

According to her father,

Some physitions thought it was a sort of palsie, others a rheumatismus, and many causes were taken with her, as letting blood, giving her spirits in vehicles, hote baths, putting her into warme cow-bellies new killed, (which had helped another girle seemingly in the same condition,) and drinking powder of swine-clawes, which had restored a woman 50 yeares old in Bradford, neare Manchester, to the use of her legges; anointing her with a salve made of bustion-grasse, which had cured a young woman in Ashton-under-Line, &c.²⁴³

At the center of caring for the sick, women played an integral role by maintaining herbal gardens, experimenting with remedies, and tending to household needs. With the availability of physicians for the upper classes, there was a broad spectrum of treatments as well as an absence of regulation in the practice of medicine. Therefore, women depended upon their familial and communal relationships to take care of the needs of their patients. Often, upper-class women had to tend to the needs of their households as

²⁴² Martindale, *Diary*, 214.

²⁴³ Martindale, *Diary*, 214.

well as to the ailments of the tenants of their estates. Childhood education for women of this class commonly included some instruction for the care of the sick.

Women such as Lady Grace Mildmay,²⁴⁴ Mary Trye²⁴⁵ and Hannah Woolley²⁴⁶ however, distinguished themselves with their more scholarly backgrounds and social connections. The medicinal recipes and practices of these women gradually affected how upper-class women cared for members of their household. Although Grace Mildmay used traditional techniques of the times on such ailments as blisters, cutting, sweating, purges, and vomits, she was different from other women who kept herb gardens or who made their own medicines in that she “was concerned with prescribing the treatment of disease and the manufacture of medications.”²⁴⁷ Instructed by her father’s niece who was informed about medical matters and knowledgeable of written works such as William Turner’s *A Newe Herball*, Lady Mildmay collected and recorded her own recipes. Partly out of her own natural curiosity and intelligence, and certainly with the intention of leaving valuable medical manuscripts for her daughter Mary and future generations, Lady Mildmay produced a collection of over 2,000 loose medical papers, several books and an inventory representative of an apothecary shop. According to Linda Pollock, her biographer and editor of extracts from her medical papers, “Lady Mildmay manufactured medications on a larger scale than most of her contemporaries, using a more extensive range of ingredients, including many more chemicals and minerals. Most importantly,

²⁴⁴ Linda Pollock, *With Faith and Physic: The Life of a Tudor Gentlewoman, Lady Grace Mildmay, 1552-1620*. See also Rachel Weigall, “An Elizabethan Woman: The Journal of Lady Mildmay,” *The Quarterly Review* (1911): 119-38; Retha M. Warnicke, “Lady Mildmay’s Journal: A Study in Autobiography and Meditation in Reformation England,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 20 (Spring, 1989): 55-68.

²⁴⁵ Mary Trye, *Medicatrix or The Woman Physician*, in *English Women’s Voices, 1540-1700*, ed. Otten, 193-7.

²⁴⁶ Hannah Woolley, *A Supplement to the Queen-like Closet* (London: R. Chisel, 1680), Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1983, 1138: 37.

²⁴⁷ Pollock, *With Faith and Physic*, 108.

she detailed the causes and symptoms of diverse diseases instead of merely listing cures.²⁴⁸

Mary Trye's *Medicatrix* or *The Woman Physician* was a defense of both her beloved father's work as a chemist and physician, and of her ability to continue the medical practice after his death. Written as a response to the critical and belligerent accusations of Warwick physician Henry Stubbe, who attacked chemical medicine and instead, believed in the use of surgical instruments, *Medicatrix* began with an epistle dedicatory in which Mary Trye wrote, "to the glory of her sex, the honor of her country, and the most accomplished Lady, the Lady Fisher, Wife of Sir Clement Fisher, Knight and Baronet of Packington- Hall in the county of Warwick."²⁴⁹ In 1674, Trye recorded her beliefs about the work of her father Dr. Thomas O'Dowd and his wish that she continue his practice. Meticulously trained by her father, Trye does continue to attend to the sick and seriously ill of Warwick and on one occasion, the town credited her with saving the life of Major Abrell, a well-known figure in Warwick. The major had fallen ill "of an apoplexy" when Trye was summoned to help him; after an examination of Abrell, Trye administered

a small quantity of this liquid medicine, some of which took place immediately, in the little time as I could walk the room to and fro, the convulse ceased: and in less than a quarter of an hour, Nature began to be enlivened, assisted, and roused up, and the patient moved, discharging half a pint or more of the offensive apoplectic matter; and in an hour he began to look about and came to utter many words.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁸ Pollock, *With Faith and Physic*, 98.

²⁴⁹ Trye, *Medicatrix* or *The Woman Physician*, in *English Women's Voices*, ed. Otten, 193.

²⁵⁰ Trye, *Medicatrix* or *The Woman Physician*, in *English Women's Voices*, ed. Otten, 196.

One of the most interesting aspects of Trye's text was not her preparation of the medicine that cured Major Abrell, but her justification to practice medicine as a woman.

In her writing, Trye explains to Lady Fisher:

But that my pen may not altogether surprise your Ladyship by these occasional and vindictory papers... 'twill be civil and requisite to let you know that abiding the late great and never-to-be-forgotten pestilential calamity of this city, and undergoing that mortal stroke, in which I lost two of my dearest friends, my father and mother, but surviving them myself, I received a medicinal talent from my father, which by the instruction of so excellent a tutor as he was to me, and my constant preparation and observation of medicines, together with my daily experience by reason of his very great practice; as also being mistree of a reasonable share of that knowledge and discretion other women attain; I made myself capable of disposing such noble and successful medicines, and managing so weighty and great a concern....²⁵¹

Men wrote most of the manuals and guidebooks covering domestic subjects such as medical recipes and care, cooking and gardening, often based on information gathered from women. Nonetheless, some female writers were able to publish texts.²⁵² Recently widowed and determined to support herself and her family with her culinary and medicinal recipes, Hannah Woolley became one of the few female authors of manuals for those interested in the domestic affairs of the household. As a literate woman who had worked with her husband in two schools, and as an accomplished domestic servant who could boast of preparing meals for the royal family of Charles I, Hannah Woolley became well-known for her publications: *The Ladies Directory* (1661 and 1662); *The Cooks Guide* (1664); *The Queen-like Closet* (1670, 1672, 1675-6, 1681, 1684); and *A Supplement To The Queen-like Closet* (1674, 1681, 1684).²⁵³ In the 1681 publication of *A Supplement To The Queen-like Closet*, Woolley explained her purpose in writing this

²⁵¹ Trye, *Medicatrix or The Woman Physician*, in *English Women's Voices*, ed. Otten, 193-4.

²⁵² See Suzanne Hull, *Chaste, Silent and Obedient: English Books for Women, 1475-1640*; Elaine Hoby, *Virtue of Necessity: English Women's Writing, 1646-1688*, chp. 7.

²⁵³ Hoby, *Virtue of Necessity*, 166-7.

text when she concluded her recipes were the result of reading and experience that may not be found in “common receipts,” but are valuable in “treating those things wherein People cannot easily Erre, and by which they may receive good.”²⁵⁴

Specifically addressed to women of the household, *The Treasurie of Hidden Secrets* by John Partridge, also referred to as *The Good Huswiues Closet of Prouision, for the Health of her Household, Gathered Out of Sundry Experiments...And Now Newly Enlarged, with ... Names and Naturall Disposition of Diseases...*, provided medical recipes to fulfill the medical needs of their families. This guidebook contained herbal remedies for ailments such as rashes, stomachaches and burns. Partridge’s text informed women what “a good huswives closet of necessary provision for the health of the household” should have in case of illness or emergencies.²⁵⁵ In this particular text, women could learn how to treat worms in young children by “taking lupines and make flower of them, which kneaded with honey, lay it to the stomach of the child.”²⁵⁶ They could also “drive away lyce” by “taking incence, and the lard of a farrow hogge, properly called farrowes gruce, boyle them together in an earthen pot, and with this ointment rub and annoynt the place where the lyce be.”²⁵⁷

The principal virtue of the English housewife according to Gervase Markham, was her skill in physic in which she understood, “the preservation and care of the family touching their health and soundness of body consisteth most in her diligence.”²⁵⁸ In 1615, the first edition of *The English Housewife* appeared, and the editor, Roger Jackson, included a note to the reader stating Gervase Markham had not written the text, but had

²⁵⁴ Woolley, *A Supplement to the Queen-like Closet*, A3.

²⁵⁵ Partridge, *The Treasurie of Hidden Secrets*, 2.

²⁵⁶ Partridge, *The Treasurie of Hidden Secrets*, 33.

²⁵⁷ Partridge, *The Treasurie of Hidden Secrets*, 24.

²⁵⁸ Markham, *The English Housewife*, 6-8.

organized the collection of writing covering medicinal remedies to the daily demands of the household. Markham,²⁵⁹ a younger son from a noble family in decline, pursued interests in law, military service, husbandry and writing. Eight years later, when *The English Housewife* appeared in a second edition, Markham acknowledged his role as an editor, but also asserted his contributions to the work in the fields of husbandry and herbs.²⁶⁰ In his perception of the ideal wife, Markham cast her as a devout individual who exemplified humility, charity and frugality in her daily activities. Such a wife maintained a status in the household, which was close to being that of an equal partner with her husband, who concerned himself with the external affairs of the family.²⁶¹

Among the upper-classes in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England, medical knowledge spread by conversations among family members, friends, and informal associations with members of the London College of Physicians.²⁶² Although many of the texts containing medical recipes authorities credited to men such as Partridge and Markham, the contents of such recipes reflected an oral culture in which women, as caretakers of the household, shared their medical skills and discoveries. Similar to the exchange of favorite meal recipes, women shared medical treatments with relatives and friends. According to Andrew Wear, “The large numbers of manuscript collections of medical recipes indicate a need to fix them in the certainty of writing rather than trusting to a fallible memory.”²⁶³

²⁵⁹ For a brief overview of Markham’s life (1568-1637), see F.N.L. Poynter “Gervase Markham,” in *Essays and Studies*, ed. Beatrice White (London: John Murray, 1962), 27-39.

²⁶⁰ Markham, *The English Housewife*, xvii.

²⁶¹ Markham, *The English Housewife*, 5.

²⁶² Andrew Wear, *Knowledge and Practice in English Medicine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 50.

²⁶³ Wear, *Knowledge and Practice*, 51.

Accounts of Childhood Mishaps and Accidents

Familial accounts demonstrate that children in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England did not escape those early years without their share of accidents and “close calls.” Because of the dependence on boats and horses for transportation, drowning and falls accounted for serious accidents and fatalities. In addition, some children were victims to scalding kettles or guns, resulting not from indifferent parenting but from the curious and impetuous nature of children.

At the age of sixty-two, Adam Martindale recollected his childhood mishaps and near death experiences in a journal written one year before his death in 1686. In a style commensurate with his Puritan training, Martindale praised God for sparing his life when he was a young child. As a toddler, Adam had run across a wet floor, fell and suffered a sharp blow to his head. Cast as “a little stirring lad playing” near a broken earthen pot partially filled with water, the young Martindale hit his “tender little head” against a sharp piece of the pot and suffered a serious trauma to his head that “might very probably have pierced my very braine.”²⁶⁴ Martindale firmly stated this account was true since he still carried a mark on his head from the incident.

In a second near death experience, young Martindale almost drowned when he fell into a pool or fishing pond where his older sister was “having some business to doe.”²⁶⁵ A fortunate glance and quick thinking enabled Adam’s sister to pull him from the pool and resuscitate him. Young Adam “was almost quite drowned, being senseless and seemingly dead,” but when he was placed on his stomach with his head down, he “began after some time, to come to myself againe, having vomited up a great quantity of

²⁶⁴ Martindale, *Diary*, 4.

²⁶⁵ Martindale, *Diary*, 4.

water.”²⁶⁶ Before the age of six, Adam Martindale had one more encounter with death when he went to church. As a result of his “curiosity to peep downe into an old coale-pit that had a great deal of water ,” Adam felt the dirt loosen under his feet and as he began to fall, his bother Henry “got hold of me with all speed, and plucked me away from the jawes of deathe.”²⁶⁷

In his recollection of his “perilous” childhood, Simonds D’Ewes described various ailments and accidents that reflect the limitations of medicine as well as the subjective nature of familial accounts. Dating from his first year of life, D’Ewes recounted he had been “cured of three dangerous distempers.”²⁶⁸ The first affliction had been a sore on his right eye that D’Ewes attributed to the forceful actions of the midwife at his birth. Secondly, D’Ewes reported, “he had a great rupture, which threatened me with much danger and inconvenience if one Mrs. Margaret Waltham, had not very seasonably and carefully undertaken the cure of it, which she so skillfully and successfully finished within the space of ten weeks.”²⁶⁹ The most serious threat to D’Ewes’ health was recorded in his writing as a “large and deep depression in my skull, on the left side of my head; which if I die of a natural death in the times of peace, I am likely to carry to the grave with me.”²⁷⁰ D’Ewes did not know how this depression developed in his skull because of the conflicting accounts from his childhood. His parents believed it might have resulted from a fall under the care of the nurse. The wetnurse and her husband had denied such a fall and attributed the depression to “a dangerous sore that bred of itself in my head, which remained awhile under the surgeon’s

²⁶⁶ Martindale, *Diary*, 4.

²⁶⁷ Martindale, *Diary*, 4-5.

²⁶⁸ D’Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 26.

²⁶⁹ D’Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 26.

²⁷⁰ D’Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 26.

hands before it could be cured.”²⁷¹ Finally, D’Ewes himself admitted that the depression in his skull could have been the result of hitting his head against some hard material.²⁷²

As a young child, D’Ewes managed to become involved in precarious predicaments that threatened his safety. At the age of seven, D’Ewes almost drowned in a stream on his grandfather’s estate at Coxden. D’Ewes had wandered outside the house and fell into the stream where his grandfather’s tenants who were washing their tools rescued him.²⁷³ In another incident, young D’Ewes had run after a ball and landed in the midst of his father’s store-horses in the courtyard. As D’Ewes retrieved the ball from under the belly of one of the horses, his parents looked on in horror as their child playfully yelled out while under the animal. Fortunately for D’Ewes, his father rescued him; afterwards, the son described the elder D’Ewes tenderness and thankfulness to God.²⁷⁴

The two-year-old son of John Evelyn also had a narrow escape with death as he nearly choked on the food he was eating. In the morning young Richard was fed broth by his nurse who had not noticed “a square but broad and pointed bone of some part of a ract of Mutton, stuck so fast in the Childs Throate and crossed his Weason.”²⁷⁵ From the nursery, the parents heard the hysterical wails of the nurse as the child gasped for breath with “eyes and face swollen, and clos’d, the Mouth full of froth and gore, the face black—no Chirurgeon neere.”²⁷⁶ After John Evelyn “cald for drink, power it downe and

²⁷¹ D’Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 27.

²⁷² D’Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 27.

²⁷³ D’Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 28.

²⁷⁴ D’Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 28-9.

²⁷⁵ Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, 165.

²⁷⁶ Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, 165.

held its head downe to incite it to vomite, it pleased God, that on the suddaine effort and as it was struggling for life, he cast forth a bone....”²⁷⁷

The availability of firearms was responsible for the incidence of accidents involving children, often resulting in fatal consequences. In her diary, Elizabeth Freke lamented the sudden death of her beloved grandchild John, killed when another child playing with a loaded pistol carelessly left by a servant, accidentally shot him in the head. Elizabeth Freke acknowledged “my deer babe gave up his soule to my God,” but her faith could not mask her profound grief for the loss of “my dearest Grandchild Jack Frek for I had sett my Whole Hartt on Him, Which itt has brok, that & me, for any Comfortt in this life.”²⁷⁸

The grandson of Ambrose Barnes died as a result of a tragic accident with a kettle. George Airey, the son of Ann and George Airey had been playing near a hot kettle that had been recently taken off the fire. The kettle contained a “Hamm of bacon had been boiled, and the boy playing where it stood, fell backward into it, whereby his back and loins were so miserably scalded, that in two or three dayes it brought convulsions upon him, and the fifth day he dyed.”²⁷⁹

When Children Died

Perhaps there is no better evidence of the affection that exists between a parent and a child than the words of a mother or a father upon the loss of a loved one. During seventeenth-century England, letters, diaries and personal records were rife with accounts

²⁷⁷ Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, 165.

²⁷⁸ Mrs. Elizabeth Freke, *Her Diary*, 58.

²⁷⁹ Ambrose Barnes, *Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Ambrose Barnes, Late Merchant and Sometime Alderman of Newcastle Upon Tyn*, ed. William H. D. Longstaffe (London: Andrews & Co., 1867), 77.

of the deaths of young children. Parental accounts describing the loss of their children elucidate their profound grief and confirm their religious faith in God's divine nature.

What are striking about parental recollections of their tragedies are not only the intimate details about the dead child, but also the revelations of personal attributes and unusual mannerisms of the deceased. Mothers and fathers were well aware of the dispositions of their children and both expressed heartfelt loss when a child died. There was little doubt of the pain Adam Martindale and his wife felt when three of their youngest four children died within a period of eight years. Unable to understand the nature of their illnesses or reluctant to express his profound grief, the Puritan minister turned to his faith in order to bring some meaning to such personal losses. In a meticulous and sensitive manner, Martindale recorded the birth and death of each child, noting special attributes, innocent nuances and devout faith in God's plans. Of his second son, John, who died from the smallpox at the age of eight, Martindale praised his "wit, memory, and forwardnesse in learning and religion for his yeares."²⁸⁰ Though he was not present when his son John died, Adam Martindale felt a need to explain why in his journal. Far from being the indifferent parent who dismissed juvenile death as an ordinary occurrence, Martindale explained his faith in the "hopefull way of recovery"²⁸¹ for John and only then, did he take care of his clerical business. Overcome with a feeling his family needed him at home, Martindale abandoned his unfinished work and returned home only to discover his son had died. Sadly, the Puritan minister concluded, "...that evening, where I found a sad and distracted family that needed much consolation and

²⁸⁰ Martindale, *Diary*, 108-9.

²⁸¹ Martindale, *Diary*, 109.

assistance from me; and I do verily believe that strong impression was from some angel that God employed to helpe on that worke.”²⁸²

At the age of four, the Martindale’s second daughter, Mary, died. Adam wrote in his journal that “she was a very witte child, (for her age)” but after the death of her younger brother, Nathan, two years earlier, “she seemed utterly to despise life, and would frequently talke of heaven and being buried by him.”²⁸³ Mary did receive her wish when the family did bury the young girl next to her three-month-old brother who Adam Martindale referred to as “a sweet beautifull babe.”²⁸⁴

When his son Richard died at the age of five, Hugh Cholmley described in detail the angelic but resolute nature of his beloved Dicke. “A weake tender child,”²⁸⁵ Sir Hugh referred to the young boy as the three-year-old walked with his younger brother, Will, who was more robust. Two years later when Dicke died, his father lamented about his failure to provide for the safety of his delicate child as he warned others of the health hazards of new construction. When the Cholmley family moved into their new home, Sir Hugh blamed the condition of the house for the illness and subsequent death of his son. According to the bereaved father,

... soe that I wish this may bee a good monition to posterity not to inhabit in a new built house till the walls and plastering worke bee well and thurrowly dryed which will not bee in less tyme then a winter and sommer, for nothing is more unwholesome then the smell of lyme and mortar and divers which in my knowledge hath received great preiudice in their health and some lost their lives by it alsoe.²⁸⁶

²⁸² Martindale, *Diary*, 109.

²⁸³ Martindale, *Diary*, 109.

²⁸⁴ Martindale, *Diary*, 109.

²⁸⁵ Cholmley, *Memoirs*, 89.

²⁸⁶ Cholmley, *Memoirs*, 90.

When Richard became ill, his father carried him to see an oculist because a “great filme growe over one of his eies,” and before father and son reached their destination, the young boy “fell into convoulutions fitts and there dyed.”²⁸⁷ Overcome with grief, Hugh Cholmley and his wife Elizabeth, had their son’s body laid to rest near his great grandmother, who had died one year earlier and who had expressed a sincere desire to see the young Dicke. According to Sir Hugh, “He was destined to be buried close to her side.”²⁸⁸

Although the grief of the Cholmley family was apparent in the account of their young son’s death, it is the anecdotal accounts recalled by Cholmley that reveal an intimate relationship between father and son. Sir Hugh’s description of his beloved Richard included not only physical traits but also emotional characteristics that defined the special nature of the young child. Though Sir Hugh described Richard as “much fairer and more beautifull then other my brood for his haire was amber couller his eies gray and his complection as fayre white and red as ever I saw,”²⁸⁹ he also described an individual with unusual valor for his age:

He dyed at the age of five yeares yet had the curridge and resolution of a man for being to have an incision on a lumpe which aroase in his arme he would say, father would you have it done and I answeard yes sweetheart for your Doctor thinks it is necessary then would he say doe it and held his arme with out ether shrinkeing or whimpering, though blood and corruption rann out, the same resolution would he in takeing of phisike which he could not endure.²⁹⁰

Though Simonds D’Ewes poignant recollection of his fourth son’s death was indicative of the limited state of medical knowledge and practice, his revelation of young

²⁸⁷ Cholmley, *Memoirs*, 90.

²⁸⁸ Cholmley, *Memoirs*, 91.

²⁸⁹ Cholmley, *Memoirs*, 90.

²⁹⁰ Cholmley, *Memoirs*, 90.

Clopton's painful death unveiled the emotional pain and anguish of the parents. As D'Ewes attempted to account for the medical reasons as to why his twenty-one month old child died, he and his wife Anne meticulously cared for the young boy, keeping track of the number of convulsions and describing the baby's demeanor as he battled his mortal illness. According to D'Ewes, "Forty and four convulsion fits he had undergone from the 3rd of April, in the year 1635, to the 4th of March then next ensuing, being near upon a year's space, although they came thicker at some times than at others.... At times he was assaulted with twelve fits more, amongst which some were so long and terrible, as his heart-strings seemed to break within him."²⁹¹ As D'Ewes and his wife watched Clopton become weaker, they remained "near him all the time, bestowing our heavy tears, deep sighs, and humble prayers upon him."²⁹²

Lady Anne Halkett's writing about the death of her second child Henry, who was one month short of his third birthday, echoed a sense of despair and resignation as she attempted to reconcile her loss with God's intentions. Henry's older sister Elizabeth had also died, and of the four children born to Anne and James Halkett, only Robert survived infancy.²⁹³ In her *Meditations*,²⁹⁴ Lady Anne Halkett composed a selection for her son entitled *Upon the Death of My Deare Son Henry, Being the 12 of May, 1661*, in which she mourns the death of her children, believing "the Lord is pleased dayly to send mee new afflictions, and to take away almost the chefe comforts of my life, which is my deare children, the first as bing best beloved, and this as next succeeding, and all to teach mee

²⁹¹ D'Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 143-5.

²⁹² D'Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 143-5.

²⁹³ The names of the four children and the years of their births include Elizabeth (1656), Henry (1658), Robert (1660), and Jane (1661).

²⁹⁴ According to Trill, Chedgzoy, and Osborne, *Lay by Your Needles*, 266-71, the *Meditations* consist of twenty-one volumes of manuscript and there exist fourteen extant volumes that are located in the National Library of Scotland.

nott to love the world or anything that is in itt.”²⁹⁵ Anne’s reflections provide some insight about the difficult practice of mothers to accept God’s will as they experienced intense heartache.

Writings of family members—fathers, husbands, wives, mothers and offspring—reveal, when carefully read, a more intimate and moving account of familial interaction that both conforms to and deviates from the prescriptive advice of the period. Although mothers received instruction from clerics and doctors about preparation for childbirth, physical care of the infant, naming the child, discipline, and acceptance of the loss of a child, they made decisions sensitive to their particular attributes and conditions. The personal accounts of such decisions, and the circumstances surrounding them, enable us to gain a more insightful understanding of the multifaceted nature of childrearing, a role mothers governed despite male advice. Mothers, as the caretakers of the family and the household, possessed an instrumental role in the physical care of children.

²⁹⁵ *The Autobiography of Anne Lady Halkett*, ed. John G. Nichols (London: Camden Society, 1875), 109-10 (Appendix).

Chapter Two

Maternal Piety and Instruction: Fulfilling and Surpassing Their Prescribed Roles

She was a woman as full of goodness discretion and piety as any in her time, & of as much affection to her husband, tenderness and care of her children, & regard of her servants, a better wife, parent, & mistres was not found, nor a more devout Christian, called by some a Puritan, & if truly to feare God be so, she was so; she had excellent naturall parts, She had the French toung perfectly, & had read much of divinity & history, and left notes of her own hand taken out of the bible.¹

As a young man of twenty-six, Bulstrode Whitelocke fondly remembered his mother Elizabeth, who had died peacefully at the age of fifty-one. His words echo a profound sense of grief and loss, but they also resound with an appreciation of her impact on his life. As the mother of seven children, Elizabeth Whitelocke carefully guided the religious education and intellectual training of her three children who survived early childhood. By the time of her death in 1631, Bulstrode Whitelocke matured into an accomplished man who would later serve in various professions as a politician, landowner, lawyer and ambassador. He would also become the father of seventeen children, a role his mother had prepared him for with her pious nature and meaningful instruction.

In sixteenth and seventeenth-century England, mothers played a significant part in the religious education of their children. Fulfilling their roles as subordinate partners to their husbands and performing prescribed roles clearly articulated by religious leaders, women embraced religion as they listened, read, prayed and instructed their children. Piety delivered the opportunity for women to engage their children and servants in the

¹ Whitelocke, *The Diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke*, 63.

religious classroom, resulting in an interaction that elicited attentive and affectionate praise in the personal recollections of husbands, children and ministers.

This chapter examines maternal religious instruction of children in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England. It looks first at the religious literature addressed to women, specifically, writings by clerics and humanists who cast mothers as models of religious piety and caretakers of the spiritual development of their children. Such an examination reveals not only what women read about their recommended roles, but also provides an opportunity to assess how women reconciled their actions with the prescriptive literature.

The second focus of this chapter is on funeral sermons about mothers, which compose a specific genre illuminating women's piety and their roles as instructors of children. Although sermon writers often praise what the authors of religious texts prescribed, they further suggest that mothers transcended their religious responsibilities and served as exemplary models to be revered and emulated. As sermons elevated the maternal role within society, women recognized this phenomenon and continued to pursue their religious devotions and responsibilities, engendering a more public female voice while cultivating a consequential and tender relationship with children.

The chapter next considers personal writings by men and women, which inform us about mothers' roles as the religious instructors of their children. Accounts such as the one described by Bulstrode Whitelocke, express the profound bond that developed as mothers nurtured an environment where they guided the spiritual development of their household. While complementing what the authors of the religious texts prescribed, mothers also cultivated a special relationship with their children and spouse, from whom

they obtained respect as well as a certain degree of independence. Maternal writings and church activities convey this newfound confidence and involvement among women.

Religious Literature, Advice and Mothers

The publication of catechisms, devotional readings, and advice concerning the religious training of children provided women with a rich corpus of writings to guide their thoughts and actions as maternal instructors and role models. Facilitated by the printing press, the number of religious works increased during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and families read and discussed such texts in their homes. Catechisms received new attention from both religious leaders and mothers as valuable tools to develop knowledgeable and involved Christians. With the responsibility of properly catechizing their households, mothers educated their children so that their sons and daughters would develop a profound understanding of the Scriptures.

In Reformation England, the increase in the publication of catechisms and other religious texts reflected society's commitment not only to educate children in the primary grades, but also to prepare those students who would advance to secondary and university education where religious instruction was part of the curriculum. Moreover, as the seventeenth century progressed, government viewed religious instruction as an important practice to ensure unity and loyalty in light of the growing Catholic threat from abroad. Ian Green's *The Christian's ABC: Catechisms and Catechizing in England c.1530-1740* provides an insightful overview of the genre of catechisms both as a medium and message in England during the early modern period.² According to Green, the process

² Ian Green, *The Christian's ABC: Catechisms and Catechizing in England c.1530-1740* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

of catechizing underwent a gradual but significant change between 1530 and 1740.³ Protestantism challenged the traditional Catholic practice of catechizing by shifting the focus from knowledge of the rudiments of faith to developing an understanding of the Scriptures in order to produce an active and devoted participant.

There was no shortage of catechisms for mothers to choose from as they educated their children. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the number of English catechisms increased as the two official forms, the 1549 Edwardian Prayer Book and the 1570 longer edition by Alexander Nowell, became popular in the Elizabethan and early Stuart Church.⁴ Green suggests 250,000 copies would be a conservative estimate of the number of Elizabethan and Stuart Prayer Books, along with *The ABC with the catechism* (a small text to teach children the alphabet and then the catechism) and *The primer and the catechism* (an official text with an approved collection of instruction and devotions), printed by the early 1640s. While most of the catechisms were written by clerics, women also translated and composed religious texts to provide instruction for children.

Mothers also read other religious texts that shaped their religious instruction and personal development. During this period in England, there were numerous religious works available to the public. Moreover, approximately two-fifths of the books printed from the sixteenth to mid-seventeenth centuries were religious, and as the century progressed, the percentage increased.⁵ In her study of English devotional literature, Helen White has estimated that many of the devotional books that circulated from 1600

³ Green, *The Christian's ABC*, 14-92.

⁴ Green, *The Christian's ABC*, 65.

⁵ Douglas Bush, *English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century, 1600-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 310. Bush claims in William Jaggard's *Catalogue* of 1619, almost three-fourths of the books were religious and moral. In addition, Bush cites in William London's *Catalogue of the Most Vendible Books in England (1657-8)*, the space devoted to religious texts equaled the space for all other books combined.

to 1640 were actually written anywhere from 1580 on.⁶ Women read psalms, meditations and prayers composed by female and male sources as well as prescriptive literature from humanists and clerics in order to pursue pious learning, avoid the temptations of sin, and render moral and religious instruction. Parents, in particular, mothers, were expected to model such roles and fulfill their responsibilities carefully described to them by the authors who, with few exceptions, were clergymen.

While women continued to abide by the biblical citations from St. Paul and St. Peter who instructed wives to submit to their husbands as they would submit to God, they also became more actively involved in pious endeavors that were endorsed by prescriptive literature and instructions from the pulpit. The translation of the Bible into the vernacular and the plethora of religious writings encouraged individuals, especially women, to read and discuss their faith. Such pious intellectual pursuits were accompanied by increased female participation in religious activities. Protestantism encouraged women to take part in public prayers, psalm singing, and hymns. Ministers advised women to lead their families in prayers, particularly if their husbands were away or busy with work. According to Bernard Capp, it was possible that women were responsible for the religious pictures, painted cloths and biblical texts used to decorate many private houses.⁷ Women also showed their support of ministers by providing shelter and funds for them. It was not unheard of for women to express their dissatisfaction with a minister, service or sermon, or to participate in a collective action protesting the dismal of a popular minister. The practice of “gadding” may have been a

⁶ Helen White, *English Devotional Literature, 1600-1640* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1931), 20.

⁷ Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighborhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 355.

gender-related concept describing the meeting of women (most of the sermons took place during the weekdays while men were at work) to listen to and discuss the contents of a sermon, but it was also an opportunity for women to congregate to voice their opinions and to learn about the thoughts and actions of other women. In essence, such an experience must have provided women with a sense of autonomy and confirmation.⁸

Instructions for women advising them of their religious duties, came from both Protestant and Catholic authorities. While Catholics continued to use Latin as they taught the Apostles Creed, the Lord's Prayer and other religious writings in services and primers, the Protestants chose to teach such beliefs in English. Rejecting Catholic instruction of the Ave Maria, the seven works of mercy, the seven deadly sins, the seven cardinal virtues, and the seven sacraments, Protestants chose to educate the laity in the Scripture in order to lead a better life.⁹

The most significant impact of Protestantism on the method of catechizing was the change from simply memorizing religious beliefs to developing an understanding of such beliefs in the life of the individual. Green concluded, "Protestants replaced the older pattern of a series of statements of belief by a system of questions and answers designed not only to test catechumens' knowledge but also to keep their attention and enhance their comprehension. Where the typical pre-Reformation form for beginners was declaratory, its post-Reformation equivalent was interrogatory."¹⁰ The Protestant emphasis on learning and understanding religious beliefs such as the Apostles' Creed by engaging the young learner in a dialogue is clear in the 1549 publication of the first Edwardian Prayer Book, which was the first time the word "catechism" received official

⁸ Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, 356.

⁹ Green, *The Christian's ABC*, 15.

¹⁰ Green, *The Christian's ABC*, 16.

sanction in England.¹¹ Derived from the classical tradition and utilized by Renaissance humanists, the technique of the dialogue to convey beliefs was used effectively by Protestants to engage their followers as devout and knowledgeable Christians. The synthesis of rote learning, question and answer practices to check for understanding, and the engagement effects of the dialogue produced a Christian who Protestants believed was actively learning and living God's message. As a result, Protestant religious instruction emphasized a profound understanding of the Scripture, which was nurtured by ministers as well as by households. Central to this belief was the primacy of prayer, which men, women, and children regarded as the path to self-knowledge, and ultimately, self-reform.¹²

Puritan households devoted many hours to spiritual devotion and the religious instruction of their children. Green concluded, "In catechical terms the main difference between 'puritan' and non-'puritans' may well have been that one had a more optimistic and the other a less optimistic estimate of what a typical householder was capable of teaching and an average child could learn."¹³ While both Anglican and Puritan personal writings reveal a commitment to religious devotion, Puritan diaries, letters and sermons consistently supported religious piety and obedience, and above all, acceptance of God's will.. Jerald Brauer suggests Puritanism assumed an evangelical form and as a result, "more Puritan devotional literature was composed during this time than any other point in Puritan history."¹⁴ This Puritan effort to shape an educated and active Christian was the

¹¹ Green, *The Christian's ABC*, 16.

¹² Faye L. Kelly, *Prayer in Sixteenth-Century England* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1966), Preface.

¹³ Green, *The Christian's ABC*, 71.

¹⁴ Jerald Brauer, "Types of Puritan Piety," *Church History* 56 (March, 1987), 49.

result of the efforts of families, particularly mothers, who listened to the instructions of their ministers.

Puritan clerics such as William Gouge, Robert Cleaver and William Perkins advised women about their religious duties and provided explanations as to why they were to implement such actions. Reaffirming the obedient role of the dutiful wife, they also recognized the spiritual equality of parents and acknowledged the significant responsibilities of women as caretakers and guides of the religious development of the household. As the “watch-man of your soules,”¹⁵ William Gouge reminded parents of their mutual responsibilities in the spiritual development of the child.¹⁶ While Gouge advised “that children beare an equall respect to both their naturall parents, and performe duty to both alike,” he also acknowledged the vital role of mothers in the early development of children by concluding, “The mothers paines and care in bringing forth the childe is indeed the greater, and it may be also the greater in bringing up the childe especially when it is young.”¹⁷ The most important parental display of love involved a pious lifestyle in which they taught their children to “walke uprightly before God and to please him.”¹⁸ Mothers, as the early teachers of children, introduced the practice of prayer, one of “their most important duties.”¹⁹

Maintaining the importance of religious education in the home, Robert Cleaver reminded parents of their duty to instruct children “unto the principals of religion, after the manner of a Catechisme.”²⁰ Cleaver also instructed mothers to “acquaint them with

¹⁵ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, Epistle Dedicatory.

¹⁶ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, 484-5.

¹⁷ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, 484.

¹⁸ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, 502.

¹⁹ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, 501.

²⁰ Cleaver, *A Godly Form of Householde Government*, 46.

the Scriptures, by reading them daily in thy house in thy hearing, and directing them to marke, and make use of those things which are plaine and easie, according to their capacite.’’²¹ Three years later, Cleaver wrote a second text, *A Briefe Explanation of the Whole Booke of the Proverbs of Salomon*, in which he instructed children to “heare thy fathers instruction, and forsake not thy mothers teaching.’’²² Similar to Gouge, Cleaver also reminded parents that religious instruction and teaching were testaments of their love for their children and for God.²³

William Perkins recognized the important role mothers possessed in the religious training of their children when he concluded, “the housewife’s dutie is not only to governe the house but to order her servants and children in wisdome, partly by instruction, partly by admonition, where there is need.’’²⁴ Central to maternal instruction was the belief that as parents, mothers taught children how to worship God “by praying for and with the household, and partly by influencing them in the holy Scriptures, and in the grounds of religion.’’²⁵

An Anglican priest, a supporter of Charles I in the Civil War, a Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, and Provost of Eton, Richard Allestree recognized the fundamental role mothers performed as the religious educators of their children. *The Ladies Calling in Two Parts*, a popular conduct book anonymously authored by Allestree, addressed the conventional criticisms of the female sex and contended that such opinions were shortsighted and mean-spirited. In the Preface to his text, Allestree maintained

²¹ Cleaver, *A Godly Form of Householde Government*, 47.

²² Robert Cleaver, *A Briefe Explanation of the Whole Booke of the Prouerbs of Salomon* (London: Thomas Man and Roger Jackson, 1615), Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1984, 1790:5, 6.

²³ Cleaver, *A Briefe Explanation*, 7.

²⁴ Perkins, *Christian Oeconomie*, 173-4.

²⁵ Perkins, *Christian Oeconomie*, 164.

women have a very powerful influence upon all sorts of Transactions in the World;...all mankind is the Pupil and Disciple of Female Institution: the Daughters till they write Women, and the Sons till the first seven years be past; the time when the mind is most ductile, and prepared to receive impression, being wholly in the Care and Conduct of the Mother.²⁶

Allestree elevated the position of mother in his writing by placing her as the nucleus of her family. As nurturers, teachers, and guides, Allestree's mothers cared for the well-being of their families and of society. Mothers were selfless and relentless in their daily responsibilities, and they possessed an "advantage towards Piety, ... more opportunities of being built up in the knowledge of their duty, and clearer apprehensions to discern it; and when they do so, have greater obligations to perform it."²⁷ Allestree also acknowledged women's propensity toward devotional practices by describing devotion as a "tender plant, that will scarce root in stiff or rocky ground, but requires a supple gentle soil; and therefore the feminine softness and pliability is very apt and proper for it."²⁸ Engendering virtue in the familial household became a maternal duty, and Allestree instructed mothers "to live a perpetual Lecture to their Children, so to exemplify to them all Virtue and Piety, that they may contribute something to their Spiritual, as well as their Natural Life."²⁹ Allestree clearly casts mothers as the religious instructors within the household as he maintains that although they might not be "a Catechist or Preacher, ... they should be taught by those who are qualified, and that furnishing them with Knowledge... will make a Christian Family the Epitome of a Church."³⁰

²⁶ Allestree, *The Ladies Calling*, b2.

²⁷ Allestree, *The Ladies Calling*, 90.

²⁸ Allestree, *The Ladies Calling*, 110.

²⁹ Allestree, *The Ladies Calling*, 207.

³⁰ Allestree, *The Ladies Calling*, 224-5.

Anglican Thomas Becon also praised the maternal role in the religious education of the household. In the preface to his *Catechism*, Becon addressed his two sons Theodore and Basil, and his daughter Rachel, with the intention of providing instruction concerning the beliefs and actions of virtuous parents. Mothers and fathers who neglected “their duty in the virtuous education and godly bringing up of their youth,” were “beastly parents, unworthy of the great blessing of God.”³¹ In a dialogue between father and son, Becon describes the virtuous matron as an individual who “looks unto her house and is an example of all godliness and honesty.”³² Entrusted with the religious training of their children and servants, mothers modeled prayer, charity and virtue as they attended to their daily activities.³³ Becon believed such behavior on the part of parents was vital to the spiritual welfare of children for “as nothing doth more profit and edify the children than the virtuous, honest, and innocent life of the parents.”³⁴

Catholics also addressed the role of mothers as religious instructors. In his text *A Short Rule of Good Life*, the Jesuit Robert Southwell included a section concerning the care of children in which he reminded parents of their responsibilities to introduce religious devotion “by little and little, not cloying them with too much at once, but rather seeking to make them take delight in it.”³⁵ Mothers were to begin with the instruction of the “*Pater noster*, *Ave* and *Creed* and other good prayers, then make them perfect in the ten Commandments and those of the Church, and the points of faith, especially those that hereticks deny.”³⁶ Unlike Protestant instruction, mothers and fathers were expected

³¹ Becon, *The Catechism*, 4.

³² Becon, *The Catechism*, 343.

³³ Becon, *The Catechism*, 343.

³⁴ Becon, *The Catechism*, 356.

³⁵ Robert Southwell, *A Short Rule of Good Life*, in *English Recusant Literature, 1558-1640*, ed. D.M. Rogers, vol. 78 (London: Scholar Press, 1971), 72.

³⁶ Southwell, *A Short Rule of Good Life*, 72-3.

to teach their children about the “abbeis and the vertew of the olde Munkes & Friers, & other Priestes and religious men and women, and of the truth and honesty of the olde time, & the iniquity of ours.”³⁷ Similar to Protestants, mothers were cautioned to steer their children from vices and to set good example in their daily living.

The Christian humanist Juan Luis Vives also maintained the significant role mothers possessed in the religious education of their children. Vives asserted that the child “will try to emulate those examples that his mother will approve for his imitation.”³⁸ The maternal relationship with the child was so strong that Vives advised mothers “to have a stock of pious sayings and rules of life,” so that they could answer the constant questions of children and “infuse high moral principals and pure Christian ideals.”³⁹ Vives’ “dutiful mother” also guided her children away from vices and “corrupt opinions” in order to “nurture in her child that little fire” which would eventually become a strong and devoted Christian.⁴⁰

Sharing their perceptions of maternal piety and religious instruction, female authors composed works that reflected their commitment to their families and their endeavor to be remembered. Well-versed in devotional texts and mindful of their audience, Elizabeth Tyrwhit and Frances Aburgauennie composed prayers and religious writings for women and children, and Dorcas Martin translated instructional works into the vernacular. Others such as Dorothy Leigh, Elizabeth Joscelyn, Elizabeth Richardson, Susanna Bell, Mary Pennyman and Elizabeth Grymeston addressed the nature of spiritual devotion and the importance of providing religious guidance for their children.

³⁷ Southwell, *A Short Rule of Good Life*, 74.

³⁸ Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman*, 271.

³⁹ Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman*, 272.

⁴⁰ Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman*, 273-4.

Elizabeth Tyrwhit, a member of the social circle of Katherine Parr, not only wrote prayers, hymns, and psalms to be recited at different times of the day, but also created a religious selection that offered spiritual advice on such subjects as friendship, conduct and worship. Entitled “Certaine godlie sentences written,” Tyrwhit’s text advised readers to think about God and his kingdom, remember the poor and avoid those who are prone to flattery.⁴¹ Tyrwhit also encouraged introspection as she recommended “Looke chieeflie on your selfe and let your mind be occupied well.”⁴² Lady Frances Aburgauennie also composed a number of prayers for her only daughter Lady Marie Fane, but the clever and insightful selection at the end of her writing is worth careful scrutiny as it suggests Aburgauennie’s attempt to be remembered and quoted. As her name is prominently outlined, this entry reflects the author’s deep religious devotion and her efforts to please God:

F From sinfulness preserue me Lord,
 R Renew thy spirit in my hart,
 A And let my tongue therewith accord,
 V Vttering all goodnesse for his part.
 N No thought let there arise in me,
 C Contrarie to thy statutes ten,
 E Ever let me must 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 devise,
 A All things that pleasing be to thee,
 V Vnto mine eares, and to mine eies,
 E Euer let there be a watch set bee,
 N None ill that they may heare and see,

⁴¹ Bentley, *The Monument of Matrones*, 1, vol. 4, 137-8.

⁴² Bentley, *The Monument of Matrones*, 1, vol. 4, 138.

N No wicked deede let my hands do,
 Y Yn thy good paths let my feete go.⁴³

Elizabethan gentlewoman Dorcas Martin contributed to the religious writings of the period by translating from French to English *An Instruction for Christians, Containing a Fruitfull and Godlie Exercise, As Well in Wholsome and Fruitfull Praiers, As in Reuerend Discerning of Gods Holie Commandments and Sacraments*.⁴⁴ Similar to the format used in catechisms, Martin's translation included a parent questioning a child about the duties of Christians, the commandments, and religious teachings concerning the sacraments of Baptism and the Lords Supper. What is interesting about this particular religious text is the substitution of the mother for the parent. Regardless of the actual author of the religious work, this selection reflects the active role played by mothers in the religious training of their children.

Proposing to bestow maternal insight concerning the spiritual and physical welfare of their children, upper-class women such as Dorothy Leigh composed texts to guide readers and share their religious insights. Between 1604 and 1624, women wrote five such works in England.⁴⁵ Leigh, a Puritan widow who fulfilled her late husband's wish to ensure that their three sons receive a godly education, composed a text that revealed her perceptions about marriage and motherhood. In the Epistle Dedicatory, Leigh casts herself as the humble and dutiful wife who expresses her concern for her children to find their way to Heaven.⁴⁶ As the caretaker of her sons' religious education,

⁴³ Bentley, *The Monument of Matrones*, 1, vol. 4, 213.

⁴⁴ Bentley, *The Monument of Matrones*, 1, vol. 4, 221-52.

⁴⁵ Valerie Wayne, "Advice for Women from Mothers and Patriarchs," in *Women and Literature in Britain, 1500-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 56.

⁴⁶ Leigh, *The Mothers Blessing, Epistle Dedicatory*, A2.

Leigh instructs her beloved sons George, John, and William to pursue a lifestyle pleasing to God and fulfilling the wishes of their deceased father.⁴⁷

Citing biblical references to support her beliefs, Leigh advises her sons in a number of subjects from choosing a wife to leading a godly existence. Although Leigh addressed *The Mother's Blessing* to her three sons, she clearly spoke to women as she counseled them in the roles of wife and mother. Chapter I of the 270-page text stated that Leigh considered “the care of Parents for their children,” and she proceeded to provide parents with guidance in the nurturance of their sons and daughters.⁴⁸ Leigh urged parents to have their children read the Bible “in their owne mother tongue; for I know it is a great help to true godliness.”⁴⁹ Believing that children should start to learn to read at the age of four, Leigh maintained they continue to at least the age of ten “so that they learn to serve God, their King and Country by reading.”⁵⁰ As children mastered the task of reading, Leigh reminded parents to treat them with kindness and patience.

In her writing, Leigh also advised her sons to select “a godly wife, that she may be a helpe to you in godliness.”⁵¹ Such a spouse would enable the family to grow according to God’s plan and provide an environment where prayer and religious devotion were nurtured. Leigh extolled the virtue of private prayer and encouraged families to cultivate this practice within their households.⁵² Not surprisingly, Leigh credited mothers as the religious caretakers of their families, a role in which she herself commanded.

⁴⁷ Leigh, *The Mother's Blessing*, Introduction, 1-4.

⁴⁸ Leigh, *The Mother's Blessing*, 1.

⁴⁹ Leigh, *The Mother's Blessing*, 24.

⁵⁰ Leigh, *The Mother's Blessing*, 46-7.

⁵¹ Leigh, *The Mother's Blessing*, 49.

⁵² Leigh, *The Mother's Blessing*, 105-7.

Elizabeth Richardson's *A Ladies Legacie to Her Daughters*⁵³ conveyed the close nature of religion in the lives of mothers as well as the sense of maternal responsibility in the religious indoctrination of the young. Widowed twice and the mother of four daughters and two sons, Richardson conveyed her belief that it was the role of the mother to introduce children to religious learning and to shape their thinking about God and his expectations. It was no accident Richardson amended her work to include her six daughters (she specifically addressed the wives of her two sons, "my daughter-in-law, the Countess of Marlborough, and Mrs. Francis Ashbournham, to be mine also"), for she instructed them to read the prayers and "imploy it to your good."⁵⁴

What are most striking about Richardson's writings are the detailed and reflective instructions concerning the importance and function of prayer in everyday life. Woven into the fabric of life, prayer became the emotional and rational tool for Richardson as she performed her daily tasks and nurtured her children. Richardson recorded prayers for everyday of the week and for each time of the day, and she wrote prayers of thanksgiving and prayers that prepared an individual for death. After the near drowning of her daughter Lady Elizabeth Cornwallis and her friend Lady Elizabeth Feilding, Richardson created a prayer of thanksgiving that "may serve upon any such fearful accident."⁵⁵ In her prayer, Richardson thanks God for his mercy in saving her "deare daughter and

⁵³ Elizabeth Richardson, *A Ladies Legacie to Her Daughters in Three Books Composed of Prayers and Meditations, Fitted for Severall Times, and upon Severall Occasions*, 1645 in *The Early Modern Englishwoman*, eds. Betty S. Travitsky and Patrick Cullen, vol. 3 (Burlington: Ashgate, 2002), 1-168.

⁵⁴ Richardson, *A Ladies Legacie to Her Daughters*, in *Early Modern Englishwomen*, 1.

⁵⁵ Richardson, *A Ladies Legacie to Her Daughters*, 47. Elizabeth also notes that one unnamed noblewoman could not be saved.

kinswoman, and concludes “let neither us, nor any of our generation forget this thy great mercy.”⁵⁶

In a notation to the reader, Richardson acknowledged the role of her parents Catherine and Sir Thomas Beaumont as religious educators. Her reference to her parents underscored the significant role, especially on the part of mothers, in the religious instruction of children:

These payers I composed for the instruction of my children and grandchildren, after the example of my dear parents, Sir Thomas Beaumont, and his Lady, of Stoughton in the County of Leicester, who I thinke were as carefull and industrious to breed up their children in the instruction and information of the Lord, to serve and obey God, as any parents could possibly be, which made them take much paines with us, more then is usual, by their endeavours to bring us to know and to feare God, and to keep his Commandments: which Solomon saith is the whole duty of man. But when parents have done the best, and all we can, it is Gods grace and blessing that must perfect the worke: which I humbly pray him to add to accomplish my desire, to their eternall happinesse.⁵⁷

Richardson later described this maternal role to her four daughters as “an ornament and a crown of glory” for them whereby she hoped they would “take in the best part my carefull industrie, for your present and future happinesse towards which I have not failed to give you the best breeding in my power, to bring you to vertue and piety, which I esteem the greatest treasure.”⁵⁸

Susanna Bell wished to teach her children acceptance of God’s will as they matured as pious and reflective Christians. In *The Legacy of a Dying Mother*,⁵⁹ Bell related an account of her life to her son as he sat by her deathbed while she reminisced

⁵⁶ Richardson, *A Ladies Legacie to Her Daughters*, 47-8. Lady Elizabeth Cornwallis was the oldest daughter of Elizabeth Richardson.

⁵⁷ Richardson, *A Ladies Legacie to Her Daughters*, 52.

⁵⁸ Richardson, *A Ladies Legacie to Her Daughters*, 6.

⁵⁹ Susanna Bell, *The Legacy of a Dying Mother to Her Mourning Children, Being the Experiences of Susanna Bell, 1673* in *The Early Modern Englishwoman*, eds. Betty S. Travitsky and Patrick Cullen, vol. 3 (Burlington: Ashgate, 2002), 1-62.

about her joys and sorrows as a wife and as a mother. Far from sugarcoating her thoughts and actions, Susanna detailed her fears about going to New England as well as her concerns about the welfare of her family. In the beginning of her narrative, Susanna described her hesitation to leave England and her concern for her young child and unborn baby. Reiterating the frequently cited Pauline verse “Wives submit your selves unto your own Husbands, as unto the Lord,”⁶⁰ Bell described the initial safe delivery of her baby, and then the death of the child. She attributed the death of the infant to the will of God who wanted to correct her weaknesses and provide her with the strength and obedience she needed. Susanna provided the following account of her experience as an instructional as well as an inspirational lesson for her children:

But after this, I being well delivered, and the Child well; It pleased the Lord soon after to take my Child to himself: Now upon this, so far as it pleased the Lord to help a poor wretch, I begged earnestly of him, to know why he took away my Child, and it was given to me, that it was because I would not go to New England. Upon this, the Lord took away all fears from my spirit, and then I told my Husband that I would go with him. For the Lord had made my way clear to me against any that should oppose.⁶¹

Throughout the rest of the narrative, Bell described the daily challenges and religious solace she faced as a mother in her new environment as well as in her return to England. Entrusting her fate to God and reminding her children of her constant efforts to live a pious life, Bell does not portray herself as an exemplar of Christian piety. This is an interesting point on her part because it is different from the *Epistle Dedicatory* by the minister Thomas Brooks who oversaw the publication of the text. Bell is portrayed as a paragon of Puritan motherhood in Brook’s “Epistle Dedicatory,” which totaled forty-three pages, while Bell’s work contained nineteen. Because Bell consistently referred to

⁶⁰ Bell, *The Legacy of a Dying Mother*, 45.

⁶¹ Bell, *The Legacy of a Dying Mother*, 46.

Scriptural teachings, Brooks championed her as a woman and as a mother who displayed important virtues for her children to emulate. In his list of recommendations, Brooks instructed her children to imitate their mother's sincerity as well as her humility. Bell was also presented as an individual who displayed charity and mercy; maintained deference and obedience to the Lord; prayed to the Saints and expressed faith in God's decisions; and died a peaceful and willing death.

Although she was not the main author of the text, Mary Pennyman also provides an example of how mothers voiced their perceptions of religious instruction. Included in John Pennyman's *Instructions to His Children*⁶² is an addendum from his wife, Mary, who added her maternal advice about how their children should lead their lives. In contrast to the religious and didactic tone of her husband, Mary Pennyman blended the religious messages of obedience and service to the Lord with personal anecdotes guiding their thoughts and behavior.⁶³ For example, Mary reminded her children to be aware of the fickle nature of friends who could compromise virtues such as integrity.⁶⁴ She identified her own experiences and concluded that her children "should trust in the Lord only, and not in mortal men."⁶⁵ While John Pennyman constructed a list of decrees forbidding his children to stray from the Ten Commandments or engage in flattery or idle behavior, Mary, on the other hand, made an earnest and heartfelt appeal to her children in an effort to identify with them as well as to shape their thoughts and actions as Christians. She reminded them of a time when their parents would no longer be living and they

⁶² John Pennyman, *Instructions to His Children*, 1674 in *The Early Modern Englishwoman*, eds. Betty S. Travitsky and Patrick Cullen, vol. 3 (Burlington: Ashgate, 2002), 1-15.

⁶³ Mary Pennyman, *Instructions to His Children*, 13-15.

⁶⁴ Mary Pennyman, *Instructions to His Children*, 14. Mary's marriage to John was her second. The daughter of a royalist, Mary had married Henry Boreman, a Quaker, who died and left her with three children.

⁶⁵ Mary Pennyman, *Instructions to His Children*, 15.

would have to exemplify the virtues instilled in them as children.⁶⁶ In short, Mary approached religious instruction as a maternal responsibility that involved an understanding of the nature of children and a devotion to God.

Concerned about the religious education of her son, Elizabeth Grymeston also prepared texts instructing him how to live a pious and honorable life. Mother of nine children, Grymeston wrote *Miscelanea, Prayers, Meditations, and Memoratives*, works reflecting her knowledge of Catholic poetry and scholarship, which mourned the loss of her eight children, and proposed to guide and to console her only surviving child, a son, Bernye Grymeston. Grymeston's writings included prayers and meditations, as well as maternal counsel for her son, Bernye, who she reminded, "there is nothing so strong as the force of love; there is no love so forcible as the love of an affectionate mother to her natural child."⁶⁷ Claiming her experience will be useful to him as a guide, Grymeston cautioned young Bernye to avoid evil and temptation and to be devoted his faith each day with prayer. Grymeston expressed her determination to leave her son with a resource of prayers and meditations to guide him after her death when she wrote

... thou mayest see the true portraiture of thy mother's mind, and find something either to resolve thee in thy doubts, or comfort thee in thy distress; hoping that being my last speches, they will be better kept in the conservance of thy memory; which I desire thou wilt make a register of heavenly meditations.⁶⁸

Pious and tender but determined in what she has to say, Grymeston thus instructed her son to remember her love and words after her death. She continued to offer counsel on such subjects as marriage and death: "I have prayed for thee; that thou mightest be fortunate in two hours of thy lifetime: in the hour of thy marriage, and at the hour of thy

⁶⁶ Mary Pennyman, *Instructions to His Children*, 13.

⁶⁷ Grymeston, *Miscellanea, Prayers, Meditations, Memoratives*, A2.

⁶⁸ Grymeston, *Miscellanea, Prayers, Meditations, Memoratives*, A3.

death.”⁶⁹ Advising her son to marry at the right time and to avoid rash decisions, Grymeston suggested that he marry within his rank and religion, and make sure his wife is chaste and devout. She also advised young Bernye not to fear death as “Charitie and humilitie purchase immortalitie.”⁷⁰ In 1604, one year after Grymeston’s death, her husband or son had her work published. Grymestone, like other women concerned about their imminent death and the absence of their role in the nurturance of their children, wanted to ensure her child received her instructions.

The devout Catholic Margaret Clitherow assumed significant risks in her efforts to practice her faith in England. Unlike their continental counterparts, Catholic women in England such as Clitherow and Dorothy Lawson, could not safely study under a spiritual advisor nor freely instruct their children.⁷¹ In the case of Clitherow, she sent her eldest son Henry to France for his education, and she consciously practiced her faith in public, thereby openly defying the Protestant state. Her martyrologist John Mush, carefully described her subsequent imprisonment and painful death, as she fearlessly died for her faith.⁷²

Religious literature not only prescribed devotional pursuits for mothers, but also designated them as custodians of the religious education of their household. While

⁶⁹ Grymeston, *Miscellanea, Prayers, Meditations, Memoratives*, A3.

⁷⁰ Grymeston, *Miscellanea, Prayers, Meditations, Memoratives*, H4.

⁷¹ Peter Lake and Michael Questier, “Margaret Clitherow, Catholic Nonconformity, Martyrology and the Politics of Religious Change in Elizabethan England,” *Past and Present* (November, 2004): 43-90; William Palmes, *Life of Mrs. Dorothy Lawson, of St. Anthony’s, near Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in Northumberland*, ed. George Bouchier Richardson (London: C. Dolman, 1855); and Ellen Macek, “‘Ghostly Fathers’ and Their ‘Virtuous Daughters’: The Role of Spiritual Direction in the Lives of Three Early Modern English Women,” *Catholic Historical Review* 90 (2004): 213-35.

⁷² For further reading on female martyrology see Frances Dolan, “‘Gentlemen, I Have One Thing More to Say’: Women on the Scaffolds in England, 1563-1680,” *Modern Philology* 92 (1994): 157-78; “Reading, Work and Catholic Women’s Biographies,” *English Literary Renaissance* 33 (November, 2003): 328-57; and Seymour Byman, “Ritualistic Acts and Compulsive Behavior: The Pattern of Tudor Martyrdom,” *American Historical Review* 83 (June, 1978): 625-43.

exercising their designated spiritual roles, mothers discovered solace in their religious studies and experienced confidence in their instructional responsibilities and writings.

Unveiling the Maternal Impact on Familial Religious Instruction: Funeral Sermons as a Source of Validation and Influence

Funeral sermons provide insightful accounts of the patterns of life of the pious, especially those of women, who were responsible for the religious edification of their household. Intended as a medium to extend religious teaching as well as to recognize exemplary spiritual individuals, sermons illuminated the lives of mothers who were praised for their private religious devotion, acts of charity, and religious instruction. As clerics extolled the pious nature of mothers who nurtured the religious environment of their children and servants, women inadvertently acquired recognition as mentors and models of spiritual devotion.

Although funeral sermons were accepted by Catholics and Protestants, the climate of Reformation England encouraged Protestant clerics to take advantage of their captive audiences in order to exercise their pedagogical religious message. Whereas Catholic funeral sermons and eulogies praised the dignified and altruistic lives of the deceased, Anglicans adopted funeral sermons not as prayers for the dead, but as “solace for the living,” instructing the laity on how to live a good, Christian life.⁷³ Puritans, who were most suspect of the impact of sermons, ascertained that the sermon was separate and

⁷³ Retha M. Warnicke, “Eulogies for Women: Public Testimony of Their Godly Example and Leadership,” in *Attending to Women in Early Modern England*, eds. Betty S. Travitsky and Adele F. Seeff (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994), 169-70.

distinct from the biographical account of the deceased individual.⁷⁴ Despite such scrutiny, Puritan as well as Anglican ministers delivered sermons commemorating the pious lives of mothers whose profound religious convictions and sincere devotion, perpetuated the spiritual well-being of the household.

Funeral sermons of pious women not only comforted family and friends, but also inculcated clerical expectations about the religious roles of mothers. Ministers delivered accounts of the exemplary lives of women, which were sometimes recorded by members of the congregation or sold as copies to interested parties. Each sermon included a religious lesson based on a text of Scripture as well as an account of the life of the deceased. Contained in the funeral sermons were common themes such as the ephemeral existence of an individual's life on earth; the reality that death comes for everyone and preparation for death is accomplished as one lives her life; dying is a trial for the good, as well as an ordeal for the unprepared sinner; and a good life will be rewarded in Heaven.⁷⁵

In addition to these themes, funeral sermons recognized the spiritual department of women and the impact of such piety upon others. When Anglican Robert Sparke of Newington delivered the funeral sermon for Mrs. Frances Fenn at St. George's Church in Southwark, he remembered her "good family" and her education, which "was every way answerable to one of such quality."⁷⁶ Sparke explained to the congregation that the life of Frances Fenn was a "looking-glass, wherein all ladies and gentlewomen might see to dress themselves and attire their conversation."⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Warnicke, "Eulogies for Women," 170. See also Diane Willen, "Godly Women in Early Modern England: Puritanism and Gender," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 43 (October, 1992): 561-80.

⁷⁵ Ralph Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion, and the English Family in England*, 305-6.

⁷⁶ Robert Sparke, *A Sermon Preached in St. George's Church Southwark at the Funeral of that Pious and Worthy Gentlewoman, Frances Fenn*, (London: T. James, 1679), Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 2000, 2678: 3, 33.

⁷⁷ Sparke, *A Sermon*, 34.

Edmund Barker, who was the Puritan Rector of Buriton in Hampshire, also extolled the virtuous life of Lady Elizabeth Capell in his funeral sermon in 1661. Barker reminded Elizabeth Capell's son "he was heir to a Blessed Martyr, and the Eldest Son of a most Excellent Mother, so that Honour and Nobility, and Worth and Piety are intailed upon you...."⁷⁸ The behavior of Elizabeth Capell was also deserving of imitation, for she was "pious and orderly in the government of her family"⁷⁹ and a "Precious Saint," who along with her deceased husband, served as "pleasant vines" so that their children would not be "thornes and thistles."⁸⁰

While he was Lord Bishop of Meath, Dr. James Ussher delivered Elizabeth Crashaw's funeral sermon in which he recognized her profound piety and altruism and recommended her exemplary life as a model for others. At the request of the bereaved husband William Crashaw, Ussher composed a eulogy for Elizabeth Crashaw in which he presented her as a young mother who devoted her life to the needs of her family. The funeral sermon briefly highlighted Elizabeth's background and portrayed this young woman as an individual who from birth, displayed pious and respectful behavior toward her parents and God.⁸¹ Despite the fact that she was a beautiful, young and wealthy woman who could have married a number of suitable men, Elizabeth was exceptional because she had chosen a minister who was not only twice her age, but also a widower

⁷⁸ Edmund Barker, *A Sermon Preached at the Funerall of the Right Honourable and the Most Excellent Lady, the Lady Elizabeth Capell Dowager*, (London: I. R., 1661), Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1985, 1626: 59, Epistle Dedicatory.

⁷⁹ Barker, *A Sermon*, 35.

⁸⁰ Barker, *A Sermon*, 46.

⁸¹ Dr. James Ussher, *The Honor of Virtue; or, The Monument Erected by the Sorrowful Husband and the Epitaphs Annexed by Learned and Worthy Men to the Immortal Memory of that Worthy Gentlewoman Mrs. Elizabeth Crashaw, Who Died in Childbirth and Was Buried in White Chapel October 8, 1620, in the Twenty-fourth Year of Her Age*, in *Half Humankind: Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about Women in England, 1540-1640*, eds. Katherine U. Henderson and Barbara F. McManus (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 344-347.

with a young son. As the wife of a Puritan cleric, Elizabeth had rejected materialism and assumed a nurturing role for young Richard who received “her singular motherly affection.”⁸² Her seventeen-month marriage ended when she died after the birth of a son, an event portrayed in her funeral sermon as inspirational to others:

Who, in the Prime of her years,
upon her first child
by her first husband,
even in the very birth,
yielded up by untimely death
Her Soul to God,
Her life to Nature,
Her Body to the earth,
Her memory to the world,⁸³

In addition to extolling the virtuous nature of mothers, clerics specifically urged children to emulate the examples set before them. Puritan minister William Gurnall who signed the Act of Uniformity and retained his position as the Rector at the Church of Christ in Lavenham, Suffolk, acknowledged the importance of spiritual demeanor when he reminded Lady Mary Vere’s children to remember their mother for her “Christian deportment,” piety and example, which would continue to shape their lives and the lives of their descendants.⁸⁴ Anglican cleric Thomas Dugard also referred to the conduct of Lady Alice Lucie when he reminded her children of the magnitude of their mother’s responsibility and the resilience and piety she displayed after the death of their father.⁸⁵

⁸² Ussher, *The Honor of Virtue*, 346.

⁸³ Ussher, *The Honor of Virtue*, 344-5.

⁸⁴ William Gurnall, *The Christian’s Labour and Reward; or, a Sermon Part of which was Preached at the Funeral of the Right Honourable the Lady Mary Vere Relict of Sir Horace Vere, Baron of Tilbury*, (London: J.M., 1672), Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1972, 419:9, The Epistle Dedicatory.

⁸⁵ Thomas Dugard, *Death and the Grave or a Sermon Preached at the Funeral of That Honorable and Virtuous Ladie, the Ladie Alice Lucie*, (London: William Dugard, 1649), Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1977, 761:2, The Epistle Dedicatory.

The significant role of mothers as the religious educators of children received high praise from ministers in their funeral sermons. In the sermon delivered by Francis Roberts, the Puritan Pastor of the Church at Wrington, Mary Jackson's life was exemplary for she was a "tender, careful, and compassionate mother."⁸⁶ Puritan Edward Reynolds praised the religious education Mrs. Mary Bewley offered her only son as he was to be "eminent and useful in that employment which he intended."⁸⁷ Reynolds described Mary Bewley as an active and devoted teacher who "influenced her son to read and know the Scriptures from a childe; framing and propounding such questions to him, as made him give a good account of the chief Histories in the Bible."⁸⁸ Mary Bewley continued her watchful eye on her son as he matured as she was remembered to have "prayed daily for him, followed him with her wholesome counsel and wise reproofs, not conniving at the least imperfection or appearance of evil in him."⁸⁹

The funeral sermon of Elizabeth Montfort praised her skills as a mother and teacher. This woman was "carefull over her children" and she did "nurse her children, which many refuse to do."⁹⁰ Elizabeth Montfort was compared to Bathsheba who guided Lemuel; therefore, this seventeenth-century mother "brought up her children in nurture or instruction and information of the Lord during their tender yeers."⁹¹ Simon Ford also

⁸⁶ Francis Roberts, *The Checquer-Work of God's Providences, Towards His Own People, Made up of Blacks and Whites: Of Their Abatements, and Advancements; Their Distresses and Deliverances, Their Sullyng Tribulations, and Beautifying Relaxations: Represented in a Sermon Preached at the Funeral of that Faithful Servant of the Lord, Mary the Late Wife of Joseph Jackson Esq., Alderman of the City of Bristol*, (London: R.W., 1657), Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1974, 508: 32, 39.

⁸⁷ Edward Reynolds, *Imitation and Caution for Christian Women: or, The Life and Death of that Excellent Gentlewoman, Mrs. Mary Bewley* (London: E.M., 1659), Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1978, 144: E968, 5.

⁸⁸ Reynolds, *Imitation and Caution*, 4-5.

⁸⁹ Reynolds, *Imitation and Caution*, 4-5.

⁹⁰ *Two Sermons Preached at the Funerals of Mrs. E. Montfort (text: Rev. 14.13) and Dr. T. Montfort (text: Rom. 2.16.)* (London: J. Norton, 1632), Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1984, 1666: 2, 6. The author of the sermon is unknown because the title page and preliminary pages are missing.

⁹¹ *Two Sermons*, 6.

praised Lady Elizabeth Langham for her virtue in the Epistle Dedicatory of her funeral sermon.⁹² A Puritan minister of Northamptonshire, Ford described Elizabeth as a woman of “most compleat vertue” and “one that might be thought to have been born on the purpose for the Correction of the Age she lived in.”⁹³ What was most insightful about Ford’s description of Langham’s virtue was the recommendation that her husband and he could best “commend her vertues, by imitating them.”⁹⁴

Sometimes funeral sermons not only commended the deceased mother’s educational impact on her children, but also recognized the maternal tradition of religious instruction. In the funeral sermon of Lady Jane Cheyne, minister Adam Littleton praised her “pious mother, a Lady of most exemplary charities, from whom she received the first elements of her virtuous education; and her noble grandmother, the Lady Ogle, whose darling she was.”⁹⁵ Continuing such an exemplary maternal tradition, Lady Jane encouraged her children to read, to be diligent in their prayers, and at the end of her life, she instructed them, “to be observant to their father, and transferring that obedience they had to her self upon him, to pay him now a double duty, and to be entirely loving to one another.”⁹⁶ In his sermon, Simon Ford also acknowledged Lucy, Countess of Huntingdon, for her maternal devotion and inspiration in the education of her daughter Elizabeth Langham. Confessing his difficult task of comforting a mother upon the death

⁹² The Epistle Dedicatory was addressed to her parents Lucy, Countess of Huntingdon and Henry, Lord Loughbrough.

⁹³ Simon Ford, *A Christian’s Acquiescence in all the Products of Divine Providence; Opened in a Sermon, Preached at Cottesbrook in Northamptonshire April the 16, 1664 at the Interment of the Right Honourable, and Eminently Pious Lady, the Lady Elizabeth Langham, Wife to Sir James Langham Kt.* (London: R.D., 1665), Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1977, 692:1, A3.

⁹⁴ Ford, *A Christian’s Acquiescence*, A6.

⁹⁵ Adam Littleton, *A Sermon at the Funeral of the Right Honourable the Lady Jane Eldest Daughter to His Grace, William, Duke of Newcastle, and Wife to the Honourable Charles Cheyne, Esq., at Chelsey, Novemb. 1, being All-Saints Day* (London: John Macock, 1669), Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1977, 767: 6, 42.

⁹⁶ Littleton, *A Sermon at the Funeral of the Right Honourable the Lady Jane*, 54.

of her young daughter “who was supposed to shut our eyes and receive our last breath, and dying command,”⁹⁷ Ford praised the Countess for nurturing such a pious daughter as Lady Elizabeth. In particular, Ford commended Lucy Huntingdon for providing “a Nursery of Vertue” and an “Academy of Learning.”⁹⁸ Because of her mother’s guidance, Elizabeth excelled in both religious learning and secular studies. The Countess passed on her religious devotion and scholarship to her own daughter, who at age eleven, learned the sermons her mother had recited, and “was able to analyze a discourse of 30 or 40 particular heads memoriter, with the most remarkable enlargements upon them.”⁹⁹

William Tong’s funeral sermon for Mrs. Elizabeth Bury also praised her mother’s “Heavenly image” which she bestowed to her daughter.¹⁰⁰ Elizabeth Cutts’ legacy to her daughter was commendable as she was known for her “great sagacity and Penetration, as well as her great Piety and Zeal in Religion.”¹⁰¹ As the mother of six children, Elizabeth had nurtured her own daughter Elizabeth, to become a “serious, circumspect, judicious and exemplary Christian.”¹⁰² Elizabeth’s mother “brought them to love their Bibles, to learn them some short Sentences and Payers, and Pieces of pleasant History, especially such as concerned Children.”¹⁰³ When she became a mother, Elizabeth Bury followed her mother’s example and proposed a method of religious instruction in which she encouraged familiarity and mastery of religious readings. Tong recalled how Elizabeth

⁹⁷ Ford, *A Christian’s Acquiescence*, a.

⁹⁸ Ford, *A Christian’s Acquiescence*, 98.

⁹⁹ Ford, *A Christian’s Acquiescence*, 133.

¹⁰⁰ Tong, *An Account of the Life and Death of Mrs. Elizabeth Bury*, 1.

¹⁰¹ Tong, *An Account of the Life and Death of Mrs. Elizabeth Bury*, 2.

¹⁰² Tong, *An Account of the Life and Death of Mrs. Elizabeth Bury*, 3.

¹⁰³ Tong, *An Account of the Life and Death of Mrs. Elizabeth Bury*, 8.

encouraged “some part of the Catechism be daily recited,” and “Sermons talked over together in Language adapted to his Capacity.”¹⁰⁴

Puritan divine Edmund Calamy not only eulogized Lady Anne Waller for her piety and careful religious education of her children and servants, but also remembered her for diligence in attending services, recording sermons, and supporting ministers.¹⁰⁵

Calamy, who was Pastor of Aldermanbury, reminded Waller’s family and friends that she “was a constant writer of sermons; and wrote them in her heart as well as in her book.”¹⁰⁶

This pious woman was also “an excellent mother, bringing up her children in the Nurture and Fear of the Lord, and walking before them as an Example of Piety and Humility.”¹⁰⁷

The pious and dedicated nature of Elizabeth Brooks was also remembered in her funeral sermon. Vicar of Yoxford and chaplain to Elizabeth Brooke, Nathaniel Parkhurst paid tribute to her religious scholarship and educational instruction. When her twenty-six years of marriage to Sir Robert Brooke ended with his death, Elizabeth had given birth to four daughters and three sons, one of whom died in infancy. For her six children Elizabeth provided carefully planned religious instruction and according to her chaplain,

... she endeavoured also that her family might walk in the same steps, providing for them the daily help of Prayer Morning and Evening, with the reading of the Scriptures; and on the Lord’s day the Repetition of what was preached in the Publick Congregation. And for their further Benefit, she many Years together procured a Grave Divine to perform the Office of a Catechist in her House, who came constantly every Fortnight, and expounded methodically the Principles of Religion....¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Tong, *An Account of the Life and Death of Mrs. Elizabeth Bury*, 178.

¹⁰⁵ Edmund Calamy, *The Happinesse of Those Who Sleep in Jesus, or, the Benefit that Comes to the Dead Bodies of the Saints Even While They Are in the Graves Sleeping in Jesus, Delivered in a Sermon Preached at the Funeral of that Pious and Religious Lady, the Lady Anne Waller*, (London: John Harding, 1662), Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1972, 409:21, 28-30.

¹⁰⁶ Calamy, *The Happinesse of Those*, 28.

¹⁰⁷ Calamy, *The Happinesse of Those*, 30.

¹⁰⁸ Parkhurst, Nathaniel Parkhurst, *The Faithful and Diligent*, 53-4.

Parkhurst also admired Elizabeth's intellectual pursuits and her devotion to piety. He apologized to Elizabeth's only surviving daughter Mary, for not offering a "fuller account of your excellent Mother."¹⁰⁹ Orphaned by the time she reached childhood, Elizabeth¹¹⁰ received her education under the guidance of her maternal grandmother, and according to Parkhurst,

She had rare endowments of Nature, an excellent Mind lodged in a fine body, and under a beautiful aspect, something of which remained even in her old Age. She had an extraordinary quickness of Apprehension, a curious fancy, great Solidity of Judgment, and a considerable Memory.¹¹¹

One of Elizabeth Brooke's exceptional characteristics was her command of Scripture and her ability to converse with religious scholars. Parkhurst attributed her acumen and profound knowledge to her ability "to apply her self to Religion in the Power and Strictness of it: Parts and Industry, and length of Time and the use of excellent Books, and Converse with Learned Men uniting together...."¹¹² Furthermore, Parkhurst recounted, "I never knew any other Person that had so great a knowledge in Divinity, who was not skill'd in Learned Languages; so that no Scholar could repent the time spent in Converse with her."¹¹³

Rare for her sex, Elizabeth Brooke left behind a number of writings, which reflect a profound understanding of scriptural text and analyses. When she died at the age of eighty-two, Elizabeth's works—a collection of commentaries about the Scripture; a text entitled *The Sum of the Controversies between Us and the Papists*;¹¹⁴ and *Observations*

¹⁰⁹ Parkhurst, *The Faithful and Diligent*, A3.

¹¹⁰ Elizabeth was the daughter of Thomas Culpepper and Lady Elizabeth Slaney.

¹¹¹ Parkhurst, *The Faithful and Diligent*, 43.

¹¹² Parkhurst, *The Faithful and Diligent*, 47-8.

¹¹³ Parkhurst, *The Faithful and Diligent*, 48-9.

¹¹⁴ Parkhurst, *The Faithful and Diligent*, 81.

and Experiences,¹¹⁵ containing her reflections on prayer and religious study—were attached to her funeral sermon. Parkhurst concluded she had produced “A considerable Body of Divinity, in a large Quarto, showing what a Christian must believe and practice. It is not surprising that on the title page of her sermon, Parkhurst included Prov. 31.29, “Many Daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.”¹¹⁶

In the funeral sermon of Lady Elizabeth Stanley, the deceased received praise for her religious instruction of the young and the service she provided for the state. Remembered for her knowledge and religious devotion, the author of her sermon concluded that because of her work, the “the State thereof hath been much advanced by her instruction and incouragement in this house, which hath beene long honoured, for honouring God.”¹¹⁷ The virtues of good mothering were also highlighted in the funeral sermon of Elizabeth Montfort. The unknown author of the sermon described Montfort as a woman who was “carefull over her children” and who did “nurse her children, which many refuse to do.”¹¹⁸ Elizabeth Montfort was compared to Bathsheba who guided Lemuel; therefore, this seventeenth-century mother “brought up her children in nurture or instruction and information of the Lord during their tender yeers.”¹¹⁹

Minister Edward Rainbowe also credited mothers for maintaining an ordered household and, therefore contributing to the establishment of an ordered state. “The Mother of the Family is to the House, as the Soul to the Body,” Edward Rainbowe

¹¹⁵ Parkhurst, *The Faithful and Diligent*, 99.

¹¹⁶ Nathaniel Parkhurst, *The Faithful and Diligent*, title page.

¹¹⁷ I. F. A *Sermon Preached at Ashby De-la-zouch in the Countie of Leicester at the Funerall of the Truly Noble and Vertuous Lady Elizabeth Stanley, One of the Daughters and Coheires of the Right Honourable Ferdinand Late Earle of Derby, and Late Wife to Henrie Earle of Huntingdon the Fifth Earle of that Famile* (London: W.I and T. P., 1635), Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1959, 789:11, 35.

¹¹⁸ *Two Sermons Preached at the Funerals of Mrs. E. Montfort (text: Rev. 14.13) and Dr. T. Montfort (text: Rom. 2.16.)* (London: J. Norton, 1632), Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1984, 1666: 2, 6. The author of the sermon is unknown because the title page and preliminary pages are missing.

¹¹⁹ *Two Sermons*, 6.

explained to his audience at the funeral of Anne, Countess of Pembroke, Dorset and Montgomery.¹²⁰ According to Rainbowe, who was Lord Bishop of Carlile, the mother was responsible for the proper functioning of the home, ordered all things and persons within the House, and “took care for them, and all this, as by an Art, as written Laws and Rules of Oeconomy, or good Housewifery.”¹²¹ Rainbowe also credited family government to women who “have been the Instruments to convey great blessings to their Generations.”¹²² What is most significant about Rainbowe’s description concerning mothers’ roles within the household was his assertion that “Family-Government chiefly belongs to Women; who, when mens occasions call them out, are commonly fix’d to the House.”¹²³ Although the father’s role was recognized in the sermon, Rainbowe concluded, “yet the particular and regular inclinations of children are commonly formed by the Woman; and if she be indeed intelligent and Wife, none can do better.”¹²⁴

In addition to their maternal instruction of the household, women were recognized for their charitable works in the community. Rector Anthony Walker described Mary, Countess of Warwick, as “a serious and attentive hearer of the Word, and constantly after Sermon, recollected what she had heard, sometimes by writing, always by thinking and calling it to mind, that she may make it her own, and turn it into practice.”¹²⁵ Mary

¹²⁰ Edward Rainbowe, *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of the Right Honorable Anne Countess of Pembroke, Dorset, and Montgomery, With Remarks on the Life of that Eminent Lady* (London: R. Royston, 1677), Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1971, 397:14, 14.

¹²¹ Rainbowe, *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral*, 14.

¹²² Rainbowe, *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral*, 8.

¹²³ Rainbowe, *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral*, 28.

¹²⁴ Rainbowe, *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral*, 28.

¹²⁵ Anthony Walker, *The Virtuous Woman Found Her Loss Bewailed and Character Exemplified in a Sermon Preached at Felsted in Essex, April, 30, 1678 at the Funeral of the Most Excellent Lady the Right Honourable, and Eminently Religious and Charitable Mary, Countess Dowager of Warwick, the Most Illustrious Pattern of Sincere Piety, and Solid Goodness this Age Hath Produced with So Large Additions As May be Stiled The Life of that Noble Lady* (London: Nathaniel Ranew), Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1982, 1243:11, 68.

was charitable and supportive of “good Ministers,”¹²⁶ and she was “a most incomparable Mother, which appeared in the education of her one son and three daughters of her Soul.”¹²⁷ Minister Edmund Hall recognized the altruism of Anne Harcourt in his funeral sermon at Stanton-Harcourt Church in the County of Oxford. Extolling her “knowing in History, in Physick, in Musick,”¹²⁸ Hall also marveled at her work ethic and devotion to her family. In his sermon, Hall revealed Ann Harcourt spent her days “retir’d in her closet at her devotions, or else writing, or reading, or playing on some musical instrument, or ordering the affaires of her house, or buried in making medicines for the poore.”¹²⁹

While consistently extolling maternal attributes, some funeral sermons also acknowledged women as benefactors. As the pastor of the church in Little Wratting, John Mayer dedicated his funeral sermon to Lucy Thornton as “his last duty towards her, his loving patroness.”¹³⁰ Similar to other women whose lives were to become models for all Christians, Lucy Thornton was remembered as a devout, altruistic and obedient wife, who gave unselfishly of her energies to her family, her servants and the poor. At home, she was diligent in conducting prayers and Scripture readings as well as in carrying out the religious instruction of children and servants.¹³¹ Because of her religious faith and work, Mayer portrayed Lucy Thornton as an individual who did not fear death; instead,

¹²⁶ Walker, *The Virtuous Woman*, 84.

¹²⁷ Walker, *The Virtuous Woman*, 92-3. The three daughters referred to were the nieces of her husband.

¹²⁸ Edmund Hall, *A Sermon Preached at Stanton-Harcourt Church, in the County of Oxford; at the Funerall of the Honourable the Lady Ann Harcourt, Who Deceased Aug. 23, 1664, Together with Her Funerall Speech* (Oxford: A.&L. Lichfield, 1664), Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1970, 356:5, 49.

¹²⁹ Hall, *A Sermon Preached at Stanton-Harcourt Church*, 50.

¹³⁰ John Mayer, *A Pattern for Women, Setting forth the most Christian Life and Most Comfortable Death of Mrs. Lucy, Late Wife to the Worshipful Roger Thornton, Esquire, of Little Wratting in Suffolk, 1619 in Half Humankind: Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about Women in England, 1540-1640*, eds. Katherine U. Henderson and Barbara F. McManus (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 336.

¹³¹ Mayer, *A Pattern for Women*, 336-7.

she was willing to go to God as “to go to a friend of hers.”¹³² Mayer ended his sermon by concluding Roger Thornton had lost “a heavenly, wise, humble, loving and obedient wife”; and her children have lost “a mother by nature, a mother by grace.”¹³³

Ministers also tried to envision the impact of mothers who died too young. In an effort to console Lady Barbara St. John upon the premature death of her fourth daughter, Elizabeth, Reverend Anthony Horneck reflected upon the life of this young woman as one that was filled with piety and charity towards others.¹³⁴ Concluding that “her Piety was great and early, and her Soul big with Devotion,” Horneck speculated “What would this Plant have come to, if it had grown up to its full height and stature, and how glorious would be this Tree have been, if it had been permitted to spread its branches....”¹³⁵ Sir Thomas Alston received condolences from Reverend William Dillingham upon the premature death of his young wife, Lady Elizabeth Alston. In her funeral sermon, Dillingham apologized for the brevity of “his commendation, but the suddnesses of the occasion, and the time of the Night, will not allow me to speak much.”¹³⁶ Dillingham did commend Elizabeth Alston however, for “her conscientious care that the Duties of Religion might be maintain’d and kept in her Family.”¹³⁷ He further praised Elizabeth Alston’s maternal role by recollecting, “Towards her children, she was a most tender and

¹³² Mayer, *A Pattern for Women*, 341.

¹³³ Mayer, *A Pattern for Women*, 341.

¹³⁴ Anthony Horneck, *A Sermon Preached at the Solemnity of the Funeral of Mrs. Dorothy St. John, Fourth Daughter of the Late Sir Oliver St. John, Knight and Baronet, of Woodford in Northamptonshire, in the Parish Church of St. Martins in the Fields, on the 24th of June, 1677* (London: James Collins, 1677), Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1978, 790:29, 33.

¹³⁵ Horneck, *A Sermon Preached at the Solemnity of the Funeral of Dorothy St. John*, 33-4.

¹³⁶ Dillingham, *A Sermon at the Funeral of the Lady Elizabeth Alston*, 39.

¹³⁷ Dillingham, *A Sermon at the Funeral of the Lady Elizabeth Alston*, 41.

careful Mother, whom she did not satisfy her self to have once brought forth but she travailed again of them, that Christ might be formed in them.”¹³⁸

Some ministers made a special effort to have their funeral sermons printed and distributed so that women might learn from them and become better mothers. When the Puritan minister Richard Baxter prepared the funeral sermon of his wife Margaret Baxter, he prefaced the text with a section entitled “To the Reader.” It was in this part that Baxter acknowledged God had called Margaret “to his Blessed Rest and Glory, the Spirit of the most dear Companion of these first Nineteen Yeares of my Life.”¹³⁹ Grieving for his wife, Baxter also revealed her wish in her Last Will to have five hundred copies of her mother’s funeral sermon reprinted for the benefit of all who wish to pursue a more Christian life.¹⁴⁰ According to her husband, Margaret had often read the sermon of her mother, Mary Charlton, which Richard Baxter had written for her in 1661. The title of the funeral sermon was *The Last Work of a Believer, His passing-prayer, recommending his departing Spirit to Christ, to be received by him*. In his preface to Margaret’s funeral sermon, Baxter provided some insight as to why his mother-in-law’s and his wife’s funeral sermons were important to those left behind. He deemed these accounts as good histories of virtuous women, worthy of emulation and reverence.¹⁴¹

Jesuit William Palmes composed a eulogy for Mrs. Dorothy Lawson in which he recounted the pious nature of her background and her devoted nature to her children. In this Catholic text dedicated to the lady Abbess of the English Benedictine Dames of

¹³⁸ Dillingham, *A Sermon at the Funeral of the Lady Elizabeth Alston*, 40.

¹³⁹ Richard Baxter, *A Breviate of the Life of Margaret, The Daughter of Francis Charlton, of Apply in Shropshire, and Wife of Richard Baxter* (London: B. Simmons, 1681), Early English Books, 1641-1700, 200:09, A.

¹⁴⁰ Baxter, *A Breviate of the Life of Margaret*, A.

¹⁴¹ Baxter, *A Breviate of the Life of Margaret*, A-A7.

Gant, which was the convent that educated some of Mrs. Lawson's daughters and granddaughters,¹⁴² Palmes referred to similar themes evident in Protestant funeral sermons. In his account of Dorothy Lawson, Palmes recollected her birth in 1580 to Henry and Margaret Constable, Lord and Lady of Burton Constable in Yorkshire, and he described Dorothy's religious education from her mother. A close friend to the Lawson family, Palmes believed Elizabeth's "best inheritance or part was that which neither wrinkles could blemish, sickness ruin, or death despoil her off; to witt, her pious mothers excellent virtues."¹⁴³

At the age of seventeen, Dorothy married Roger Lawson, a lawyer, and together the couple raised seven children as Catholics. Dorothy was not only responsible for convincing her husband to raise the four boys and three girls as Catholics, but she also arranged for the priest to come into the house by night, and lodged him in a chamber. "All her children were bred Catholicks, solidly instructed in Christian doctrine, or principles of faith, and had the company of a priest so freely...."¹⁴⁴ Palmes also compared Elizabeth's profound faith in her religion to "gold refined in a furnace," in which "shee suffered a long imprisonment, liberality to good uses, zeal of God's honour, to the emulation of Catholicks and confusion of Hereticks."¹⁴⁵ Unlike Protestant clerics who would share Elizabeth's life with the laity, Palmes gave a copy of his text to the Abbess, believing Elizabeth's life would serve as a model to others for she was so exceptional "that she might not die as long as she liv'd."¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² William Palmes, *Life of Mrs. Dorothy Lawson, of St. Anthony's, near Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in Northumberland*, ed. George Bouchier Richardson (London: C. Dolman, 1855), 1-3.

¹⁴³ Palmes, *Life of Mrs. Dorothy Lawson*, 7-8.

¹⁴⁴ Palmes, *Life of Mrs. Dorothy Lawson*, 17.

¹⁴⁵ Palmes, *Life of Mrs. Dorothy Lawson*, 7-8.

¹⁴⁶ Palmes, *Life of Mrs. Dorothy Lawson*, 7-8.

Funeral sermons of women exalted their maternal roles as nurturers and spiritual caretakers of children. Complementing the prescriptive literature of the period, funeral sermons also suggest women were able to transcend traditional limitations placed on their gender to obtain a more “public presence” from the pulpits and in the printed accounts commemorating their lives. In his dedication to Mrs. Rebecca Crisp, cleric and theologian Thomas Gataker, acknowledged the family’s private use of his funeral sermon, but he also “thought it would not be amisse to make it more publicke and adde unto it the testimonie then truly and upon good ground given to her: partly for the propagating and perpetuating of the memory of so worthy a servant of God.”¹⁴⁷ Gataker’s words underscore the importance of the maternal role within the household and the subsequent role mothers continued to possess as “Christianitie maketh no distinction of Sex.”¹⁴⁸

Familial Accounts of Mothers and Religious Learning

As recommended in the prescriptive literature and confirmed in the funeral sermons, mothers possessed an important role in the orchestration of religious education and devotion within the household. Recollections of children and spouses further reveal the pious commitment of mothers as they cultivated an environment of prayer and religious learning. While public and economic concerns often directed fathers and husbands from the household, mothers were responsible for spiritual devotion and education of children and servants, engendering a tender and significant relationship.

¹⁴⁷ Thomas Gataker, *Pauls Desire of Dissolution, and Deaths Advantage, A Sermon Preached at the Funerall of the Right Vertuous and Religious Gentlewoman Mrs. Rebecca Crisp* (London: Edward Griffin, 1620), A3-A4.

¹⁴⁸ Gataker, *Pauls Desire of Dissolution*, A4.

Familial accounts of maternal piety and religious instruction convey an array of sentiments from children and spouses. When they became adults, children fondly remembered the maternal bond that developed while mothers introduced prayer and religious devotion. As mothers practiced exercises from catechisms and recited stories from the Scriptures, children not only developed an understanding of their religion, but they also accepted the important role of religion in their lives that would continue into adulthood. Accounts from husbands and fathers express their sincere appreciation of the pious nature of wives and mothers. Paternal letters and other personal writings confirm and illuminate interest in the pious activities of mothers.

Lady Anne Halkett possessed fond memories of the religious education she received from her mother. Born in London in 1621 to Thomas Murray and Jane Drummond Murray who were minor Scottish gentry serving in the Court of James I, Anne received instruction in the patterns of devotion set by the Church of England and outlined in the *Book of Common Prayer*. In her *Autobiography* Anne recalled the prominent role her mother played in the development of religious study among her children, and she credited such maternal guidance as the reason why she discovered solace and joy in her faith. Reminiscing about her childhood, Anne claimed, “My mother’s greatest care, for which I shall ever owe to her memory the highest gratitude, was the great care she tooke that, even from our infancy, wee were instructed never to neglect to begin and end the day with prayer.”¹⁴⁹ Anne also wrote about the schedule her mother had prepared for the family which included reading the Bible each morning, attending Church prayers and services, and maintaining a charitable relationship with

¹⁴⁹ *Autobiography of Anne Lady Halkett*, 2-3.

others. Anne concluded, “I blese God, I had my education, and the example of a good Mother.”¹⁵⁰

Sometimes mothers witnessed the impact of their religious devotion in the actions of their children. In a poignant portrayal of twenty-five-year-old Anne Halkett and her dying mother, Episcopalian minister Simon Couper acknowledged the inner peace of Jane Murray as he described how devoted Anne was in tending to the needs of her mother:

... which she received with all gratitude, as a new obligation to be more dutiful and diligent in attending upon her, especially being now more infirm and sickly; which, with great care and concern, she performed, ministering to her all the spiritual and bodily help she was capable to afford. This made a very comfortable and endearing impression upon her dying mother, and filled her heart with joy in finding not only the tender affection of her daughter, but much more, the refreshing fruits of her piety and devotion.¹⁵¹

As a student at Trinity College in Cambridge, Simond D’Ewes caringly remembered his mother whose religious training provided him with comfort and confidence in his new environment. According to D’Ewes who was fifteen at the time, school life proved to be challenging but thanks “to my dear and religious mother, and there partaking of her zealous prayers, godly instructions, and blessed example, did admirably strengthen and settle me in the love and exercise of the best things.”¹⁵² Because of his mother’s training and guidance, young D’Ewes “began to perform holy duties feelingly and with comfort, which I at first had only taken up upon trust, and

¹⁵⁰ *Autobiography of Anne Lady Halkett*, 2-3.

¹⁵¹ *Autobiography of Anne Lady Halkett*, ii. Also see *The Life of the Lady Halket* (Edinburgh, A. Symson and H. Knox, 1701). The author of the biographical life of Lady Halkett is listed as S.C. While many critics have claimed the writings of Lady Halkett were not intended for publication but only for the private reading of her family, Suzanne Trill has claimed Anne Halkett gave her manuscripts to her minister Simon Couper in order to publish what he deemed useful to others.

¹⁵² D’Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 104.

performed out of custom.”¹⁵³ One year later when D’Ewes visited his dying mother, he reminisced about her significant role upon his life by concluding, “Very careful was she in the godly education of her children and orderly government of her family.”¹⁵⁴

Maternal religious instruction among children sometimes proved to be such a powerful force in their lives that they attributed their well-being to it. The antiquarian Gervase Holles reminisced about his mother Elizabeth, who had died shortly after the birth of a daughter. Enlightened by stories of her piety and kindness toward family, friends and neighbors, Gervase Holles concluded, “And I must acknowledge that to be the son of such a mother I ought to ranke amongst the chiefest blessings and greatest comfortes that God Almighty in his goodness hath bestowed upon me.”¹⁵⁵ At the age of ten, Bulstrode Whitelocke was taken from Eaton and placed in Merchant Taylor’s School “where his father had been a scholar and his mother still took care of his instruction in religion and for humane learning.”¹⁵⁶ In his diary, Whitelocke also shared recollections of the religious instruction he received as a young boy from his mother when he wrote “With the teaching him of his book, the pious mother took care betimes to instruct her son in the rudiments of religion, as farre as he was capable to understand it, and this she did with the more zeale and conscience of her duety being herselfe.”¹⁵⁷ Later on, Whitelocke attributed his mother’s piety and commitment to his recovery from illness as he recounted, “His learning was disturbed with a sharpe fitt of sickness, butt the mother being as full of skill as tenderness, with the blessing of God recovered him, as did many

¹⁵³ D’Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 104.

¹⁵⁴ D’Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 117.

¹⁵⁵ Gervase Holles, *Memorials of the Holles Family*, 220.

¹⁵⁶ Whitelocke, *The Diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke*, 46.

¹⁵⁷ Whitelocke, *The Diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke*, 44.

of her friends and neighbours, as well as those of her family, she being very skillfull in Physick and chirurgery.¹⁵⁸

Reminiscing about the pious nature and strong attributes of his mother Alice, the nonconformist minister Oliver Heywood also confirmed her ability to heal others with the assistance of her strong faith. Heywood characterized his mother as a “woman of sorrows, which she bore with invincible courage, and incredible patience, chearfulness and selfe-denial, for she had a speedy remedy for every malady, and that was prayer.”¹⁵⁹ Heywood also described his mother’s devout nature as she “was very conversant with the lord alone in the holy, humble retirements, selfe-conference, meditation, and recollecting sermons.”¹⁶⁰ Her son concluded that such a relationship with God permitted Alice Heywood to “goe to the lord and open up her case and state to him in secret prayer and therby found present ease and future success.”¹⁶¹

Children also remembered the charitable acts of their mothers as well as their commitment to their religious formation. The lawyer John Bramston fondly remembered his mother Bridget, who died at the age of thirty-six while he was away at school at Blackmore in Essex as “a beautifull, comely person, of a middle stature, virtuous and pious, a very observant wife, a carefull, tender mother; who was very charitable to the poore, kind to her neighbours, and beloved by them, and died much lamented by all that knew her.”¹⁶² In addition to her religious devotions, Alice Heywood “loved al godly ministers,” possessed “an earnest desire and constant care to wait at the posts of

¹⁵⁸ Whitelocke, *The Diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke*, 44.

¹⁵⁹ Heywood, *His Autobiography, Diaries, Anecdote and Event Books*, vol. 1, 46.

¹⁶⁰ Heywood, *His Autobiography, Diaries, Anecdote and Event Books*, vol. 1, 46.

¹⁶¹ Heywood, *His Autobiography, Diaries, Anecdote and Event Books*, vol. 1, 46.

¹⁶² Bramston, *Autobiography*, 34.

wisdome,” and “was exceedingly pitiful and tender-hearted to the poore.”¹⁶³ When she was an expectant mother, Alice Heywood was described by her son as one “who was tenderly affected to the fruit of her wombe, the love she bore to our bodys, tho natural, was spiritualized, But the love she bore to our soules was highly elevated; I might say she traveled in birth again for us til christ was formed in us.”¹⁶⁴

In her *Memoirs*, Lady Ann Fanshawe also recalled her mother’s piety and altruistic nature. Ann described her mother as a woman who was very understanding of others, tender and “very pious, and charitable to the degree that she relieved many with her own hand daily out of her purse.”¹⁶⁵ Ann’s mother also devoted herself to the care of the sick, “dressing many wounds” to the point when she herself became ill, she sent her servant in her place.¹⁶⁶

Maternal religious instruction evoked tender and detailed recollections from Oliver Heywood, who recalled how it was his mother’s “constant custome when my father was gone to London to make al her children pray. Tho some of us were but young yet we begun at the yongest, and left at the eldest, saying what we could before the lord, together.”¹⁶⁷ Heywood also recalled how his mother “tooke great care of us, that al her children might learn and say chatichisme.”¹⁶⁸ Alice Heywood’s devotion to the religious education of her children seemed intense as Oliver recollected, “she was continually putting us upon reading the scriptures and good bookes, and instructed us how to pray.”¹⁶⁹ Later on when Oliver Heywood became a father, he described his late, pious

¹⁶³ Heywood, *His Autobiography, Diaries, Anecdote and Event Books*, vol. 1, 47-8.

¹⁶⁴ Heywood, *His Autobiography, Diaries, Anecdote and Event Books*, vol. 1, 50.

¹⁶⁵ Fanshawe, *Memoirs of Ann Lady Fanshawe*, 19-20.

¹⁶⁶ Fanshawe, *Memoirs of Ann Lady Fanshawe*, 20.

¹⁶⁷ Heywood, *His Autobiography, Diaries, Anecdote and Event Books*, vol. 1, 51.

¹⁶⁸ Heywood, *His Autobiography, Diaries, Anecdote and Event Books*, vol. 1, 51.

¹⁶⁹ Heywood, *His Autobiography, Diaries, Anecdote and Event Books*, vol. 1, 51.

wife's (Elizabeth) role on the religious training of their sons John and Eliezer, as they:
 "... plyed their book, read chapters, learned chatichismes, got some chapters and psalms
 without book...."¹⁷⁰

Roger North's mother combined religious education with a spirited methodology in order to instill a sense of morality in her children. In his autobiography, North remembered her as a mother "who took perpetuall care wee should contract no ill habits by conversing with servants, especially lying, which she allwais preacht against, as well as hardly forgave, when discovered."¹⁷¹ North remembered his mother Ann had exercised "all possible impressions in the way of religion, by discoursing, and by answering wisely, when wee were talkative; and to shew how virtue may be mixt with delight, she used to tell us tales, always concluding in morality, to which, as children use, wee were most attentive."¹⁷² North concluded his description of his mother's religious role with an account of her special Sunday lesson:

On Sundays also she would comply, when wee solicited for a story, but it must be a Sunday one, as she called it, and then would tell some scripturall history, which was more pleasing to us because more admirable, and extraordinary than others; nothing could be more a propos, then this method, for forming the minds of children to a prejudice in favour of what was good.¹⁷³

Although young John Cheke was instructed by various tutors, his mother Agnes Cheke greatly shaped his moral development. As the mother of English scholar and Secretary of State to Edward VI, Sir John Cheke, Agnes guided his study and religious education during his early years. According to the English ecclesiastical historian and biographer John Strype, John Cheke "was educated under pious and wise parents; who

¹⁷⁰ Heywood, *His Autobiography, Diaries, Anecdote and Event Books*, vol. 1, 234.

¹⁷¹ North, *Notes of Me*, 82.

¹⁷² North, *Notes of Me*, 82.

¹⁷³ North, *Notes of Me*, 82.

perceiving the natural genius of the lad, spared for no care nor pains to cultivate his nature and encourage his inclinations.”¹⁷⁴ Cheke’s parents appointed a German scholar to take care of his younger studies, and a Frenchman to instruct him in behavior; however, Strype asserted that it was Agnes Cheke, “The godly matron his mother following him with good precepts; and this among the rest, that he ‘should take care of three things, his God, his soul, and his company.’”¹⁷⁵

Lucy Hutchinson’s memories of her mother Lady Lucy Apsley not only included her charitable acts to prisoners in the tower (Lady Lucy’s husband Sir Allen Apsley was the lieutenant of the Tower of London) , but also emphasized the maternal impact on her daughter’s religious behavior. According to Lucy Hutchinson, “It pleas’d God that, thro’ the good instructions of my mother, and the sermons she carried me to, I was convinc’d that the knowledge of God was the most excellent study, and accordingly applied myselfe to it, and to practise as I was taught.”¹⁷⁶ In her daily actions, Lucy believed she continued her mother’s pious example as she “us’d to exhort my mother’s maides much, and to turne their idle discourses to good subjects: but I thought, when I had done this on the Lord’s day, and every day perform’d my due taskes of reading and praying, that then I was free to anie thing that was not sin.”¹⁷⁷

Mary Ferrar, mother of Nicholas Ferrar, Cambridge graduate, world traveler, experienced businessman, member of Parliament, and founder of the religious school of Little Gidding in Huntingdonshire in 1624, played an important role in the formation of her son’s religious ideology. As the fourth of seven children of Nicholas and Mary

¹⁷⁴ John Strype, *The Life of the Learned Sir John Cheke, First Instructor, Afterward Secretary of State to King Edward VI* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1821), 149.

¹⁷⁵ Strype, *The Life of the Learned Sir John Cheke*, 149.

¹⁷⁶ Hutchinson, “The Life of Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson, Written by Herself,” 288.

¹⁷⁷ Hutchinson, “The Life of Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson, Written by Herself,” 288.

Ferrar, Nicholas, along with his siblings were strongly guided by their mother who maintained a regimen of religious instruction. According to Dr. Lindsell, Bishop of Hereford, lifelong friend of Mary Ferrar (the Bishop was accustomed to calling Mary Ferrar, “mother”), and tutor of her son Nicholas, Mary Ferrar could be constantly found sitting at work with her children and maids around her, singing psalms with them, and hearing them read chapters in the Bible and stories from the Book of Martyrs.¹⁷⁸ They had family prayers twice a day, and a clergyman residing in the house to act as chaplain. Mother and children also attended church services on Wednesdays and Fridays as well as on Sundays. Dr. Lindsell estimated that during the course of her life, Mary Ferrar must have heard as many as twelve thousand sermons, and he concluded, “What good use she made of all these things, let the world speak of it; her deeds will praise her in the gates of the City, and in the country, in the open fields abroad.”¹⁷⁹

The death of a mother sometimes provided children with the occasion to reflect upon the significant impact of her devout nature upon their lives. When John Evelyn and his siblings surrounded the bed of Mary, his dying mother, he recounted how she “summoned all her Children and express’d her selfe in a manner so heavenly, with instructions so pious, and Christian, as made us strangely sensible of the extraordinary losse then imminent.”¹⁸⁰ Before she died, Mary Evelyn embraced each of her children and gave “each a Ring, with her Blessing, and dismiss’d us.”¹⁸¹ As a young child, Adam Martindale also lost his mother who was “very penitent and devout in her sicknesses,”

¹⁷⁸ Rev. T.T. Carter, *Nicholas Ferrar: His Household and His Friends* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1893), 6-8.

¹⁷⁹ *Nicholas Ferrar: His Household and His Friends*, 8.

¹⁸⁰ Evelyn, *Diary*, 6.

¹⁸¹ Evelyn, *Diary*, 7.

but unable to see her young son because of the contagious nature of her illness.¹⁸² Isaac Archer was eight years old when he lost his “pious and prudent” mother.¹⁸³ After Mary Archer’s death, his father William assumed the religious education of his seven children and made young Isaac “read the Bible.”¹⁸⁴

Husbands also held fond memories of their wives who shaped the religious education of children. After the death of his beloved wife, Elizabeth, to whom he had been married to for thirty-three years, Hugh Cholmley wrote of his wife as “a most pious virtuous person of great inienueety, a discerning iudgement in most things; of a sweet good nature compassionate beyond immgenation in soe much there was nothing she tooke more content in, or more agreeable to her disposition, then to be helpfull to every bodyes need of what quallety or condition soever.”¹⁸⁵ As the mother of six children, Elizabeth Cholmley took an active interest in their religious education and although her husband recounted that she had indulged her children at times, Elizabeth still managed to guide them by being “a trew daughter of the Church of England dyeing in profession of that faith both in doctrine and discipline....”¹⁸⁶

After the death of his wife Elizabeth, John Egerton displayed his affection for and his appreciation of her pious nature and maternal warmth when he composed a memorial for her tombstone. Married for twenty-one years, John Egerton (formerly Viscount Brackley) the second earl of Bridgewater (in 1649) and Elizabeth, the daughter of William Cavendish and stepdaughter to Margaret (Lucas) Cavendish, the Duchess of

¹⁸² Martindale, *Diary*, 18.

¹⁸³ Matthew Storey, ed., *Two East Anglican Diaries, 1641-1729: Isaac Archer and William Coe* (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1994), 44.

¹⁸⁴ Storey, ed., *Two East Anglican Diaries*, 47.

¹⁸⁵ Cholmley, *Memoirs*, 116-7.

¹⁸⁶ Cholmley, *Memoirs*, 121.

Newcastle, had nine children when Elizabeth died after giving birth to her tenth child at the age of thirty-seven.¹⁸⁷ After the death of his wife, John Egerton recalled “She was of a noble and generous soul, . . . Her devotion was most exemplary, . . . and her divine meditations every particular chapter of the Bible written with her own hand, and never (until her death) seen by any.”¹⁸⁸

Although their work often separated them from the household, husbands valued the pious example mothers provided for their children. In a personal letter to his wife Olive, Endymion Porter reminded her how much he missed his family, and he included in his writing a reminder for her to continue her religious guidance of their young son George. Interestingly, Porter ended his note with “God bless thy child and make him a Saint George.”¹⁸⁹ Although his work in the court circle and later under the Parliamentary government demanded time from home, country gentleman Francis Osborne reminded his son John to emulate the “virtues of your mother, which I confess are inferior to none. . . .”¹⁹⁰

In his *Memoirs*, merchant Ambrose Barnes thought so highly of the erudition of his wife Mary, her two sisters, and of the religious training they provided for their children, that he wrote about them.¹⁹¹ The eldest sister Jane, who married Mr. John Oxenbridge, a tutor at Magdeline College and a fellow of Eaton College, was described as a scholar who “few divines equaled in textual divinity.”¹⁹² Although she “had an

¹⁸⁷ Betty Travitsky, “Reconstructing the Still, Small Voice: The Occasional Journal of Elizabeth Egerton,” *Womens Studies*, 19 (1991), 193.

¹⁸⁸ Travitsky, “Elizabeth Egerton,” 194.

¹⁸⁹ Porter, *Life and Letters of Mr. Endymion Porter*, 24.

¹⁹⁰ Francis Osborne, *Advice to a Son or Directions for your Better Conduct through the Various and Most Important Encounters of This Life*, 1656 in *Advice to a Son*, ed. Wright, 67.

¹⁹¹ Ambrose Barnes, *Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Ambrose Barnes, Late Merchant and Sometime Alderman of Newcastle Upon Tyne* (London: Andrews & Co., 1867).

¹⁹² Barnes, *Memoirs*, 61.

infirm Body, but was strong in her faith,” Jane “loved commonly to have her opinion upon a text of scripture before he preacht from it.”¹⁹³ Jane nurtured a son, Dr. Daniel Oxenbridge, “a gentleman of rare accomplishments both as a Christian, a phisitian, and a scholar,” and a daughter “who whilst a child exprest great dutifulness to her parents, studying everything that would please them.”¹⁹⁴

Mary Barnes’ second older sister, Grace who was married to the minister John Rogers, also received accolades from Barnes for her maternal piety and devotion to her children. Barnes described his sister-in-law Grace as “a woman of great meekness, wisdom, sweetness, and every way an eminent pattern of Christianity.”¹⁹⁵ Grace and John Rogers had four children and two survived infancy. After burying two sons, Jonathan in 1650, and a second son, John two years later, Grace and John Rogers had a baby girl, Mary and Timothy Rogers, who became a minister and an author of several books on early religion. His texts included discourses of sickness and recovery, the character of a virtuous woman, and funeral sermons.¹⁹⁶ The writings of Timothy Rogers may have been affected by the illness of his mother who suffered a long time from cancer. According to Ambrose Barnes, there was a paper handed out of her dying speeches, one of which was, “Do not think my triumph over death is less because I speak less, my assurance continues, my joy is full, but my body is weak, my pain great, my voice spent, I cannot speak as I would.”¹⁹⁷

Ambrose Barnes had much to be proud of in his own marriage to Mary who continued the tradition of piety and devotion to the household. Barnes admired his wife’s

¹⁹³ Barnes, *Memoirs*, 64.

¹⁹⁴ Barnes, *Memoirs*, 64.

¹⁹⁵ Barnes, *Memoirs*, 65.

¹⁹⁶ Barnes, *Memoirs*, 65.

¹⁹⁷ Barnes, *Memoirs*, 65.

patience and devotion in the religious education of their children and he compared her methods to Biblical figures:

She took care to instill betimes into her children, the A,B,C, of religion, as Bathsheba did to her son Solomon, Prov. 30, (31) which chapter is set down by way of alphabet. Man is conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity, and this holy matron did what in her lay, to be before-hand with it, and whilst great with child, would make a deed of gift of the fruit of her womb to God, that it might be his delight. When her children were infants, she would take them one by one into her chamber with her in secret, and, with many tears pour out her soul to God for them.¹⁹⁸

Barnes also described how his wife Mary cared for the members of the family and the household. “Besides the pills, electuaries, conserves, candies, sirriips, and many distillations she made for the use of her family, she kept a closet of salves, ointments, pouders, and diet-drinks, which she sent to the poor, sometimes visiting them her self, sometimes sending to see how they did, and taking care in their sickness, that they were clean kept.”¹⁹⁹

Anthony Walker’s description of his wife’s piety and guidance upon the religious education of their children reflects his profound admiration of her. In his text *The Holy Life of Elizabeth Walker*, Anthony Walker explained that his sources for his text were Elizabeths’ personal writings, only discovered by him after her death.²⁰⁰ Intended for the use of her two daughters who were living at the time, Elizabeth included “excellent Instructions and religious Directions in order to teach them how to serve God acceptably, and promote the Salvation of their Souls.”²⁰¹ According to her husband, Elizabeth considered children “the nursery of Families, the Church, and the Nation.”²⁰² She

¹⁹⁸ Barnes, *Memoirs*, 69.

¹⁹⁹ Barnes, *Memoirs*, 70.

²⁰⁰ Walker, *The Holy Life of Elizabeth Walker*, 6.

²⁰¹ Walker, *The Holy Life of Elizabeth Walker*, 6.

²⁰² Walker, *The Holy Life of Elizabeth Walker*, 66.

believed that mothers needed to practice diligence and wisdom while nurturing them and she considered this “not only an Indispensable Duty to be done, but a high Honour to be intrusted by God.”²⁰³ While Elizabeth Walker’s instructions for the religious education of children were carefully outlined in her writings, she believed mothers needed to be patient and kind so that “they sowed the Seed of early Pious knowledge in their tender Minds.”²⁰⁴

Though their religious and societal instructions perpetuated a public acceptance of their subordinate positions, mothers exercised a certain degree of power within their private worlds particularly among Protestant ministers, who supported clerical marriage and spiritual development. As a result, women were able to instruct their children and servants, obtain the admiration of their families, pursue individual devotional studies, and attract clerical attention to their sincere religious studies.

Funeral sermons commemorating women for their religious lives provided them with spectators outside their domiciles. The private lives of pious women became public as ministers revealed their beliefs and actions from the pulpit, and publishers sold and distributed such accounts to a wider audience. While complementing the prescriptive advice, these devout women were able to serve as models to others, and in doing so, they were able to exemplify not only Christian virtue but also to exercise autonomy as caretakers of the religious activities of the household. Whether women at this time realized the significant power they exercised in this capacity is debatable, but what is true is that they practiced such religious pursuits and experienced greater freedom as custodians of the religious education of their children.

²⁰³ Walker, *The Holy Life of Elizabeth Walker*, 67.

²⁰⁴ Walker, *The Holy Life of Elizabeth Walker*, 69.

Chapter Three

Maternal Perceptions and Involvement in the Intellectual Training of Children

My most dear mother, ... God removed from you quickly, and hath since taken from you all the comfort that that marriage produced. All those children (for whose maintenance his industry provided, and for whose education you were so carefully and so chargeably diligent) He hath now taken from you.... For whatever I shall be able to do, I acknowledge to be a debt to you from whom I had that education, which must make my fortune....¹

One of the most unsolicited and poignant references to mothers and their roles in the education of their young can be found in the words of John Donne. In 1616 at the age of forty-four, the recently ordained Anglican priest wrote a letter to his mother, attempting to comfort her upon the death of her daughter Anne, Donne's last surviving sibling. The correspondence between John Donne and his mother conveys his sorrow for her loss and his acknowledgement of Elizabeth Donne's important role in the education of her son despite Donne's break with his Catholic past. Although little is known of John Donne's relationship with his mother, who was the great grandniece of Thomas More and a sister to Jesuit activists, Elizabeth Heywood Donne carefully guided her son's education with Catholic tutors and later instruction at Oxford, Cambridge and law studies at Lincoln's Inn. The conversion of her son to Protestantism must have strained the relationship between Elizabeth and John Donne, but it was not strong enough to erase the loving and appreciative memory of her private but profound impact upon his life.

The first school for children in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England was the home where mothers supervised the development of their children, and demonstrated a

¹ Augustus Jessop, *John Donne: Sometime Dean of St. Paul's* (New York: Haskell House, 1972), 115-7.

devoted interest in their health, education and religious practices. Similar to the close and caring supervision of the physical well-being and pious development of their children, mothers also served as early teachers who patiently and tenderly taught the rudiments of reading and writing. While the individual educational abilities differed among upper class women, most mothers were able to prepare their children for the impending years of formal education.

Private tutors and university life did not end the important relationship mothers continued to play in the education of their children. Despite the exception of women who received extraordinary educational opportunities such as Margaret More Roper or the Cooke sisters, mothers were limited by the inferior schooling afforded to women. They did maintain, however, a supportive environment sustaining the welfare and success of their sons, and maternal letters along with recollections of children attest to such devotion and perseverance. Fathers also fondly remembered and credited mothers who continued to anticipate the needs and dilemmas of their children.

Parents, especially mothers who remained in the household, received advice as to the correct way to educate children. Even as religious education overshadowed the textual material involved in learning, the purpose and methods of education received considerable attention from humanists, clerics and educational writers of the period. Mothers' educative roles were addressed by male writers suggesting recognition of their significant and influential positions. In some cases, clerics such as Anglican Edward Rainbowe went so far as to credit mothers with the responsibility of nurturing the future

welfare of the state: “Children well instructed in *Gynaceo*, as plants well ordered in the Nursery, will thrive, and prosper, and fill the World with good fruit.”²

This chapter will begin with an examination of the educational advice expressed by influential humanists, clerics and writers concerning the training of children and the specific responsibilities of parents. While their works contain many similar tenets of an educational philosophy supporting attentive parenting, the discussion of learning in relation to girls or the maternal role in the educative process receives varying degrees of interest. To what extent did mothers in turn follow the prescriptive literature advising them of their maternal responsibilities in the education of their children? Recollections of children and spouses, as well as maternal letters and accounts will be analyzed to assess the multifaceted role mothers possessed as their children began and continued their intellectual instruction.

Educational Philosophy, Advice and Mothers

Believing appropriate and meaningful instruction of the child at a young age would be most effective in achieving their goals, clerics, humanists and educational writers advised parents on matters such as discipline, learning and responsibility. In some instances, mothers, as the primary teachers of young children, received special attention from writers such as Juan Luis Vives, Desiderius Erasmus, Thomas Salter, John Amos Comenius and Jacques Du Bosc, who recognized their strategic position within the household and their intimate relationship with sons and daughters. In addition to offering

²Rainbowe, *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of the Right Honorable Anne Countess of Pembroke, Dorset, and Montgomery*, 28. *Gynaeceum* refers to women’s quarters in ancient Greek.

advice to mothers and discussing the education of daughters, these authors carefully directed women on subjects involving their private studies, instruction of their children, and moral development.

Drawing upon classical, biblical and personal accounts, Christian humanist Juan Luis Vives specifically addressed mothers on the care and instruction of children. The ideal mother was nurturing, altruistic, diligent and wise, cognizant of her important role in the education of her children, but also mindful of her subordinate position in society.³ As the first teacher of a child, Vives recognized the magnitude of the mother's role and advised her of the infant's natural tendencies of imitating maternal speech and behavior: "Its first sense perception and first information of the mind it takes from what it hears from the mother. Therefore, much more depends on the mother in the formation of the children's character than one would think." (270)

Central to the formation of good character in children were the moral lessons taught by their mothers. Citing Plutarch's Eurydice, Vives identified her as an example of a mother who "devoted herself to literature and moral teachings solely so that she might pass on these to her children, which she did." (270) Insightfully, Vives called attention to the special place a mother held as the infant's first moral instructor as she already established an intimate bond, conducive to mental and physical edification: "If the mother knows literature, she should teach her children when they are small so that

³ Vives, *The Education of A Christian Woman*, see Chapter X "On Children and the Care That Must Be Taken of Them," 265-82. See also Gloria Kaufman, "Juan Luis Vives on the Education of Women," *Signs* 3 (Summer, 1978), 891-6. In the following pages, references to Juan Luis Vives' *The Education of A Christian Woman* will appear in text in parenthesis.

they have the same person as mother, nurse, and teacher. They will love her more and learn more readily with the help that they have for their teacher.”(270)

As the child matured, Vives instructed mothers to continue to shape his or her moral character by renouncing indulgence and thoughtless behavior and adopting a sincere resolve to instill the values of piety, scholarship and moderation. Vives is clear as to the focal part of mothers in the direction of their children’s upbringing when he claimed “Mothers, how many opportunities you have to make your children good or bad!”(272) Warning mothers against the vulnerability of being lenient and weak so that they develop the fortitude of implementing discipline and sacrifice, Vives detailed the personal and lasting benefits of firm and consequential punishment. Recognizing the need for mothers to know of their children’s love for them, Vives perceptively reminded mothers that their children will love them when they grow up to be virtuous, learned and resilient; similarly, children will hate their parents when they discover their lavish and decadent lifestyles have left them poor, empty and despised.(274-7)

Vives is most compelling in his argument for maternal discipline and restraint in a personal account of his mother’s interaction with him. For Vives, love between a mother and child was not something which existed as the result of granting a young person’s every desire, but a state that was recognized by children when they were old enough to understand the true meaning of maternal love. Vives recounted, “No mother loved her son more dearly than my mother loved me. But no son felt less loved by his mother than I.”(276) Admitting that his mother never smiled at him or practiced any leniency towards him, Vives also confessed she also became gravely ill when she was unaware of his whereabouts for three or four days. (276) Fondly, Vives concluded, “There was no one I

avoided more or shunned more as a child than my mother, but as a young man, no one was more constantly in my thoughts than she.”(276)

In his treatment of the education of girls, Vives offered specific advice to mothers directing them to ensure their daughters read works that develop their morality, and pursue activities such as spinning and cooking which perfect their domestic skills.⁴ The educational setting for young girls should consist of members of their gender, closely supervised by mothers who nurture their spiritual and intellectual growth. Speculating from Classical authors about the appropriate age(suggested ages range from four to seven) for girls to learn letters and reading, Vives recommended that such a decision be left up to the parents, “who will be guided by the character and qualities of the child.”(58) Vives is clear about the importance of reading—“Reading is the best occupation and I counsel it first of all”—and even more emphatic about the content of reading material—“They must read and hear all things that will elevate their minds to God, compose their feelings in a Christian tranquility, and improve their morals.”(59, 79)

Emulating what they have learned from sources as the Old Testament, the Gospels and authors including Jerome, Augustine, Plato and Cicero, women were expected to acquire “rectitude and wisdom” as they read and wrote, while not overstepping their prescribed boundaries of the household.(71) Although Vives believed in placing no limits on speaking for males and females, he did attribute males a public forum in which they “be equipped with the knowledge of many and varied subjects, which will be of profit to himself and to the state.”(71) Women on the other hand, were to be content in learning for their own moral edification and for the instruction of their

⁴ Vives, *The Education of A Christian Woman*, see Chapter II “On the Later Years of Childhood”; Chapter III “On Her Early Training”; Chapter IV “On the Instruction of Young Girls”; and Chapter V “Which Writers Are to Be Read and Which Not to Be Read.”

children, complying with the directive “it is best that she stay at home and be unknown to others.”(72)

The significant role of mothers as the first teachers of their children was also supported by Desiderius Erasmus who believed the maternal bond, first established by giving birth and breastfeeding, provided mothers with an intimate connection to the young child.⁵ In the exchange between the wise Eutrapelus and Fabula over the merits of nursing one’s child, Eutrapelus instructs the young mother that after she has formed the little body of her son, “fashion his equally pliable mind through good education.”⁶ Similar to Vives, Erasmus explained since learning is most effective when there is mutual affection between the teacher and the pupil, a mother instilled “principles of good conduct in him more easily. The mother is of no small importance in this respect, both because the material she molds is most plastic and because it is responsive to every suggestion.”⁷

In his 1529 treatise *De Pueris statim ac liberaliter instituendis* or, *That Children Should Straightway from Their Earliest Years Be Trained in Virtue and Sound Learning*, addressed to William, Duke of Cleves, Erasmus asserted the “means to happiness is right training or education.”⁸ Advising that parents, in particular mothers, be diligent and wise in the upbringing of their children, Erasmus also stressed the importance of early education which involved the close monitoring of behavior, the use of words and actions

⁵ See Erasmus, “The New Mother” in *The Colloquies of Erasmus*, 267-85. See also Erika Rummel, ed., *Erasmus on Women* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); A .D. Cousins, “Humanism, Female Education, and Myth: Erasmus, Vives and More’s *To Candidus*,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 65 (April, 2004): 213-50; and J.K. Sowards, “Erasmus and the Education of Women,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 13 (Winter, 1982): 77-89.

⁶ Erasmus, “The New Mother,” 283.

⁷ Erasmus, “The New Mother,” 283. See also Erasmus, “De Pueris Instituendis” in *Desiderius Erasmus Concerning the Aim and Method of Education*, William Harrison Woodward (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1964), 194-5.

⁸ Erasmus, “De Pueris Instituendis,” 183.

worthy of imitation, and the cultivation of sound wisdom and learning. Citing Classical figures such as Cicero, Vergil and Horace, Erasmus claimed they “became men of approved learning . . . for they were taught by their parents from the very nursery the art of refined speech.”⁹ So adamantly did Erasmus believe in molding the child from birth that he concluded, “It is at this period that education truly begins; not, as some would have it, at the seventh year—or the seventeenth!”¹⁰

Erasmus also underscored the importance of the selection of the proper instructor for the child as well as the involvement of parents. In addition to possessing superior knowledge and educational practices, the teacher also should be kind, patient, and sensitive to his pupil but firm in his direction of study. Reminding parents that their role in the education of their child did not end when a tutor was selected, Erasmus advised parents to be aware of the intellectual progress of their child and he urged fathers to visit the classroom. Erasmus also displayed his perceptive nature about children and learning by recognizing the role of individuality in learning, and he reminded parents, “Nature, therefore, claims the help of the schoolmaster in carrying forward the special gifts with which she has endowed the child.”¹¹

The Protestant schoolmaster Thomas Salter addressed the education of women in *A Mirrhor mete for All Mothers, Matrones, and Maidens, intituled the Mirrhor of Modestie* (1579).¹² Like Vives and Erasmus, Salter believed female training should

⁹ Erasmus, “De Pueris Instituendis, 220.

¹⁰ Erasmus, “De Pueris Instituendis,” 195.

¹¹ Erasmus, “De Pueris Instituendis,” 213.

¹² Thomas Salter, *A Mirrhor mete for All Mothers, Matrones, and Maidens, intituled the Mirrhor of Modestie* (1579) in *A Critical Edition of Thomas Salter’s The Mirrhor of Modestie*, ed., Janis B. Holm, *The Renaissance Imagination*, vol. 32 (New York: Garland, 1987). Salter’s work is a close translation of Giovanni Michele Bruto’s *La institutione di una fanciulla nata nobilmente* (Antwerp, 1555), which was “an epistolary address to Lord Sylvester Cattaneo on the subject of his daughter’s education,” 1. Ruth Kelso was the first to discover the text as a plagiarism “of one of the most conservative of sixteenth-century

engender such Christian virtues as chastity, modesty and humility. Salter's mirror was not "a crystal mirror for vain reflections, but a more worthy mirror, for learning how to dress the mind for virtue."¹³ As an instructional text, the *Mirrhoe of Modestie* was intended for mothers to guide their daughters, in matters concerning what to read, how to conduct oneself, and what to learn. Salter warns women to avoid books such as ballads and sonnets and to pursue texts that provide examples "of virtuous ladies, chosen from the Holy Scripture and other histories."¹⁴ Salter's matron was advised, "...to frame in the minds of those she governs a true religion and piety, untainted by superstition."¹⁵ For Salter, virtue and chastity were more important than learning. Despite the pleasure women may obtain from a study of philosophy, Salter maintained, "training in the liberal arts is unsuitable for a maiden and women should be restricted to the care of their families."¹⁶

Tudor humanist Sir Thomas Elyot in his educational text *The Book Named the Governour* (1531) also advocated maternal involvement in the early moral development of children. Although Elyot differed from the beliefs of both Vives and Erasmus concerning the issue of wetnursing, he did stipulate in his treatise that the parents select a nurse who was "mature or ripe age, clean from all sickness and deformity, and supervised by another woman of approved virtue, discretion and gravity."¹⁷ Elyot also advised mothers and fathers to be mindful of the fact that children "express their disposition to the

humanist positions on women's education, introduced to England almost twenty years before Bruno's treatise was to appear in English under his own name," 1.

¹³ Salter, *The Mirrhoe of Modestie*, 37.

¹⁴ Salter, *The Mirrhoe of Modestie*, 39.

¹⁵ Salter, *The Mirrhoe of Modestie*, 46.

¹⁶ Salter, *The Mirrhoe of Modestie*, 44.

¹⁷ Elyot, *The Book Named the Governour*, 63.

imitation of those things, be they good or evil, which they usually do see or hear.”¹⁸

Therefore, he directed parents “to instill in them sweet manners and virtuous customs,” while carefully monitoring “their playfellows which shall not do in his presence any reproachable act or speak an unclean word.”¹⁹

Similar to the philosophies of Vives and Erasmus, Elyot supported the idea that learning should be sensitive to the age and ability of the child, and modeled after the teaching of Classical authors who wrote in elegant Latin and demonstrated wisdom and leadership. At the age of seven, Elyot advised that a boy “be taken from the company of women,” and placed with a tutor whose office “is to first know the nature of his pupil.”²⁰ It is at this point that the young boy would begin his formal education, preparing him for government service and separating him for the time being from the guidance of his mother.

In his text *Positions* (1581), educational writer and Protestant humanist Richard Mulcaster supported the education of “young maidens,” but he did not believe they should attend “the publike grammer scholes or the universities.”²¹ Recognizing the value of learning for girls as well as the societal norms of the period, Mulcaster, who enjoyed a long career as a teacher and as the headmaster of Merchant Taylors’ School (1561-1586) and St. Paul’s (1596-1608), suggested private instruction for young girls and additional study if they should wish to advance with their training. Similar to Vives and Erasmus, Mulcaster believed educated women would not participate in public affairs, but would

¹⁸ Elyot, *The Book Named the Governor*, 64.

¹⁹ Elyot, *The Book Named the Governor*, 64.

²⁰ Elyot, *The Book Named the Governor*, 70.

²¹ Richard Mulcaster, *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children*, ed. William Barker (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 167-8. Also Richard Mulcaster, *The Educational Writings of Richard Mulcaster (1532-1611)*, ed. Oliphant, 50-59; and Richard L. DeMolen, *Richard Mulcaster and Educational Reform in the Renaissance* (Nieuwkoop, Netherlands: De Graaf Publishers, 1991).

devote their talents to the household, particularly the training of children, which would benefit the state.

One of the most interesting aspects of Mulcaster's perception of female education is his rationale for supporting it. Succinctly, Mulcaster wrote that he had "Foure speciall reasons as to why females are to be trained: the manner and custome of my countrey; the duetie, which we owe unto them; their own towardnesse, which God by nature would never have given them, to remain idle; and the excellent effects in that sex, when they have had the help of good bringing up."²² Because he believed girls deserved an education, Mulcaster vowed to "allow them learning with distinction in degrees, with difference of their calling, and with respect to their endes."²³

Mulcaster called attention to the significance of educating girls and warned against indifference on the part of parents and teachers. Specifically, Mulcaster raised the question: "Is it either nothing, or but some small thing, to have our childrens mothers well furnished in minde, well strengthened in bodie? which desire by them to maintain our succession?"²⁴ Mulcaster reminded his readers of their obligation to women and to the state, and he clearly outlined the benefits of a learned wife and mother. Children would receive help in their learning whether it was reading, mathematics or music; the household would reap the rewards of a woman's skills with herbs and Physicke; and piety and virtue would be nurtured.²⁵

Different from Elyot's text that proposed to prepare the gentry for government service, John Amos Comenius created a seventeenth-century educational treatise

²² Mulcaster, *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children*, 167.

²³ Mulcaster, *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children*, 168.

²⁴ Mulcaster, *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children*, 169.

²⁵ Mulcaster, *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children*, 181.

specifically addressed to parents, in particular mothers, who were the primary caregivers and teachers of children before the age of seven. A Protestant theologian and educational theorist, Comenius was invited to speak in many countries of Europe, including England, where he shared his educational philosophy concerning the emotional, intellectual and physical development of children. In his *School of Infancy: an Essay on the Education of Youth during Their First Six Years*, Comenius described the “maternal school” as the foundation of a child’s life. For a period of approximately six years, the maternal school was designed to instruct the young child “in the duties of faith and piety, uprightness in respect of morals, and knowledge of languages, of arts.”²⁶

As God’s most precious gifts to man, Comenius reminded parents “we owe to them the most diligent attention.”(7) The first care of children was the soul, “which is the principal part of man, so that it may become...beautifully adorned” and the second care was the body, “that it may be made a habitation fit and worthy of the immortal soul.”(9) The mother, as the first teacher of a child, was to be pious and mindful of her health and actions, for the infant first came from her womb. Supporting the ideas of Vives and Erasmus, Comenius also strongly maintained the importance of breastfeeding as central to the spiritual and physical welfare of the infant. Children, when nourished by their mothers’ milk, will “approach nearer to the disposition and virtues of their parents than generally happens.”(24)

²⁶ John Amos Comenius, *The School of Infancy: An Essay on the Education of Youth During Their First Six Years*, ed. Daniel Benham (London: W. Mallalieu & Co, 1858), 10. In the following pages, references to John Amos Comenius’ *The School of Infancy: An Essay on the Education of Youth During Their First Six Years* will appear in text in parenthesis.

Comenius advised parents to exercise moderation, patience and diligence as they nurtured children during the primary developmental stages of childhood. Mothers were instructed to provide foods for their children that were easily digested and they were warned to avoid the unnecessary use of medication.(27) What distinguishes Comenius from earlier writers on the education of children is his apparent understanding of their distinct nature at various stages. For example, Comenius not only prescribed a safe environment for toddlers to play and run, but he also explains why this particular childhood activity is healthy and natural: "...when the little ones are somewhat advanced and begin to take to their feet, they may be allowed to run and do this or that little matter. The more a child is thus employed, runs about and plays, the sweeter is its sleep; the more easily its stomach digests, the more quickly does it grow and flourish, both in body and mind." (30)

Piety, morals and virtue were to be nurtured during the early years of childhood and parents were accountable for the moral instruction of their children. Mothers carefully taught children how to pray and they patiently modeled deportment for them to follow in church and in civil society. Children also were expected to learn temperance in their eating and "from the earliest age they should gradually be taught to restrain their desires."(16) "An essential ornament of youth—serving their elders with civility and kindness— was an expectation of all children which parents cultivated from infancy.(16) While Comenius advised parents about childhood behavior and learning, he also reminded them of the importance of providing good example and disciplining children in a timely, reflective and constructive manner. Before disobedience would receive a slap on the hand or the use of the rod so that the child "may recollect himself and become

more attentive,” a parent would attempt to address the wrongdoing of the child, admonishing him and “moving him to fear, and to a recollection of himself.”(49-50)

Comenius attributed a threefold division to sound learning: “we learn to know some things, to do some things, and to say some things.”(17) Attentive to the curiosity and skills of the young child, Comenius explained how parents could use their environment to teach important subjects as nature, geography, chronology, history, household affairs and politics. The personal instruction children received from their parents would also help them in their learning of arithmetic, geometry, music, language and even the principles of dialectic, which “may be so far imbibed as that a child may know what a question is, and what an answer is.” (18) Comenius recommended that a child should be “properly detained in the school of the mother until the end of the sixth year, or the beginning of the seventh, provided care be taken as advised.” (69) Acknowledging the magnitude of maternal nurturing and understanding, Comenius proposed children would now be ready to enter their next school with confidence, parental support and the belief that education will lead to wisdom and God’s blessing. (74)

Similar to Comenius in the philosophy that children need to develop an understanding of the subject as well as cultivate a mastery of the material, English schoolmaster John Brinsley used maternal exchanges with children as examples of dialogues to teach Latin. In his text *Pueriles Confabulationum, or Children’s Dialogues*, Brinsley selected commonplace events in the lives of young boys in an effort to teach translation and

grammar.²⁷ The short vignettes also reinforce conventional behavior such as giving thanks to God in a salutation²⁸ or a mother reminding her son to be on time for school.²⁹ A member of the gentry class who authored historical biographies and histories as well as translated many French and Latin works into English, Robert Codrington (1601-65) compiled *The Second Part of Youths Behavior or Decency in Conversation Amongst Women*.³⁰ William Lee who had commissioned Codrington to compose a female companion to his already famous *Youth's Behavior*, which was first printed during the early 1640s, published this work in 1664. Educated at Oxford and accepted in both Catholic and Protestant circles, Codrington compiled an advice manual for women that covered topics from proper behavior, fashion and culinary skills to the implementation and importance of education. The dedication to Ellinor Pargiter, called the "True Mirror of her Sex," and to her recently deceased daughter Elizabeth Washington, extolled the ability and virtue of women. Here Codrington conveyed his thoughts about the importance of education for women, describing the pursuit of learning as "a noble and unwavering light" that provided comfort and honor to the young woman.³¹ For those women who rejected learning, Codrington portrayed their lives as slothful and full of ignorance, displaying extravagance and licentious behavior.³²

²⁷ John Brinsley, *Pueriles Confabulatiunculae*, 1617 in *English Linguistics, 1500-1800 (A Collection of Facsimile Reprints)*, no. 269, ed. R.C. Alston (Menston, England: Scholar Press, 1971).

²⁸ Brinsley, *Pueriles Confabulatiunculae*, A1-A4.

²⁹ Brinsley, *Pueriles Confabulatiunculae*, 5-6.

³⁰ Robert Codrington, *The Second Part of Youths Behaviour, or Decency in Conversation Amongst Women: Containing Excellent Directions for the Education of Young Ladies, Gentlewomen, and Other Persons, and Rules of Advice How at the First to Deport Themselves, and Afterwards Govern the Affairs of a Family* (London: William Lee, 1664) in *Conduct Literature for Women, 1640-1710*, eds. William St. Clair and Irmgard Maassen, vol. 4 (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2002), A3.

³¹ Codrington, *The Second Part of Youths Behaviour*, A4.

³² Codrington, *The Second Part of Youths Behaviour*, A4.

Instructing both parents and daughters, Codrington claimed that they should ensure “chief care to lay a good foundation in education.”³³ A staunch opponent of those who believed reading would corrupt the minds of girls and young women, Codrington encouraged his female audience to read books of piety so that “they may inflame their hearts with the love of God; and in thus all faculties of their memory, imagination and of their reason are continually exercised.”³⁴ Such women would be a great asset to husbands who Codrington believed should take advice from women, “...if men would take the advice of those women who God hath given to them for helps in the government of their affairs, it undoubtedly would rebound much to their advantage...”³⁵

Not content to prescribe readings and to inform husbands to allow their wives to help them, Codrington further asserted women were just as capable as men were in administration and intellect. For example, Codrington cited the “ancient Gaules who did leave their wives the establishment of the Laws and the management of the Commonwealth,” while they were away at war.³⁶ In a modern-day example, Codrington reminded his readers of the “honour and happiness that flourished under the government of Queen Elizabeth,” and of her skill in language recorded by “her instructor Mr. Ascham who recorded that she did read more Greek in one Day, than many great Doctors did read Latin in a whole week.”³⁷

Sharing Codrington’s support of female education and accomplishment, Jacques Du Bosc, defended his position of educating women to become more interesting and productive citizens in *The Compleat Woman* (1639), which was the English translation of

³³ Codrington, *The Second Part of Youths Behaviour*, B2.

³⁴ Codrington, *The Second Part of Youths Behaviour*, B3.

³⁵ Codrington, *The Second Part of Youths Behaviour*, E3.

³⁶ Codrington, *The Second Part of Youths Behaviour*, 61.

³⁷ Codrington, *The Second Part of Youths Behaviour*, 61.

the controversial first part of the author's *L'Honneste Femme* (1632).³⁸ Du Bosc was a French priest who believed women paralleled men in their ability to learn, and he appealed to the intellectual interests of elite women who expressed a desire to read history, science and literature as well as devotional texts. Encouraging women and men to engage in reading, conversation and musing, Du Bosc explained why all three practices were essential to learning: "By reading wee treat with the dead; by conversation with the living, and by musing, with our selves. Reading enricheth the memory, conversation polisheth the mind, and musing frames the judgment."³⁹

Du Bosc believed education and piety enabled a woman to live a more enlightened and constructive life. Declaring "reading is very requisite for women since they have no less need of dumbe Teachers then Princes," Du Bosc underscored the importance of learning in order to avoid mistakes of the past and to "have eyes in order to put a difference between vice and virtue."⁴⁰ He believed "devotion is not contrary to civility," and an educated woman was no less pious because of her advancement in learning.⁴¹ In fact, Du Bosc claimed "women void of study or reading are tedious and irksome,"⁴² and they are susceptible to disingenuous displays of piety when they "make so many ceremonies and practice so many subtilities to deceive some eies."⁴³

The progression in the understanding of how children learn and the role of their parents and teachers in the process, reflected the caring but disciplined nature of education in which mothers played a central but sometimes understated role. Good

³⁸ Jacques Du Bosc, *The Compleat Woman*, trans. N.N. (London: Thomas Harper and Richard Hodgkinson, 1639).

³⁹ Du Bosc, *The Compleat Woman*, 1.

⁴⁰ Du Bosc, *The Compleat Woman*, 4.

⁴¹ Du Bosc, *The Compleat Woman*, 55-6

⁴² Du Bosc, *The Compleat Woman*. 27.

⁴³ Du Bosc, *The Compleat Woman*, 57.

health, virtuous and obedient behavior, and acknowledgement of the individual learning styles of children were advocated by such writers as John Locke who placed virtue before learning in his important educational work *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*.⁴⁴ Written as a result of a compilation of letters to Edward Clarke who asked Locke for advice on the rearing of his eight-year-old son, the treatise focused on the child and his environment, supporting a nurturing setting where first-hand experience (Rousseau would later expand on this) and appropriate and applicable learning were prized. Locke's classroom encouraged an atmosphere where learning was not to be burdensome, children would be eased through difficulties, curiosity would be encouraged, and the teachers would be attentive, kind and methodical in their instruction.⁴⁵ Missing from Locke's discussion are mothers, although his references to a child's tender age and parenting would be difficult to imagine without maternal input.

Mothers and the Early Education of Children: Their Important and Elusive Presence

Often hidden from the biographical depictions of prominent individuals such as John Donne, or from narratives detailing the events and accomplishments of particular people, are personal accounts portraying mothers as the early educators of their children. Almost miraculously, children appear to have obtained a sense of security and confidence in their abilities as well as a sense of mastery of social, physical and intellectual accomplishments. Though not always as descriptive as one may prefer, primary sources such as diaries, letters and personal writings illuminate the tender and devoted roles mothers exercised as the initial teachers of their young sons and daughters. Recollections

⁴⁴ John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, in *The Educational Writings of John Locke*, ed. James L. Axtell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 241.

⁴⁵ Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, 279-314

of children who relied upon them not only for such basic skills as eating and dressing, but also social skills as conducting oneself in public, refer to the intellectual training mothers provided as they taught them reading and writing. In their correspondence and specific instructions to sons and daughters, husbands also confirmed the fundamental responsibilities mothers possessed in children's learning.

Adam Martindale's childhood greatly changed when he received an ABC, a gift that had been given to him by his godmother Anne Simpkin.⁴⁶ Martindale was six years old at the time and up to this point in his life, he was an active child who did not show interest in learning. When the book was presented to him however, Martindale's demeanor changed, much to his mother's surprise who thought "I would onelie pull (the book) in pieces."⁴⁷ Instead, the ABC became one of Martindale's prized possessions and he believed it "worth more than its weight in gold."⁴⁸ With the assistance of his family, Martindale mastered the ABC and the primer, and delighted in reading the Bible and any other English books.⁴⁹

Bulstrode Whitelocke held fond memories of his mother's intellectual talent and ingenuity as she taught him during his early years at home. Elizabeth Whitelocke encouraged a love of reading in her young son who described his mother as "an able instructor who was well furnished with learning."⁵⁰ Bulstrode also reported that his mother "read much and was able to make use of it, especially she was expert in the French Language."⁵¹ In addition to his mother's scholarly attainments, her son described

⁴⁶ Martindale, *The Life of Adam Martindale*, 5.

⁴⁷ Martindale, *The Life of Adam Martindale*, 5.

⁴⁸ Martindale, *The Life of Adam Martindale*, 5.

⁴⁹ Martindale, *The Life of Adam Martindale*, 5.

⁵⁰ Whitelocke, *The Diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke*, 44.

⁵¹ Whitelocke, *The Diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke*, 44.

how she facilitated his wish to have a quiet place to read. Elizabeth Whitelocke helped Bulstrode build a private cubbyhole beneath a flight of stairs where he had a study in order to read his books. In his diary Bulstrode recorded, “when his schoolfellows were att play he would be in his study when he was att home, by which industry and advantage of his time, he gott before his fellows in learning, and much pleased his parents and his tyrannicall schoolmaster.”⁵²

Roger North also marveled at the intelligence and energy of his mother as she monitored the education of her family. Ann North did not have an easy time as the mother of fourteen children, four of whom died when they were young. As the youngest of the remaining ten, Roger and his siblings conformed to the directives of his mother who was plagued by the frugal and maddening behavior of her father-in-law and the ill temper of her husband who agonized over family finances. Despite such adversity, Ann North was remembered by Roger as a mother who was “learned and eloquent and had much knowledge, history and readiness of witt to express herself.”⁵³ Although she was strict with her children in their studies and responsibilities, Ann North was also described as “tender as well as debonair and familiar to entertain us.”⁵⁴ Roger remembered his mother loved to “engage in discourse” to convey stories of inspiration and learning.⁵⁵ He also recalled that when it came time for her children to read, Ann North established a regimen: “And for the part of learning to read, and bringing us to it, at sett hours, leaving the intervals to remission, which is absolutely necessary to yonglings.”⁵⁶

⁵² Whitelocke, *The Diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke*, 45.

⁵³ North, *Notes of Me*, 81.

⁵⁴ North, *Notes of Me*, 81.

⁵⁵ North, *Notes of Me*, 81.

⁵⁶ North, *Notes of Me*, 82.

In his *Memoirs*, Sir Robert Sibbald expressed affectionate memories of his mother's role in his early education. A well-respected scholar and physician, Sir Robert described his mother Margaret as a "virtuous and pious matron of great sagacity and firmnesse of mynde, and very carefull of my education."⁵⁷ At the age of nine, young Robert Sibbald began to "learn the Latine at Cowper of Fyffe under Mr. Patrick Anderson, schoolmaster."⁵⁸ When he was at the University of Edinburgh, Sibbald studied a variety of subjects including the humanities, mathematics, and anatomy. He described himself as an avid reader and after he came home from school, he recounted, "I applied myself to read some peeces of Theologie ... My mother would have had me studie divinity, but yr were great divisions amongst the Presbyterians then...."⁵⁹ Wishing to avoid the factions among the ministry, Sibbald decided to enter the field of medicine and "obtained the permission of my parent...to go to Holland ... and studied anatomic and chirurgie at Leyden."⁶⁰ Sibbald later continued his studies in Paris and London and eventually returned to Scotland to practice medicine.

Sometimes the absence of mothers because of their premature deaths reveals their concerns about the education of their children. In his diary, John Evelyn reminisced how his dying mother summoned her family to her deathbed and instructed his father as to the course of education for John's younger brother. According to Evelyn, "she taking my Father by the hand, recommended us to his care; and because she was extremely zealous for the education of my Younger Brother; she requested my father that he might be sent

⁵⁷ Sibbald, *Memoirs*, 50.

⁵⁸ Sibbald, *Memoirs*, 52.

⁵⁹ Sibbald, *Memoirs*, 54 -55.

⁶⁰ Sibbald, *Memoirs*, 56.

with me to Lewes.”⁶¹ After the famous antiquarian Gervase Holles was born, it was his mother Elizabeth’s wish to have him educated by his maternal grandmother Catherine Kingston and her husband John who cared for him and “tooke care of my education.”⁶² Young Gervase possessed a very close relationship with his grandfather who “made it his care to transfer that most deare affection upon me whome shee left in the cradle.”⁶³ Before his attendance at the Grimesby Grammar School, Gervase received instruction from his grandmother who played such a significant role in his life that the noted antiquarian reminisced: “Untill I went to the Gramar Schole (which I did about sixe yeares of age) I had no other tutor but my good grandmother who had taught me to read English perfectly.”⁶⁴

The early life and education of Gervase Holles is also interesting to study because his grandparents not only taught him the rudiments of reading and writing, but they also shared with him stories about his talented mother. When Elizabeth Holles gave birth to Gervase in 1606, she was twenty-eight years old and married to Freschville Holles of Great Grimsby. Educated by her mother who marveled at her accomplishments and remembered her kind and gentle demeanor, Elizabeth demonstrated “noble characters of hir virtues, goodness and discretion.”⁶⁵ Elizabeth Holles “had the best and choysset education, wch render’d hir, who had judgment beyond most of her sex, aequally accomplisht with the best of them.”⁶⁶ Her son also knew of her fondness for writing as he maintained, “Shee wrote a hand far better than most weomen usually write...Hir stile

⁶¹ Evelyn, *Diary*, 6-7. See also Lucinda McCray Beier, “The Good Death in Seventeenth-Century England” in *Death, Ritual and Bereavement*, ed. Ralph Houlbrooke (London: Routledge, 1989), 43-61.

⁶² Gervase Holles, *Memorials of the Holles Family*, 227.

⁶³ Gervase Holles, *Memorials of the Holles Family*, 220-1.

⁶⁴ Gervase Holles, *Memorials of the Holles Family*, 227.

⁶⁵ Gervase Holles, *Memorials of the Holles Family*, 220.

⁶⁶ Gervase Holles, *Memorials of the Holles Family*, 219.

was better than hir hand, weighty and unaffected. And to prove that a great fancy may sometimes accompany great virtues, shee compiled in verse the passages of hir whole life.”⁶⁷ Gervase described his mother’s physical features as well and he concluded, “In a word shee was every way formed to make hir parents, husband and children happy. And I must acknowledge that to be the son of such a mother I ought to ranke amongst the chiefest blessings and greatest comfortes that God Almighty in his goodness hath bestowed upon me.”⁶⁸

In reminiscing about the impact of the maternal role upon their education, daughters such as Lady Ann Fanshawe described the household training, music instruction and language lessons they received. Acting in accordance with societal norms, mothers taught their daughters needlework and household skills including cooking and medicinal recipes.⁶⁹ When Lady Ann Fanshawe wrote “of my mother’s education of me” in her memoirs, she maintained that her mother gave her “all the advantages that time afforded, both for working all sorts of fine works with my needle, and learning French, singing, the lute, the virginals, and dancing; and not withstanding I learned as well as most did....”⁷⁰

Unlike Lady Fanshawe’s educational experience as a child, the intellectual attainment of Lucy Apsley, the future Mrs. Hutchinson, was the result of the active interest of her parents in her education. Born in 1620 after three brothers, Lucy recalled her parents’ commitment to her education in what remains of her *Autobiography*. Lucy

⁶⁷ Gervase Holles, *Memorials of the Holles Family*, 219.

⁶⁸ Gervase Holles, *Memorials of the Holles Family*, 220.

⁶⁹ See Retha Warnicke, “Private and Public: The Boundaries of Women’s Lives in Early Stuart England,” in *Privileging Gender in Early Modern England*, ed. Jean Brink (Kirksville, Missouri: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1993), 123-40.

⁷⁰ Fanshawe, *The Memoirs of Ann Lady Fanshawe*, 22.

remembered that her mother and father “applied all their cares and spar’d no cost to emprove me in my education.”⁷¹ As a result, Lucy “was taught to speake French and English together,” and by the time she was four years old, Lucy recounted, “I read English perfectly, and having a greate memory, I was carried to sermons; and while I was very young could remember and repeate them so exactly, and being caress’d, the love of praise tickled me, and made me attend more heedfully.”⁷²

Lucy’s excitement about her learning continued as she matured. When she was seven she recalled, “I had att one time eight tutors in severall quallities, languages, musick, dancing, writing and needlework; but my genius was quite averse from all but my booke.”⁷³ Although her mother worried that her intense devotion to books might jeopardize her health, Lucy kept up her reading inspite of her mother’s efforts. Lucy concluded, “this rather animated me than kept me back, and every moment I could steal from my play I would employ in any booke I could find, when my own were locked up from me.”⁷⁴

Lucy’s father appeared to marvel at the accomplishments of his daughter, and although her mother wanted her daughter to develop skills in needlework and music, Lady Apsley continued to allow Lucy to pursue her books. In addition to French, Lucy also learned Latin and she claimed she was “so apt that I outstript my brothers who were at schoole, although my father’s chaplaine that was my tutor was a pitifull dull fellow. My brothers, who had a greate deale of witt, had some emulation at the progresse I made

⁷¹ Hutchinson, “The Life of Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson,” 288.

⁷² Hutchinson, “The Life of Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson,” 288.

⁷³ Hutchinson, “The Life of Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson,” 288.

⁷⁴ Hutchinson, “The Life of Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson,” 288.

in my learning.”⁷⁵ Lucy’s devotion to books and neglect of other activities continued to disturb Lady Apsley, and her daughter acknowledged that her mother would “have been contented if I had not so wholly addicted myselfe to that as to neglect my other qualities.”⁷⁶ Lucy admitted she had little use for music and dancing and she failed to practice “my lute or harpsichords but when my masters were with me; and for my needle I absolutely hated it.”⁷⁷

Katherine Phillips shared Lucy Hutchinson’s erudite preferences but not her contentious nature about learning music and the “other accomplishments of young women in polite society.”⁷⁸ As the daughter of Puritan gentry, Katherine was educated at home by her mother Katherine Fowler, who taught her reading and writing and noted that her precocious daughter “was mighty apt to learne and could read the Bible through before she was full foure yeares old.”⁷⁹ At the age of eight, Katherine was sent to Mrs. Salmon’s School in Hackney, which was a fashionable boarding school where upper-class girls acquired the social graces valued by their class.⁸⁰ At her new school, Katherine studied some French and Italian and was drilled in the catechism of John Ball, a noted Puritan schoolmaster. Her experience at Mrs. Salmon’s School proved to be an important event in her life because Katherine cultivated friendships that introduced her to an intellectual and artistic society she maintained for the rest of her life.

The education of Lady Anne Clifford differed from other young girls of noble class because of the strong personality of her mother, Margaret, Countess of Cumberland,

⁷⁵ Hutchinson, “The Life of Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson,” 288.

⁷⁶ Hutchinson, “The Life of Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson,” 288.

⁷⁷ Hutchinson, “The Life of Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson,” 288.

⁷⁸ *The Collected Works of Katherine Philips, The Matchless Orinda*, ed. Patrick Thomas, vol. 1 (Essex: Stump Cross Books, 1990), 3.

⁷⁹ *The Collected Works of Katherine Philips*, 2.

⁸⁰ For a discussion of boarding schools for girls see Elaine Hoby, *Virtue of Necessity*, 192; Myra Reynolds, *The Learned Lady in England, 1650-1760*, 42.

and the estrangement of her father, George Clifford, third Earl of Cumberland. After the death of her two young brothers, Anne's parents separated and her father pursued a lifestyle resulting in considerable debt. Margaret chose to take her daughter and live with her sister, Anne, Countess of Warwick in Hertfordshire.⁸¹ The two women raised and educated Margaret's only surviving child, Ann Clifford. Lady Cumberland made sure that her daughter received a good education and Anne remembered the time she spent in the country with her mother as a period in which both of them were "seasoned with the grounds of goodness and religion."⁸²

To supervise Lady Anne's studies, Lady Cumberland hired Samuel Daniel, a poet, historian and experienced teacher who would develop Anne's interest in reading English prose, poetry and history. He started as Anne's tutor when she was nine and continued until she was twelve, encouraging her "to store the mansion of her mind with the richest furniture of worth."⁸³ Her favorite texts included the Bible, the writings of St. Augustine, Montaigne's *Essays*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, and the poems of Edmund Spenser and her tutor, Mr. Daniel.⁸⁴ His guidance upon his precocious student was profound, and when he died twenty years later in 1619, his devoted female pupil erected a tomb commemorating his life.⁸⁵

Lady Anne proved to be an accomplished student who was inspired by scholarly pursuits of her mother and the cultured discourse of her aunts. In addition to her academic studies, Anne Clifford studied music and dancing and accompanied her aunts to social

⁸¹ Both Ann and Margaret were daughters of Francis Russell, second Earl of Bedford. Ann married Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick.

⁸² Richard T. Spence, *Lady Anne Clifford Countess of Pembroke, Dorset and Montgomery (1590-1676)*, (Stroud: Sutton, 1997), 3.

⁸³ George C. Williamson, *Lady Anne Clifford Countess of Dorset, Pembroke and Montgomery, 1590-1676: Her Life, Letters and Work* (Wakefield: S.R. Publishers, 1967), 62.

⁸⁴ Williamson, *Lady Anne Clifford, 60-1*; Spence, *Lady Anne Clifford*, 13.

⁸⁵ Williamson, *Lady Anne Clifford*, 63.

affairs where she was introduced to members of the royal court. The estrangement of her parents influenced Anne Clifford's upbringing to such an extent that she was not only inspired by her mother's erudition and circle of friends, but also by Lady Cumberland's efforts to safeguard Anne's inheritance which her father had willed to his brother.

Anne Clifford believed "she was blessed by the education and tender care of a most affectionate dear and excellent mother, who brought her up in as much goodness and knowledge as her secrets and years were capable of."⁸⁶ Anne remembered her mother as a woman of great determination, who possessed a discerning spirit and remained gracious in her interaction with others. Lady Cumberland's intellectual interests were not limited to religious and literary works, and Anne recalled her mother "was deeply interested in alchemy, and she found many excellent medicines that did good to many people, and that she distilled waters and chemical extractions, delighting in the work, for she had a great deal of knowledge of minerals, of herbs, of flowers, and of plants."⁸⁷ In 1616 when her mother died, Anne Clifford lamented, "The heavy news of my mother's death is the greatest and most lamentable cross that could befall me."⁸⁸

When a husband died, mothers assumed the sole responsibility of educating their children. Accounts of sons and daughters affectionately convey how their mothers orchestrated and supported their education beyond the domestic classroom. Having served as a tutor to the royal children and later as the Provost of Eton, Thomas Murray had made many of the educational decisions in his household before his premature death in 1622. When he died, he left seven children; the youngest was Anne Halkett who was three months old. Jane Murray's devotion to her family and her attentiveness to the

⁸⁶ Williamson, *Lady Anne Clifford*, 60.

⁸⁷ Williamson, *Lady Anne Clifford*, 38.

⁸⁸ Katherine O. Acheson, *The Diary of Anne Clifford, 1616-1619*, (New York: Garland, 1995), 51.

education of her children might have easily gone unnoticed if it had not been for the acknowledgement of her youngest daughter. Anne reminisced about her mother's increased responsibilities and her determination to provide for her children: "my mother spared no expence in educating all her children in the most suitable way to improve them."⁸⁹ Admitting that she herself may not have tried as hard as her mother would have liked, Anne confessed that "it was my fault, and not my mother's, who paid masters for teaching my sister and mee to write, speak French, play on the lute and virginals and dance."⁹⁰ Anne also made known that her mother "kept a gentlewoman to teach us all kinds of needleworke, which shews I was not brought up in an idle life."⁹¹

When she became a widow in 1596, Magdalen Herbert was the mother of ten children and she too, exercised great strength in the education of her children. Her diligence and clever insight about the particular needs of her children are documented in the writings of her two famous sons—the writers and poets Edward and George Herbert—as well as by John Donne. In his autobiography, Edward described his mother as an individual who possessed "an incomparable Piety to God, and love to her Children, as being most assiduous and devout in her daily both private and publick prayers."⁹² John Donne remembered Mrs. Herbert for her consistent concern with the education of her children, especially her sons Edward and Herbert. She had her children tutored privately at home, selecting their tutors herself, and encouraging them in their studies.

⁸⁹ *The Autobiography of Anne Lady Halkett*, 2. See L.M. Cumming, "Anne, Lady Halkett," *Blackwood's Magazine* (1924): 654-76.

⁹⁰ *The Autobiography of Anne Lady Halkett*, 2.

⁹¹ *The Autobiography of Anne Lady Halkett*, 2.

⁹² *The Life of Edward, First Lord Herbert of Cherbury*, ed. J.M. Shuttleworth (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), 7.

In 1627, John Donne then Dean of St. Paul's and a close friend of the Herbert family, delivered "A Sermon of Commemoration of the Lady Danvers, Late Wife of Sir John Danvers, and Mother of George Herbert," in which he credited Magdalen Herbert with the cultivation of "a family of honor."⁹³ After the death of her husband, Magdalen Herbert cared for "her young plants" and "chose her own ground in widowhood" by focusing on her principal care, the education of her children.⁹⁴ During the twelve years she spent as a widow before her marriage to Lord Danvers, earl of Danby, Magdalen Herbert safeguarded the family estate, selected tutors for her children and became so attentive to the intellectual needs of her children that Donne concluded, "to recompense to them the loss of their father, she gave them two mothers."⁹⁵

Children were not alone in remembering the influential role mothers played in their education; husbands also acknowledged the impact of mothers as teachers. As the mother of six children, Anne Holles, wife of John Holles, second earl of Clare, nurtured her four sons and two daughters and continued to monitor their activities as they matured. The letters of John Holles (1587-1637) conveyed not only his close and tender relationship with his wife, but also recognition of Anne's influential role as the mother of their offspring. When their eldest son John attended Cambridge in 1611, the correspondence between John Holles and his son John reflected Anne's involvement in matters of nutrition, study and obedience to instructors; moreover, young John received a reminder from his father to "obey your mother in all things."⁹⁶ Later on when young

⁹³ John Donne, "A Sermon of Commemoration of the Lady Danvers, Late Wife of Sir John Danvers, and Mother of George Herbert," in *The Life of Dr. John Donne*, ed. Izaak Walton (London: William Pickering, 1840), 151-97.

⁹⁴ Donne, "A Sermon of Commemoration of the Lady Danvers," 190.

⁹⁵ Donne, "A Sermon of Commemoration of the Lady Danvers," 190.

⁹⁶ John Holles, *Letters of John Holles*, vol. 1, 31, 35-6.

John continued his studies in Paris, his father reprimanded him for not writing to his mother:

But your mother muche marvelled shee had no lyns from yow, which nevertheless lyk a mother shee layeth upon accident: for not being remembered in myn, she perswaded her self yow writt one to her, and forgot the packeting of it up with the rest: how it is lett her know, and lett yow hast other way be never so muche, nor your leisure so little, but that yow allyway perfourm that duety.⁹⁷

The husband of Mildred Cooke reminded his son Robert Cecil of his good fortune in having a mother who trained him so well. In 1563, William Cecil, first Baron Burghley, and his second wife, Mildred Cooke, became the proud parents of Robert, a talented son who reaped the benefits of two scholarly parents. In *“Certain Precepts for the Well Ordering of a Man’s Life,”* William Cecil wrote to twenty-one-year- Robert and shared fatherly advice with him stating that although his son has new friends, he must not forget his upbringing, in particular, what his mother has taught him. Specifically, Robert was not to take for granted “the virtuous inclinations of thy matchless mother, by whose tender and godly care thy infancy was governed.”⁹⁸ Robert’s father also confirmed the superior education his son received from “so zealous and excellent a tutor,” that he believed such an experience created a bond which would make Robert happy in life as well as in death.⁹⁹ As he concluded his letter, William Cecil assured Robert of his confidence in him because he was guided by “so all sufficient a teacher.”¹⁰⁰

Insight about maternal guidance in the education of children can be found in *Instructions to a Son* by Archibald Campbell, Marquis of Argyle (1598-1661), who

⁹⁷ Holles, *Letters of John Holles*, vol. 1, 80.

⁹⁸ William Cecil, *Certain Precepts for the Well Ordering of a Man’s Life*, 1584 in *Advice to a Son*, 9.

⁹⁹ William Cecil, *Certain Precepts*, 9.

¹⁰⁰ William Cecil, *Certain Precepts*, 9.

revealed the wishes of a dying father to his children. After addressing the eldest boy about his responsibilities, Campbell turned his attention to the rest of his children and informed them of his paternal care to instruct them as well as to remind them of the importance of their mother in their intellectual and spiritual lives. The marquis explained that his illness has been very difficult for the family especially his wife “whose affection to me in all my suffering of late, deserve very much at my hand.”¹⁰¹ Campbell wished for his children to help their mother out of respect for her and for him, and he reminded them of “her piety and tenderness in your education, and of her great indulgence towards you.”¹⁰² Acknowledging his death was imminent, the marquis appealed to his children not to fail “in any outward circumstance of honour and reverence to her, some of the harshness and austerity of her present condition may be alleviated.”¹⁰³

There are also accounts of individuals such as tutors and ministers, closely connected with the family, who commended the initiative taken by mothers in the education of their children. In 1671, Lady Ann Asheton, widow of Sir Ralph Asheton, hired Adam Martindale to tutor her son and her nephew. Lady Ann, who was in charge of the education of her son Richard, and of his cousin, Peter Bold, received praise from Martindale as she diligently arranged for instruction and handsomely rewarded and supported his services.¹⁰⁴ The Anglican clergyman Samuel Clarke (1599-1682), who was well connected among the upper classes, was famous for his lives of individuals, some of

¹⁰¹ Archibald Campbell, *Instructions to a Son* (London: J. Latham, 1661), Microfilm, Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1983; 1394:9, 20-22.

¹⁰² Campbell, *Instructions to a Son*, 20-22.

¹⁰³ Campbell, *Instructions to a Son*, 20-22.

¹⁰⁴ Martindale, *Diary*, 197.

them mothers who greatly shaped the education of their children.¹⁰⁵ When the “Reverend and Learned Divine Mr. Samuel Fairclough” lost his father at the age of nine, his mother followed the deathbed wish of her husband and “bred her son a scholar...and educated him under the most famous schoolmaster of the age, Mr. Robotham.”¹⁰⁶

Samuel Clarke praised the altruistic actions of mothers who educated their children to become learned and pious members of society. After Mrs. Alice Lucy died in 1648, Clarke not only remembered her prudence and wisdom, but also admired her devotion to instructing her children in “secular and spiritual writings.”¹⁰⁷ Possessing a “great library, well stored with most of our choice English Authors,” Alice Lucy read and possessed an excellent understanding of the texts, which she shared with her children.¹⁰⁸ Clarke described how each day—in the morning, afternoon, and before bedtime—Alice Lucy practiced reading and discussion with her children, “commending it to her children, whom she caused, every day to read some portions, both of Old and New Testament in her own preference and hearing.”¹⁰⁹ Samuel Clarke also extolled the efforts of Mrs. Katherine Clarke, his wife, who nurtured nine children, “by Instructions, advice and good counsel as there were occasion.”¹¹⁰ When her children matured and went abroad, Katherine continued her instruction and guidance through her letters, “laboring to build them up in grace and godliness, and keeping them from scandalous courses in these corrupt times.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵ Samuel Clarke, *The Lives of Sundry Eminent Persons in This Later Age in Two Parts: I. Of Divines, II. Of Nobility and Gentry of Both Sexes* (London: Thomas Simmons, 1683), Microfilm, Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1969; 310:1.

¹⁰⁶ Clarke, *The Lives of Sundry Eminent Persons*, 154.

¹⁰⁷ Clarke, *The Lives of Sundry Eminent Persons*, 141.

¹⁰⁸ Clarke, *The Lives of Sundry Eminent Persons*, 141.

¹⁰⁹ Clarke, *The Lives of Sundry Eminent Persons*, 141.

¹¹⁰ Clarke, *The Lives of Sundry Eminent Persons*, 155.

¹¹¹ Clarke, *The Lives of Sundry Eminent Persons*, 155.

Beyond the Domestic Classroom: The Maternal Role as Sons Continued Their Education

Although the prescriptive literature advised mothers of their educative responsibilities of children from birth to approximately seven years of age and of their significantly modified positions when children attended grammar schools or were placed under the supervision of tutors, writers did not recommend a specific maternal role once their children left home for advanced studies. Seemingly, when sons attended the universities, they interacted within a male world where women were absent. A closer examination of the private lives of sons attending classes however, reveals maternal intervention in such matters as emotional and material support, religious and moral guidance, and unfailing concern and assistance for health and welfare matters.

The letters of Katherine Paston to her son William, indicate the continuation of the maternal role in the education of sons as well as the close bond between them. While he was a student at Corpus Christi College in Cambridge from 1623 to 1627, William Paston received many letters from his mother, reminding him of his academic responsibilities and of his religious upbringing. Katherine Paston began and ended each of the forty-three letters, which her son kept, with a religious passage, usually a prayer for God to bless her beloved son. The letters reveal a close and open relationship between mother and son as Katherine Paston provided William with an account of family events and, at the same time, she expressed an understanding of the challenges that young William encountered as a student. Encouraging her son “to gayne the best knowledge,” Katherine also remained steadfast in her religious belief that William continue to pray and reflect upon the scriptural readings he had learned as a young boy at home:

I hope thow dos ruminat over all thy Psalms and Chapters and texts of scripture, which longe sinc thou didest learne by harte. I wold be sory thow sholdes forget thy Conduit of Comfort: these things lett not slipe out of the mind, for thay will be to the in time to com, bothe Comforters and Cownselers: the God of infinite mercy so blese and sanctify thy hart and sowll, that thou mayst live to the honor of his nam, and to the comfort of thy self and frindes who wisheth the well....¹¹²

Among the letters between mother and son, William Paston also saved a few of his own in which he displayed a profound love and respect for his devoted mother. As a beginning student at Corpus Christi College, William reassured his mother, “I will ever have your precepts in my minde puttinge them allwaies in practice, and I hope iff I obey them I shall still keep your accustomed Love which, next to the grace of god, I esteeme above anie thinge.”¹¹³

Lady Brilliana Harley’s letters to her son Ned convey a loving mother who possessed a keen interest in the health, education and religious practice of her child.¹¹⁴ A godly woman, concerned about the political turbulence of the period and the impact of such events upon the welfare of her family, Brilliana Harley found solace in her many letters to Ned during his five years at Oxford.¹¹⁵ Born in the Netherlands, where her father had been the Lieutenant Governor, Brilliana married Sir Robert Harley of Brampton Bryan in Herefordshire in 1624, and the couple had seven children.¹¹⁶ Ned was the oldest and his mother’s favorite. Possessing some understanding of French and Latin, and well versed

¹¹² *The Correspondence of Lady Katherine Paston, 1603-1627*, ed. Ruth Hughey (Norfolk: Norfolk Record Society, 1941), 83.

¹¹³ *The Correspondence of Lady Katherine Paston*, 64.

¹¹⁴ *Letters of The Lady Brilliana Harley*. Also see chp. 3 “The Harleys and the Godly Community,” in Jacqueline Eales, *Puritans and Roundheads: The Harleys of Brampton Bryan and the Outbreak of the English Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

¹¹⁵ The Harleys sympathized with the Puritans, who challenged royalist policies. Ned was at Oxford between 1638-1642.

¹¹⁶ The three boys and four girls were baptized at Brampton as follows: Edward, October 24, 1624; Robert, April 16, 1624; Thomas, January 13, 1627; Brilliana, April 26, 1629; Dorothee, September 12, 1630; Margaret, December 25, 1631; and Elizabeth, October 26, 1634. See *Letters of The Lady Brilliana Harley, Wife of Sir Robert Harley*, introduction and notes, Thomas T. Lewis (London: Camden Society, 1853), xii.

in the Holy Scripture as well as ancient and modern history, Brilliana Harley devoted her life to the welfare and security of her family.¹¹⁷

Lady Harley's prolific letters to her son Ned while he was away at Oxford¹¹⁸ cover a variety of subjects indicative of a close and open relationship between a mother and son. In many of her letters to Ned, Lady Brilliana provides reports concerning familial matters and financial concerns, informing Ned that his younger brother Robert "has no fitt sence you went," or "your sisters are, I thanke God, well; and so is all your frindes in theas parts." (12, 18) Lady Brilliana wrote to Ned of his father's frequent absences in London, and she consistently notified him that she was sending "a halfe a dusen handcherchers" or food such as "meath, appells, turkey pie, or clothing." (85, 99, 137) In every letter, Lady Brilliana revealed to her son how much she missed him, and she reminded him to maintain his religious faith. In addition to her pious requests for God to bless her son, Lady Brilliana also appealed to Ned "to be watchfull that you grow not slake in keeping the saboth, and in the performeing of priuet dutyes." (28) In another letter, Lady Brilliana specifically blessed Ned and reminded him to abide by the teachings he learned from his upbringing, "...the Lord blles you and give you that heauenly wisdome to remember your Creator in the days of your youth...you may sarufe your God with an vpright hart." (65)

The letters of Lady Brilliana also suggest she possessed knowledge of Ned's tutors and academic studies. In one letter to Ned, she shared his tutor's assessment and Lady Brilliana was pleased "that your worthy tutor gives so good a testimony of you." (13) Her

¹¹⁷ *Letters of The Lady Brilliana Harley*, xiii. In the following pages, references to *Lady Brilliana's Letters* will appear in text in parenthesis.

¹¹⁸ There are 205 letters in 1983 text by the Camden Society. Nine of the letters were sent to her husband and the remaining 106 were addressed to her son Ned.

correspondence with Ned also reflected her awareness of what he was reading and writing. For example, Lady Brilliana reminded her son that she had not forgotten the book he had requested from his father, “You longe sence riwite for Sir Wallter Rawelys History to your father. I did not forget it, and haue sent it you by this carrier, with a book of news.” (27) In another letter, Lady Brilliana thanks her son for the paper he sent her and promised to read it. (98)

While he was at Oxford, Ned’s health and living arrangements were of great concern to his mother. In addition to sending him food and clothing, Lady Brilliana instructed her son about his health: “I take it for a great mercy of God, that you haue your health; the Lord in mercy continue it to you, and be you carefull of your selfe: the meanes to presarufe health, is good diet and exercise.”(14) Lady Brilliana often encouraged Ned to exercise, but always with moderation. When Ned was fourteen and a student at Oxford, she reminded him to use caution with exercise, and recommended a medicinal recipe to address the pain in his back. Lady Brilliana’s letter instructed her son to “be carefull to vse exercise; and for that paine in your backe, it may be caused by some indisposicion of the kidnes. I would have you drinke in the morning beare boyled with licorisch; it is a most excellent thinge for the kidnes.”(16) On another occasion, Ned received a letter from his mother that specified what he needed to do to treat his sore eyes that were better but not completely cured. In her note, Lady Brilliana wrote, “feareing your eyes should after this rume be inclined to a rumeticke humor, I haue sent a glass of eye watter, which is not only good to cure sore eys, but to presarufe the eyes sight.”(36)

Magdalen Herbert was so devoted to her son Edward and his studies that she decided to move near him while he attended school. While Edward Herbert attended Oxford, his

mother Magdalen not only arranged his marriage to the wealthy heiress and cousin Mary Herbert, but also set up a house to be near her son and daughter-in-law. According to son, “I went to Oxford together with my wife and Mother who took a house and lived a certayne tyme there.”¹¹⁹ Interestingly, Edward Herbert referred to his mother and her decision to move near him while he attended school in Oxford as a “due remedy” for “that lasciviousness to which youth is naturally inclined.”¹²⁰ Because of his devoted mother’s intervention, young Edward reported, “I followed my booke more close then ever in which course I continued till I attained about the age of eighteene, when my mother took a house in London betweene which place and Montgomery Castle I passed my Time till I came to the age of one and twenty.”¹²¹

While he was a student at Jesus College in Cambridge, Christopher Hatton also received letters from his mother Alice Hatton, who made sure her son not only monitored his studies and possessions, but also maintained his religious devotions.¹²² In an affectionate letter reminding young Christopher of her love, Lady Hatton also advised her son of his religious observance so that he would be “in minde of your cheefe dutie, which is to God, which I charge you not to neglect, but to dedicate your first thoughts to Him constantly; read His works reverently; heare sermons; strive to take notes that you may meditate on them.”¹²³ Lady Hatton warned her son that if he failed to “know God’s will and to practice it,” he would only know “fruitless pleasures, the sweetnes whereof is quickly gon, the sorrow lonely stayes.”¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ *The Life of Edward, First Lord Herbert of Cherbury*, 16.

¹²⁰ *The Life of Edward, First Lord Herbert of Cherbury*, 16.

¹²¹ *The Life of Edward, First Lord Herbert of Cherbury*, 16.

¹²² *Correspondence of the Family of Hatton*, ed. Edward M. Thompson, vol. I (Westminster: Camden Society, 1878).

¹²³ *Correspondence of the Family of Hatton*, 3-4.

¹²⁴ *Correspondence of the Family of Hatton*, 3-4.

Similar to Lady Brilliana Harley, Elizabeth Smyth also maintained a close relationship with her son through correspondence while he was away at school. The letters of Elizabeth Smyth to her son Thomas, who at the age of thirteen, attended St. John's College, Oxford, reveal a tender and concerned mother who often reminded her son to "be careful for your health,"¹²⁵ and to be mindful of being "a comfort to your parents and to doe good to others when we are gone."¹²⁶ After staying at St. John's for two years, young Thomas Smyth matriculated in 1624 and continued his studies at Oxford until 1626. During this time, letters from his mother and tutor at St. John's, Thomas Atkinson, reveal the concern families possessed about the outbreak of diseases such as the smallpox, as well as the ability of children to avoid potential danger in the city.¹²⁷ During his final year at Oxford, Elizabeth Smyth continued to remind her son, "to keepe your selfe warme as you may when the cold weather comes in with such as you have. Remember your necke and feett."¹²⁸

While they were away at school, sons received letters from their mothers reminding them of their familial obligations and urging them to practice moderation in their requests while concentrating on their studies. When her eldest son Joseph was away at the Inns of Court, Mary Barnes enclosed some lines within the letter his father sent in order to remind him of his responsibility to himself and to the family. Although her "weakness" prohibited her from writing much, Mary instructed her son to "Remember, you were not born for yourself onely, be kindly affectionate to your brothers and sisters, possess loyalty and obedience to your parents, and my son, if thine heart be wise, my

¹²⁵ *Calendar of the Correspondence of the Smyth Family of Ashton Court, 1548-1642*, ed. J.H. Bettey (Bristol: Bristol Record Society, 1982), 57.

¹²⁶ *Calendar of the Correspondence of the Smyth Family*, 58.

¹²⁷ *Calendar of the Correspondence of the Smyth Family*, 65-9; 74-9.

¹²⁸ *Calendar of the Correspondence of the Smyth Family*, 79.

heart shall rejoice even mine.”¹²⁹ While he was away at school, the mother of Simonds D’Ewes also wrote her son a letter reminding him to “remain dutiful to your mother and painful in your studies.”¹³⁰ Despite Simonds’ request for a gown, his mother informed him he would have to wait until Christmas when “you shall have one made here at your coming, and also a new winter sute, and a cloak; for all this I think you have need.”¹³¹

When he was eleven and a student at Shrewsbury School, Philip Sidney, like Joseph Barnes, received a letter from his mother, Mary, advising him about his ancestry and his duty to do well. Mary Sidney belonged to an intimate circle of women scholars, which included her sister-in-law Lady Jane Grey, and three of the Cooke sisters—Lady Cecil, Lady Bacon and Lady Margaret Hoby. For the first ten years of young Philip’s life, his educated and worldly mother took charge of his intellectual training.¹³² Although the letter in many respects was conventional in that young Philip was reminded of his responsibilities, it was also personal, indicative of a caring mother who was concerned about her child. Mary Sidney advised Philip “to see that you show yourself as a loving and obedient scholar to your good master, to govern you yet many years.”¹³³ Mary also shared how she happy was when she heard that Philip “profit so in his learning.”¹³⁴

An examination of the private accounts of families support the influential role of mothers in the education of their children. Although education was clearly a male-centered domain from public policy to university life, the elusive presence of mothers

¹²⁹ Barnes, *Memoirs*, 69.

¹³⁰ D’Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 34.

¹³¹ D’Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 34.

¹³² See Malcolm W. Wallace, *The Life of Sir Philip Sidney* (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1967) and Katherine Duncan Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

¹³³ Edward Berry, *The Making of Sir Philip Sidney* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 11; Wallace, *The Life of Sir Philip Sidney*, 70.

¹³⁴ Edward Berry, *The Making of Sir Philip Sidney* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 11; Wallace, *The Life of Sir Philip Sidney*, 70.

became evident in the households and in the correspondence of their sons, relatives and other individuals who were knowledgeable of their family life. While authors of educational texts prescribed a more defined role for mothers when their children were young, they also advocated no such role as their children entered advanced studies away from home. Mothers maintained their guidance, however, and they continued to support, advise and encourage their children who appeared to savor the maternal bond of their early years.

Chapter Four

Exemplary Mothers and Their Children

Although upper-class mothers in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England carefully monitored the religious, social and intellectual development of their children, a few women emerged as famous maternal figures, distinguished not only for their prestigious ancestry and progeny, but also for their personal accomplishments. A close examination of the characteristics of these mothers—Margaret More Roper, Anne Cooke Bacon, Elizabeth Cary and Susanna Wesley—reveals some interesting findings such as a sense of purpose, the ability to pursue intellectual interests while remaining devoted to welfare of their children, and a capacity to continue to shape the lives of their offspring after they left home.

What makes this particular inquiry unique is the investigation of these well-known women whose roles *as mothers* emerge more saliently from the literature but have not been adequately described. This study will now provide such information based on the reading of the sources. This failure is all the more surprising because of their prominence, especially in the case of Elizabeth Cary whose own literary work has been exclusively studied in recent years. An outlying sixteenth-century figure, Margaret More Roper's case is anomalous because of the exceptional progressivism of her father, who pioneered the education of women in England. Susanna Wesley is profiled in this study because aside from a simple hagiographical comment on her in the Methodist tradition, there is no critical assessment of her role as mother. Anne Cooke Bacon's significant role in the education of her two children has been overshadowed by the accomplishments of her famous son Francis.

Central to an investigation of the interaction between Margaret More Roper, Anne Cooke Bacon, Elizabeth Cary and Susanna Wesley and their children is an understanding of the personal backgrounds of each woman and of the impact of their parents, in particular, their fathers. While Margaret More Roper lived in the shadow of her famous father who closely monitored her studies, Elizabeth Cary delighted her sometimes-affectionate father with her insight and devotion to reading. Anne Cooke Bacon was recognized for her erudition as the daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke, and Susanna Wesley read almost every book in her father's library. This intellectual preparation enabled each woman to pursue her craft as well as to inspire her children. Familial background and scholarly prowess also shaped the attitude of these women towards motherhood. Each of them possessed a strong sense of self, empowering them significantly to guide and shape the rearing of their children.

Despite their dominant personalities and notable talents, Margaret More Roper, Anne Cooke Bacon, Elizabeth Cary and Susanna Wesley confronted societal norms, which forced them to negotiate their personal intentions with the mandates of the patriarchal forces in their private and public lives. Margaret More Roper's intellectual abilities were well known but she deferred her activities to the scholarly advice of Thomas More whose political decision to remain true to his conscience cost him his life as well as the emotional and physical energies of his talented daughter. The resolve to pursue her intellectual and religious interests placed Elizabeth Cary at odds with her parents and eventually with her husband and some of her children. During her marriage to Nicholas Bacon, Anne Cooke Bacon placed his interests ahead of her own, and later on in her life, struggled with the decisions of her precocious and extravagant sons. Susanna

Wesley navigated a stormy relationship with her husband Samuel who savored his position as a minister, as she raised their nine surviving children.

Perhaps one way to measure the impact of Margaret More Roper, Anne Cooke Bacon, Elizabeth Cary and Susanna Wesley is to examine how their children responded to their maternal guidance. In some cases such as those of Elizabeth Cary and Susanna Wesley, children dedicated writings honoring their mother's role in their lives. For example, Elizabeth Cary's daughter revered her mother's life by writing a biography entitled *Lady Falkland: Her Life*. John Wesley modeled his thoughts on education by including much of what he had learned from his mother. The children of Margaret More Roper continued to excel in their academic studies while remaining devout Catholics, and Anthony and Francis Bacon continued to confer with their mother regardless of the differences that came between them.

Margaret More Roper

(1505-1544)

In your letter you speak of your approaching confinement. We pray most earnestly that all may go happily and successfully with you. May God and our Blessed Lady grant you happily and safely a little one like his mother in everything except sex. Yet let it by all means be a girl, if only she will make up for the inferiority of her sex by her zeal to imitate her mother's virtue and learning. Such a girl I should prefer to three boys. Good-bye, my dearest child.¹

¹ Thomas Stapleton, *The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More*, ed. E.E. Reynolds, trans. Philip Hallett (New York: Fordham University Press, 1966), 105. For the life of Thomas More and his exchange with Margaret see also Nichols Harpsfield, *The Life and Death of St. Thomas Moore, Knight, Sometimes Lord High Chancellor of England*, ed. Elsie Vaughan Hitchcock (London: Oxford University Press, 1932); William Roper and Nicholas Harpsfield, *Lives of Saint Thomas More*, ed. E.E. Reynolds (London: Everyman's Library, 1963); and E.E. Reynolds, *Margaret Roper: Eldest Daughter of St. Thomas More* (New York: P.J. Kennedy & Sons, 1960) For a compilation of More's letters, see Elizabeth Rogers, ed. *Selected Letters of Sir Thomas More* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961); Patricia Demers, "Margaret More Roper and Erasmus: The Relationship of Translator and Source," *WWR*

Thomas More's letter to his daughter Margaret as she expected her first child reflected the deep bond between the scholar and his most famous pupil. By all standards of her age, Margaret More Roper represented the epitome of the virtuous and learned woman, who transcended the conventional notion of the dutiful daughter, obedient wife and loving mother. While much of her acclaim may be attributed to the intervention of her brilliant and famous father, Margaret clearly also possessed an intellect that not only enabled her to engage in scholarly pursuits but also fortified her efforts to educate her children. As the mother of three boys and two girls, Margaret meticulously supervised their education, sharing her "ready wit, quick conception, tenacious memory, and a fine imagination."²

As Elizabeth McCutcheon acknowledged in her article examining the scholarly activities of Margaret Roper, "Two aspects of Margaret Roper's life are extensively, if not fully, documented: her education and her relationship with her father, especially while he was under arrest."³ To further compound an effort to illuminate Margaret's thoughts about her life and family, many of her written works are lost, and historians know of them through casual references in the letters of her father or in the writings of More biographers. Yet, it is possible to elucidate Margaret's perceptions of her maternal role in the letters she exchanged with her father, and in the poignant vignettes recorded

Magazine 1 (Spring, 2005): 3-8; James Daybell, "Interpreting Letters and Reading Script: Evidence for Female Education and Literacy in Tudor England," *History of Education* 34 (November, 2005): 695-715; and David Smith, "Portrait and Counter-Portrait in Holbein's *The Family of Sir Thomas More*," *Art Bulletin* 87 (September, 2005): 484-505.

² George Ballard, *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1985), 87.

³ Elizabeth McCutcheon, "Margaret More Roper: The Learned Woman in Tudor England," in *Women Writers of the Renaissance and Reformation*, ed. Katharina M. Wilson (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1987), 449-80.

by contemporary More biographers such as William Roper, Nicholas Harpsfield, and Thomas Stapleton.

Although historians have recognized the erudition of Margaret Roper and have ascertained her devotion to Thomas More, many have overlooked her meaningful maternal role in the lives of her children.⁴ Inspired by her father, Margaret provided a classical education for each of her children, imbued with the practice of translation and a study of the Church fathers. Despite her premature death at the age of thirty-six, Margaret's guidance was great as her daughter Mary also gained recognition for her learning. Future generations of Mores and Ropers would also become active in the English Benedictine monastery of Our Lady of Consolation, Cambrai, which was a contemplative community founded in 1623 by Dame Gertrude More, poet and mystic, and the great-great granddaughter of Thomas More.⁵ In the same year, Dame Mary Roper started a monastery at Ghent.

Early Life

Margaret Roper received an extraordinary upbringing as the child of Thomas More, preparing her for a life marked by piety and erudition. Her father was a respected scholar, lawyer and servant of the Crown. Thomas More's religious faith was a significant part of his personal and public life, privately practiced on a daily basis in his household, and recognized by his contemporaries as sincere, honest and loyal. In 1505,

⁴ Rita M. Verbrugge, "Margaret More Roper's Personal Expression in the *Devout Treatise Upon the Pater Noster*," in *Silent But for the Word*, 30-42; Peter Iver Kaufman, "Absolute Margaret: Margaret More Roper and 'Well Learned' Men," *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 20 (Autumn, 1989): 443-56; Elizabeth A. Nist, "Tattle's Well's Faire: English Women Authors of the Sixteenth Century," *College English*, 46 (November, 1984): 702-16; and Beilin, *Redeeming Eve*.

⁵ Jane Stevenson, "Women, Writing and Scribal Publication in the Sixteenth Century," in *English Manuscript Studies, 1100-1700*, vol. 9, eds. Peter Beal and Margaret J.M. Ezell (London: The British Library, 2000), 3.

at the age of twenty-eight, Thomas More married his first wife Jane Colt, who at the age of seventeen was the eldest of eleven girls in a family of eighteen children.⁶ The couple lived in a comfortable house known as the Barge, in Bucklersbury, where they had four children: Margaret (1505), Elizabeth (1506), Cecily (1507) and John (1509). In 1511, at the age of twenty-three, Jane died and Erasmus, a close friend of Thomas More and a frequent guest at his home, recalled how More shaped the intellectual and spiritual development of his young wife:

He married a young girl of good family, who had been brought up with her sisters in their parents' home in the country: choosing her, yet undeveloped, that he might more readily mould her to his tastes. He had her taught literature, and trained her in every kind of music; and she was just growing into a charming life's companion for him, when she died young.⁷

Having lost her mother at the age of six, Margaret developed a close relationship with her father, who undertook an active role in her religious education and intellectual training. Thomas More made the conscious decision to find a new wife in order to provide a mother for his four young children, and within a month after Jane's death, he married Alice Middleton, a widow with one daughter, also named Alice. In his *Life of More*, Stapleton recounted a letter of Erasmus' in which the Dutch humanist wrote about Thomas More's utilitarian purpose in his second marriage as well as his efforts to mold the behavior of his new wife:

Not long afterwards, he married a widow, more for the care of his children than for his own pleasure. She is now getting on in years and is of a disposition none too tractable—although she is a keen and careful housekeeper—yet he has persuaded her to learn to sing to the lyre or the

⁶ E.M.G. Routh, *Sir Thomas More and His Friends* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1963), 41. Also, see Richard Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984) 217-21; R.W. Chambers, *Thomas More* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1965), 180-91; Peter Ackroyd, *The Life of Thomas More* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 144-9.

⁷ E.E. Reynolds, *Thomas More and Erasmus* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1965), 42.

lute, the monochord or the flute, and in this way to fulfil the daily task which her exacting husband imposes.⁸

While Alice managed the household, Thomas More took care of the education of the children. According to More's contemporary biographer, "His first care was the religious training of his children: second only to this was his zeal for their advancement in learning."⁹

More created his own academy of learning in which he hand-selected tutors to instruct his children. The classroom had grown over the years to include not only his children, but also a foster daughter by the name of Margaret Giggs and a young ward, Anne Cresacre. In addition, More's grandchildren would also receive instruction at his beloved home in Chelsea, which More had purchased in 1523. According to Stapleton, "as soon as his children were old enough to begin their education, he taught them personally or by a tutor."¹⁰ More wrote to his children in Latin and, as a way for them to improve their language skills, he expected them to reply in Latin. The letters his children sent to him do not exist; however, nine of More's letters to his children, especially to Margaret, have been preserved by Stapleton.

The teachers selected by Thomas More for his children represented some of the finest scholars of the period. The first tutor was John Clement, who became a Doctor of Medicine and a Greek scholar. In 1518, William Gunnell, who was a scholar at Cambridge, was recommended by Erasmus to become the next tutor to More's children. Other scholars at the More household included Roger Drew, a Fellow at all Soul's

⁸ Stapleton, *The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More*, 88. In 1588, Thomas Stapleton wrote the biography of Thomas More for his *Tres Thomae*, and he copied the original letters of More that family members had preserved.

⁹ Stapleton, *The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More*, 91.

¹⁰ Stapleton, *The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More*, 91. Also, see E.E. Reynolds, *Margaret Roper: Eldest Daughter of St. Thomas More*, 12.

College in Oxford and Master Nicholas Kratzer, a German scholar who later became the astronomer to Henry VIII in 1519. The last of the tutors was Richard Hyrde from Oxford, who was described by Stapleton as a “young man learned in physic, Greek and Latin.”¹¹ As More’s children immersed themselves in intellectual thought, they also cultivated a deep sense of religious devotion with daily prayers twice a day, discussion of religious sermons, and participation in charitable works. Coordinated by Thomas More, his academy of learning provided an exceptional education for all of his children, who adopted their founder’s aim of learning: “piety towards God, charity to all, and Christian humility.”¹² In a letter to William Gunnell, More reminded him “to put virtue in the first place, learning in the second, and in their studies to esteem most whatever may teach them piety.”¹³

Thomas More’s son-in-law William Roper provided an account of the daily religious practices of the More household. In his *Life of More*, Roper described the practice of private prayers in the morning with his children, following with the seven psalms, litany and suffrages. In the evening, More returned “to the chapel with his wife, children, and household, and there upon his knees ordinarily to say certain psalms and collects with them.... And a good distance from the mansion house he built a place called the new building wherein was a chapel, a library and a gallery....”¹⁴

Thomas More decided his three daughters would have the same classical education as his son. In a letter to the tutor of his daughters, Thomas More wrote, “if the

¹¹ Stapleton, *The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More*, 92.

¹² Reynolds, *Margaret Roper*, 18. See also Stapleton, *The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More*, 95.

¹³ Stapleton, *The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More*, 95.

¹⁴ *The Utopia of Sir Thomas More including Roper’s Life of More and Letters of More and His Daughter Margaret*, ed. Mildred Campbell (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1947), 226.

female soil be in its nature stubborn, and more productive of weeds than fruits, it ought, in my opinion, to be more diligently cultivated.”¹⁵ As a result, Margaret and her sisters learned Latin and Greek, and studied philosophy, rhetoric, logic and the sciences of anatomy and physics. Thomas More carefully monitored the progress of his children while he was away on Court business, and he claimed to abandon his public career rather than have the education of his children fall below his high standards. The following letter addressed to Margaret, expressed her father’s concerns about his children’s studies:

I was delighted to receive your letter, my dearest Margaret, informing me of Shaw’s condition. I should have been still more delighted if you had told me of the studies you and your brother are engaged in, of your daily reading, your pleasant discussions, your essays, and of the swift passage of the days made joyous by literary pursuits. For although everything you write gives me pleasure, yet the most exquisite delight of all comes from reading what none but you and your brother could have written.

More concluded his letter by asking Margaret to discuss her scholarly discoveries with him and keeping him informed of the academic progress of his children. He also emphasized the importance of their educational advancement, claiming to “make a sacrifice of wealth, and bid adieu to other cares and business, to attend to my children and my family, amongst whom none is more dear to me than yourself, my beloved daughter.”¹⁶

Thomas More’s commitment to the education of his children and their mastery of the program that he had prepared for them, not only provided great satisfaction for More, but also verified the claims made by their tutors. Each new advancement of learning delighted More and he expressed his contentment in his correspondence. Evidence of his children’s “continued exercises in logic, rhetoric and poetry,” led More to conclude in his

¹⁵ Walker, *Women Writers of the English Renaissance*, 5.

¹⁶ Stapleton, *The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More*, 100.

letter that he was “fully convinced that you love me as you should since I see that, although I am absent, yet you do with great eagerness what you know gives me pleasure when I am present.”¹⁷ More’s appreciation of the diligent efforts of his children is also apparent as More lets his children know he “has no greater solace in all the vexatious business in which I am immersed than to read your letters.”¹⁸

Scholars such as Erasmus and Simon Grinaeus dedicated texts to Thomas More’s son John, “a young man who was deeply versed in Greek and philosophy.”¹⁹ Simon Grinaeus was a German scholar who had been a professor of Greek and of Latin at the University of Heidelberg before Erasmus recommended him to Thomas More. In 1531, he visited England to do research, and later on, he collected opinions of continental reformers concerning Henry VIII’s divorce. According to Stapleton, Erasmus dedicated his edition of Aristotle and Simon Grinaeus his edition of Plato. While the dedicatory letters of both scholars acknowledge the scholarship of John More, the excerpt of Grinaeus’ letter also attests to the erudition of the daughters of Thomas More. In his dedication of “these books of Proclus, which are full of admirable teaching and have been published by our labor indeed, but by the benefits I have received from your family,” Grinaeus also acknowledges that while John’s name “will be an ornament to my books, on the other hand they may be of considerable use to you, conversant as I know you to be with all these serious questions, both by your long intercourse with your father and by the company of your highly cultured sisters.”²⁰ Grinaeus concludes his dedication by referring to More’s children as “a prodigy in our age,” in which “enthusiasm for learning

¹⁷ Stapleton, *The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More*, 100-1.

¹⁸ Stapleton, *The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More*, 100-1.

¹⁹ Stapleton, *The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More*, 101. .

²⁰ Stapleton, *The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More*, 102.

has carried you and your sisters to such heights of proficiency that no difficult question of science or philosophy is now beyond you.”²¹

Contemporaries of More confirm his special relationship with Margaret whose brilliance and devotion seemed to captivate her father. Stapleton claimed, “More than all the rest of his children, she resembled her father, as well as in stature, appearance, and voice, as in mind and in general character.”²² The close relationship that Margaret shared with her father, evidenced in the exchange of letters between them, reflects not only how he perceived his daughter but also how she perceived herself. Her humility and scholarship, which was cultivated during her early years, continued into adulthood as she reared her own children and contended with the tragedy of her father’s demise.

Margaret Roper and Motherhood

In 1521, at the age of sixteen, Margaret married William Roper, who recognized the piety and scholarship of his wife. The father of William Roper was a successful lawyer who had served with Thomas More on several royal commissions. Three years earlier, in 1518, William came to live at the More household while he attended Lincoln’s Inn. Preparing for a career in law, William Roper challenged the patience of his father-in-law by embracing the Protestant faith. In his account of Thomas More’s life, Nicholas Harpsfield described young Roper as “a zealous Protestant, and so fervent, and withal so well and properly liked of himself and his divine learning, that he took the bridle to the teeth, and ran forth like a headstrong horse....”²³ While Margaret’s voice is noticeably

²¹ Stapleton, *The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More*, 102.

²² Stapleton, *The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More*, 103.

²³ Roper and Harpsfield, *Lives of Thomas More*, 100.

silent during this period, her father did speak to her, and Harpsfield recorded Thomas More's decision to stop arguing with William Roper and to "start praying for his soul."²⁴

Why William Roper, a son of a distinguished legal family from Kent, decided to abandon his Protestant beliefs and embrace Catholicism remains a mystery. According to Harpsfield, "And soon after, as he verily believed, through the great mercy of God, at the devout prayer of St. Thomas More, he perceived his own ignorance, oversight, malice and folly, and turned him again to the Catholic faith, wherein, God be thanked, he hitherto continued."²⁵ Perhaps William Roper's resolve to follow the Protestant faith was met with such resistance in the More household that he rethought his decision and found the Christian humanism of the family an acceptable compromise. Furthermore, might not his decision to abandon his Protestant belief result from his devotion to Margaret who remained steadfast in her Catholic upbringing?

Throughout her marriage, Margaret Roper continued with her intellectual pursuits, while taking care of her young family. According to Harpsfield, William Roper viewed Margaret as "so good, so debonair and so gentle a wife that he thought himself a most happy man that he had happened upon such a treasure...."²⁶ One of her father's letters affirmed the practice of Margaret pursuing similar studies to those of her husband. While More concluded that he was pleased to hear that Margaret's tutor Nicholas Kratzer continued to instruct her in the study of the system of heavenly bodies, he also urged her to continue her study of philosophy and, "To devote the rest of your life to medical science and sacred literature, so that you may be well furnished for a whole scope of

²⁴ Roper and Harpsfield, *Lives of Thomas More*, 102.

²⁵ Roper and Harpsfield, *Lives of Thomas More*, 102.

²⁶ Roper and Harpsfield, *Lives of Thomas More*, 100.

human life....”²⁷ Interestingly, but not surprisingly given More’s pride and support of his daughter’s intellectual accomplishments, Margaret’s father ended his letter in an affectionate tone but also reminded her to further her learning even if she surpassed the progress of her husband:

... Farewell my dearest child, and salute for me my most gentle son, your husband. I am extremely glad that he is following the same course of study as yourself. I am ever wont to persuade you to yield in everything to your husband; now, on the contrary, I give you full leave to strive to get before him in the knowledge of the celestial system.²⁸

Thomas More not only recognized the brilliance of his eldest daughter but he also understood her quiet strength and preference for a private existence. In a letter shortly after her marriage to William Roper, More acknowledged his daughter’s decision to pursue a private existence, one devoted to family and to “the pursuit of literature and art, satisfied with your husband and myself—as a sufficiently large circle of readers for all that you write.”²⁹ One year after her marriage, Stapleton reported, “When More wrote his book on the *Four Last Things*, he gave the same subject to Margaret to treat, and when she had completed her task, he affirmed most solemnly that that treatise of his daughter was in no way inferior to his own.”³⁰ In 1524, Margaret continued to receive the admiration of her father and his colleagues when she translated Erasmus’ *A Devout Treatise upon the Pater noster* at the age of nineteen. Not surprisingly, Erasmus admired Margaret’s “exquisite learning, wisdom and virtue,” and he called her “the flower of all the learned matrons in England.”³¹

²⁷ Stapleton, *The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More*, 108.

²⁸ Stapleton, *The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More*, 109.

²⁹ Stapleton, *The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More*, 105; Rogers, *Selected Letters*, 128.

³⁰ Stapleton, *The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More*, 103.

³¹ Roper and Harpsfield, *Lives of Thomas More*, 98.

Accounts of Margaret Roper's nurturance of her five children were recorded by contemporary biographers of her father. Nicholas Harpsfield provided his sentiments about Margaret when he concluded, "To her children she was a double mother, as one not content to bring them forth only into the world, but instructing them also herself in virtue and learning."³² On one occasion when William Roper was sent to the Tower, and King Henry's men arrived to search the house, Harpsfield recounted the courage and conviction of Margaret as she maintained daily instruction of her children:

they found her not puling and lamenting but full busily teaching her children, whom they, finding nothing astonished at their message, and finding also, besides this her consistency, such gravity and wisdom in her talk as they looked for, were themselves much astonished, and were in great admiration, neither could afterward speak too much of her, as partly myself have heard at the mouth of one of them.³³

As the mother of two boys and three girls, Margaret meticulously supervised their education. While her sons, Thomas and Anthony, were "being brought up and learned in the liberal sciences and the laws of the Realm,"³⁴ the three girls—Elizabeth, Margaret and Mary—received a classical education. Margaret's daughter Mary received instruction in Greek and Latin from Dr. John Morwen, a noted Greek scholar. Guided and supported by her mother, Mary's skills in classical languages advanced, and Morwen later translated her Latin orations into English.³⁵ Ballard stated Mary "seems to have possessed of her mother's fine parts and learning."³⁶ Of Margaret's three daughters, Stapleton asserted, "Mary, who was most like her mother, became a lady of great

³² Roper and Harpsfield, *Lives of Thomas More*, 97.

³³ Roper and Harpsfield, *Lives of Thomas More*, 97-8.

³⁴ Roper and Harpsfield, *Lives of Thomas More*, 100. In addition to Thomas and Anthony, there were Elizabeth, Margaret and Mary.

³⁵ Reynolds, *The Learned Lady*, 11.

³⁶ Ballard, *Memoirs*, 100.

learning and lady-in-waiting to Queen Mary.”³⁷ Mary Roper Bassett’s scholarly accomplishments also were documented by Harpsfield, who praised her expertise in Greek and Latin, and claimed, “She hath also very aptly and fitly translated into the said tongue a certain book that Sir Thomas, her grandfather, made upon the Passion, and so elegantly and eloquently penned that a man would think it were originally written in the said English tongue.”³⁸

After Thomas More’s death in 1535, Margaret continued the private religious observance and the educational standards that shaped her life and guided the governance of her children. She would continue in this role for nine years until her death in 1544. Although she has been commonly remembered for her devoted and courageous role as Thomas More’s daughter who visited him in prison and recovered his impaled head from the stake on London Bridge, the fact remains that Margaret also displayed great fortitude in her maternal role by ensuring the values she and her father deeply believed in continued despite his absence. Margaret’s letter to her father while he was in prison, assured him of the resilience of the household and credited his example as a guide to their spiritual and worldly lives:

Father, what think you hath been our comfort since your departing from us? Surely the experience we have had of your life past, and godly conversation, and wholesome counsel, and virtuous example, and a surety not only of the continuance of that same, but also a great increase by the goodness of our Lord.³⁹

After the death of Thomas More, Margaret and her family continued to practice the values of their beloved patriarch. In his last letter dated July 5, 1535, Thomas More

³⁷ Stapleton, *The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More*, 93.

³⁸ Roper and Harpsfield, *Lives of Thomas More*, 100.

³⁹ Stapleton, *The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More*, 90. See also Rogers, *Selected Letters*, 203.

wrote with the only writing material available, a piece of coal, to his daughter Margaret reminding her of his messages to family members and thanking her “for her great cost.”⁴⁰ With the death of her father, Margaret lost her precious mentor who played such an instrumental role during the course of her life. While it is difficult to overlook More’s presence in his daughter’s life, Margaret emerged from the letters and recollections of biographers as a profound intellect who embraced her responsibilities as a daughter, wife and mother with unusual strength and humility. Although Ballard concluded, “After the death of her father, Margaret spent her time between prayers and tears and in the educating of her children and management of her domestic affairs,”⁴¹ Margaret’s life continued to advance her commitment to charitable works and the pursuit of intellectual scholarship. Maintaining a low profile for approximately three generations after Thomas More’s death, educated Mores and Ropers, loyal Catholics all, populated the convents of the Low Countries. Not surprisingly, many of them were Benedictines, which was an intellectual order open to women.

Lady Anne Bacon
(1528-1610)

When Sir Anthony Cooke died in 1576, his will provided silver to each of his family members but also stated that each daughter was to select one volume in Greek and two Latin works from his library.⁴² Such an unusual inheritance suggests a rather special

⁴⁰ *Letters of More and Margaret*, 310-1.

⁴¹ Ballard, *Memoirs*, 99.

⁴² Marjorie Keniston McIntosh, *The Cooke Family of Gidea Hall, Essex* (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1967), 105. For Lady Ann Bacon and her two sons, Anthony and Francis, see James Spedding, ed. *The Letters and the Life of Francis Bacon Including All His Occasional Works: Namely Papers, Memorials, Devices and All Authentic Writings Not Already Printed among His Philosophical, Literary, or*

and scholarly relationship between a father and his daughters. Anne Bacon, one of the five erudite daughters of Sir Anthony, emulated the serious commitment to learning and piety that her father so dearly cherished, and she conveyed his values to her children.

Anne Bacon's letters to her children support her commitment to their education and welfare. An important source for the correspondence between Anne Bacon and her two sons is *The Life and Letters of Francis Bacon* by James Spedding, who has compiled in his six-volume work letters and manuscripts from the British Museum and the Public Record Office. Unfortunately, the first two decades of the lives of Anthony and Francis and their relationship with their mother receive very little attention and most of Francis Bacon's letters cover his public life rather than his private life. There are letters however, among Francis, Anthony and their mother, which unveil the dynamics of their relationships and provide valuable insights about their expectations. Credit for the existing letters can be attributed to Anthony, who carefully kept his correspondence. A careful examination of the letters will provide a deeper understanding of Anne Bacon's guidance upon the lives of her sons as they complete their education and participate in public life.

Although historians such as Elaine Beilin, Pearl Hogrefe, Mary Ellen Lamb and Louise Schleiner have recognized the erudition of Anne Bacon (and the Cooke daughters in general), there has yet to be a study that examines her perception of motherhood and the impact of her personality and religious convictions upon the lives of her sons.⁴³

Central to a study of Anne Bacon is an examination of her early life, particularly the

Professional Works, 6 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1868); James Spedding, ed. *An Account of the Life and Times of Francis Bacon* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1880).

⁴³ See Beilin, *Redeeming Eve*; Pearl Hogrefe, *Women of Action in Tudor England*; Mary Ellen Lamb, "The Cooke Sisters: Attitudes toward Learned Women in the Renaissance," in *Silent But for the Word*, 107-25; and Louise Schleiner, *Tudor and Stuart Women Writers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

effect her father exercised in shaping her faith and empowering her as a scholar. While a biography of Anne Cooke Bacon does not exist, accounts of her life can be discovered from a variety of sources. In addition to the letters accumulated by Anne Bacon's sons, Marjorie McIntosh has provided a rich history of the Cooke family, especially the life and actions of Sir Anthony Cooke. Unfortunately, she does not provide accounts of the Cooke daughters beyond an account of their education and arranged marriages. James Anderson, Mary B. Whiting and M. St. Clare Byrne have written articles, which offer general accounts of the life of Anne Bacon, illuminating her scholarship and social position.⁴⁴ While most biographies of Francis Bacon highlight his political life and texts, nominal references can be found concerning Anne Bacon's maternal role.

Early Life

Anne's education and academic aptitude were the result of her father's foresight and commitment to education. Sir Anthony Cooke (1505-1576) used to say there were three things in which he "cannot do amiss—his prince, his conscience and his children."⁴⁵ As the tutor to young Prince Edward,⁴⁶ future King Edward VI of England, and as the father of nine children, Anthony Cooke took on the responsibility of educating his offspring so that they would develop a solid foundation in classical learning as well as in

⁴⁴ See James Anderson, *Ladies of the Reformation: Memoirs of Distinguished Female Characters Belonging to the Period of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Blackie & Son, 1855), 484-510. Connecticut: Research Publication Microfilms, 1975, 1591:240; Mary B. Whiting, "The Learned and Virtuous Lady Bacon," *The Hibbert Journal*, 29 (1930-31): 270-83; and M. St. Clare Byrne, "The Mother of Francis Bacon," *Blackwood's Magazine*, 234 (1934): 758-71.

⁴⁵ McIntosh, *The Cooke Family*, 112. Also see Violet Wilson, *Society Women of Shakespeare's Time* (New York: Kennikat Press, 1970), 9.

⁴⁶ According to McIntosh, Anthony Cooke did not have a formal education; however, he made himself "one of the foremost English scholars of his day," 59. McIntosh concluded Cooke's actual involvement with Edward was unclear as it was difficult to determine the dates and exact nature of his involvement with the young prince, 65. However, McIntosh believed he read with Edward in religion and the classics; later, Cooke was granted an annuity of £100 for life "in return for services rendered and to be rendered in giving training in good letters and manners to the king," 66-7.

Christian thought. The sixteenth-century intellectual community viewed the Cooke household at Gidea Hall as a center of humanist learning and Christian teaching, where his sons and daughters learned Greek and Latin, and delighted in their abilities to compose translations from the New Testament.⁴⁷

With the exception of establishing the Fitzwilliams as wealthy London merchants who held valuable lands and a position at court by the 1520's, little is known about the early life of Anne Cooke Bacon's mother.⁴⁸ When they were both eighteen, Anne Fitzwilliam and Anthony Cooke were married, and during the course of their fifty-three year union, they raised nine children, four boys and five girls, born within a seventeen-year period.⁴⁹ As the official obligations of Sir Anthony Cooke required him to spend extended periods at court, the responsibilities of overseeing the welfare, education and religious training of the children rested with their mother. Orchestrating the daily activities behind such a famous household, Anne Fitzwilliam Cooke displayed her devotion to and support of education and piety. Unusual for sixteenth-century standards, the Cooke household maintained an environment whereby Sir Anthony may have planned educational programs and hired tutors to work with his children, but it was his wife Anne, who diligently supervised the activities. One may obtain a glimpse of Anne Fitzwilliam Cooke's role by examining how her daughters managed the education and guidance of their children. When Anne Cooke Bacon wrote to her sons while they were

⁴⁷ Lisa Jardine and Alan Stewart, *Hostage to Fortune: The Troubled Life of Francis Bacon* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1999), 25. Jardine and Stewart show the education the children received focused on Greek rather than Latin, and on New Testament Greek and the Greek Church fathers.

⁴⁸ McIntosh, *The Cooke Family*, 46.

⁴⁹ In 1524, the oldest, Mildred was born. The order of births for the remaining siblings was: Katherine (1526); Elizabeth (1528); Richard (1531); Anne (1533); Anthony (1535); William (1537); Edward (1539); and Margaret (1541).

away at school, Beilin suggested that she might be following the example of her mother “who took care for the moral and spiritual education of her children.”⁵⁰

While the sons of Sir Anthony Cooke received a proper education commensurate with other young men of their social position, what was extraordinary about the Cooke household was the intellectual training the five daughters received. Such a household devoted to education required the concern and intelligence of parents who possessed a unique approach to learning and life. Sir Anthony Cooke and his wife were certainly different from other elite families who modified the education of their daughters according to their future positions in life. However, Sir Anthony was aware of the educational training of royal children such as Mary and Elizabeth, and of the intellectual community engendered by Thomas More. As the humanists debated the intellectual abilities of girls and the societal merits of such an endeavor, the Cooke household made the conscious decision to differ with the conventional opinions of their class and to embrace a rigorous education for their daughters.

The reason as to why Sir Anthony Cooke chose this course of action remains unclear. According to Jardine and Stewart, Sir Anthony took great pride in the education he provided for his daughters, and he considered their success a reflection on his own intellectual standing.⁵¹ While this may be true, it is important to note that Sir Anthony was deeply religious and introspective when it came to scholarship. McIntosh suggests his deep commitment to classical learning and Christian teaching convinced him of the necessity of educating his daughters as well as his sons.⁵² Given these historical perspectives, however, Cooke believed religion was not a personal or casual relationship

⁵⁰ Beilin, *Redeeming Eve*, 60.

⁵¹ Jardine and Stewart, *Hostage to Fortune*, 25-26.

⁵² McIntosh, *The Cooke Family*, 63.

with God, and therefore, he maintained it was necessary to learn Greek and Latin in order to read the Scriptures. It is not surprising that his children learned Greek and Latin, and read early Christian writers. Although his daughters were famous for their erudition and their excellent marriages that he arranged for them, they shared their father's strong belief in Protestantism, and they read and translated religious works.⁵³

Before she married Nicholas Bacon, Anne Cooke had accomplished some remarkable feats as of her twenty-fifth birthday. At the age of twenty, she had already translated from the Italian the sermons of the preacher Barnardino Ochino, who had escaped persecution from his native country. Archbishop Cranmer invited Ochino to become a minister among the Italian Protestant refugees in London. Ochino had been one of the foreign reformers who had visited the house of Sir Anthony and this is where Anne Cooke first met him. Inspired by his devout Protestant message of obedience to God's laws and the doctrine of predestination, Anne decided to translate Ochino's sermons into English.⁵⁴ The translation was a scholarly and religious project for Anne Cooke, who was so taken with Ochino's oratorical skills and religious ideas that she wanted to have his work translated into English. It is not clear to what extent Anne wished to pursue the scholarly task of composing the translation or to what degree she wanted an English translation for others to read. The preface to the Ochino text contains a preface signed by 'G.B.', an unknown identity.⁵⁵ It is in the preface, however, that the

⁵³ Mildred Cooke translated from Greek St. Basil's sermon on Deuteronomy 15; Elizabeth translated from Latin *A Way of Reconciliation of a Good and Learned Man*; Anne translated Barnardino Ochino's sermons from Italian.

⁵⁴ In 1548, five of Anne Cooke's translations of Ochino's sermons were published. An edition of fourteen sermons was published in 1551.

⁵⁵ *The Early Modern Englishwoman: A Facsimile Library of Essential Works, 1500-1640*, eds. Betty Travitsky and Patrick Cullen, vol. 1, introduction by Valerie Wayne, xi. According to Wayne, "the text that is reproduced comes from the 1551 edition of *Fourtene Sermons of Barnardine Ochyne* because it includes the preface and dedication, and is the only edition of more than five sermons that does not also

writer does state that the purpose of the translation is to make sure Ochino's words "should not be private to those only which understand the Italian tongue."⁵⁶

In the dedication of the *Fouretene Sermons of Barnardine Ochyne* to her mother, Anne acknowledged Lady Fitzwilliam Cooke's role as a moral guide and champion of intellectual pursuits. Aware of her mother's disdain for Italian because of its relationship with Catholicism, Anne justified her knowledge of the language by attributing her skills to unlocking the valuable religious message Ochino, an Italian heretic who had departed from Catholicism, has to share with his audience. In her dedication, Anne Cooke cast her role as one that would make her mother proud of her ability to convey the message of the glory of God as well as the capacity of man to remain steadfast in his belief of God's will. Although Anne wrote to her mother, "it hath pleased you, often, to reprove my vaine studye in the Italyan tonge," she also wished to "dedicate unto your Ladyship this small number of Sermons, for the excellent fruit sake in them contained,"⁵⁷

As a young mother and wife to the Tudor statesman Nicholas Bacon, Anne completed a second important translation of a theologian's work—this time from the Latin—in order to support her devout Protestant faith. Edited by Matthew Parker who was the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Jewel's *Apologia ecclesiae anglicanae* (Defense of the Anglican Church) was published in England in 1562 as a defense of the English Church. William Cecil, Anne Bacon's brother-in-law, encouraged John Jewel to write the *Apologia ecclesiae anglicanae*. Jewel later became Bishop of Salisbury. The initial translation commissioned by Parker, however, was unsatisfactory, and Anne Bacon

reprint translations by Argentyne." Wayne cited there are twelve extant copies of this particular text and the copy she used was from St. John's College, Cambridge, which is the most readable copy she has seen.

⁵⁶ Preface, *Fouretene Sermons of Barnardine Ochyne* in *The Early Modern Englishwoman*.

⁵⁷ Dedication, *Fouretene Sermons of Barnardine Ochyne* in *The Early Modern Englishwoman*.

provided the clear and accurate translation both Parker and Jewel desired. Commended for her pious contribution to the English Church and people, Anne Bacon received recognition for her scholarly contribution.

Anne's decision to translate Jewel's work, however, requires further examination. Why did Anne decide to submit her work to such public and powerful men? A combination of reasons may account for Ann Bacon's decision. She was a gifted scholar who realized the limitations of her sex in the religious or political domain; translations of religious works were an acceptable medium, which women could publish and fulfill their ambitions. More importantly, Anne Cooke was a serious Protestant who believed her religion required a clear, unified doctrine in the face of Catholic opposition. She remained consistent in her efforts to further an understanding of the Protestant faith among the English population.

It was into this family that Anne Cooke Bacon was born in 1528, and where she obtained her education, religious learning and sense of accomplishment. While this study will focus on Anne as a scholar and as a strong maternal figure in the lives of her children and stepchildren, it would be difficult not to keep in mind the impact of such a family heritage. Currently, there is no biography of Anne Cooke Bacon, and most of what we know about her casts Anne as one of the scholarly Cooke daughters or as the mother of Francis Bacon. A closer examination of her intellectual prowess and of her interaction with family members, especially with her two sons, Anthony and Nicholas, reveals an independent woman who approached motherhood with a clear sense of purpose and forbearance.

Lady Anne Bacon and Motherhood

Anne Cooke's commitment to her faith and education greatly shaped her perception of motherhood. In 1553, she married Nicholas Bacon, an aspiring official who at the time of their marriage became treasurer of Gray's Inn.⁵⁸ Since Bacon was also a widower with six children all under the age of twelve, Anne became a stepmother to his three boys and girls; Bacon's prior wife Jane Fernely died in October, 1552 leaving him with Elizabeth, Nicholas, Anne, Nathaniel, Edward and Elizabeth. Later, Anne and Nicholas added two sons born of their marriage, Anthony, in 1558, and Francis, in 1561. Their twenty-six year marriage was a happy one as Anne's familial connections advanced the career of her husband, who became Lord Keeper of the Seal, later knighted, and served as a member of Elizabeth's Privy Council.⁵⁹ Anne also must have been content to further her connections at court as well as to have a spouse who shared her intellectual interests and religious beliefs. Both parents personally were involved with the education of their children and carefully selected tutors such as Thomas Fowle, John Walsall and Robert Johnson, well known in the Puritan classical movement.⁶⁰

The Bacon children grew up on the manor of Gorhambury⁶¹ in Hertfordshire, where Anne possessed more authority over the discipline and training of Anthony and Francis than of her stepchildren. With the exception of a reference by John Walsall in his epistle dedication to Anne Bacon in which he thanked her for teaching her young sons,

⁵⁸ Robert Tittler, *Nicholas Bacon: The Making of a Tudor Statesman* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1976).

⁵⁹ Anne's brother-in-law William Cecil was influential in Nicholas Bacon's political advancement. Bacon was an intelligent, diligent official who also possessed a strong commitment to Protestantism.

⁶⁰ Robert Tittler, *Nicholas Bacon: The Making of a Tudor Statesman*, 61. Fowle, Walsall and Johnson served as chaplains to the Bacon household.

⁶¹ Designed by Sir Nicholas, the new house was built between 1563-68. Nicholas Bacon chose the family motto, *mediocria firma*, moderate things endure, from a chorus in Seneca's *Oedipus*; Jardine and Stewart, *Hostage to Fortune*, 28.

little is known of the early years of Anthony and Francis.⁶² There exists an anecdote, however, which provides a glimpse of Anne's scholarly and pious temperament. In 1569, when Anthony and Francis were eleven and eight years old, their stepbrother Nathaniel, married the illegitimate daughter of Sir Thomas Gresham. Anne Gresham did not have the intellectual or religious training necessary for someone of her husband's position, and as a result, Nathaniel who was aware of the pious and disciplined nature of Anne, asked his stepmother if his new wife could join her classroom at Gorhambury. Anne Bacon welcomed her new daughter-in-law and provided her with the intellectual and religious education her pious husband requested. Nathaniel Bacon personally was touched with the guidance and warmth Anne Bacon extended to his wife, and afterwards, he expressed his gratitude by writing, "I think myself so greatly beholding to your ladyship, in that you were content to trouble yourself with having my wife, and not that alone, but during her being with you to have such care over her."⁶³

The classroom at Gorhambury, closely supervised by Anne Bacon, provided her two sons with a disciplined and Protestant education as well as a bond between them, which both brothers shared throughout their lives. Much of what is known about this bond can be read in their letters after they entered the university and as they pursued their unique careers. When it came time for the boys to leave the schoolhouse at Gorhambury and enter Trinity College at Cambridge because of its Puritan affiliations, Anthony was fourteen and Francis was twelve. According to Robert Tittler, Nicholas Bacon sought the same education he had received for his sons—three from his first marriage as well as Anthony and Francis—and planned to have them continue at Gray's Inn. The sons

⁶² Virgil B. Heltzel, "Young Francis Bacon's Tutor," *Modern Language Notes*, 63 (November, 1948): 483-5.

⁶³ Jardine and Stewart, *Hostage to Fortune*, 33.

attended Trinity instead of Corpus because the Master of Trinity was Robert Beaumont, a colleague of Bacon's and a scholar known for his Puritan beliefs.⁶⁴

It is possible that Nicholas and Ann Bacon believed Francis, a precocious but fragile boy, was not only ready for the university, but also would be a companion for his older brother. Similar to their closely supervised education at home, Anthony and Francis benefited from the assistance and supervision of John Whitgift, the Master of Trinity College. Unlike the other students who had to cope with the challenges of dormitory life, Anthony and Francis Bacon lived with Whitgift, who personally managed their expenses and monitored their studies and activities. One could argue that Nicholas Bacon's selection of Whitgift as a mentor and guardian may have been a disappointment to Anne who would have preferred someone more sympathetic to nonconformist activists at the university. In addition, Anne conveyed her personal dislike of Whitgift when she described him as one who was "the destruction of our church, for he loves his own glory more than the glory of Christ."⁶⁵ A brilliant scholar whose religious views supported those of Calvin, Whitgift possessed an authoritative manner. He believed Puritan writings were heretical and threatened the unity of the Church of England. Whitgift was also politically astute; he knew his Queen, the chancellor of the university (Lord Burghley), and Nathaniel Bacon wanted to end nonconformist activism. Later on, Elizabeth appointed Whitgift Archbishop of Canterbury. Could it be that Nicholas Bacon did not share his wife's passion for Puritan activism, and instead, believed such allegiance might hurt the future careers of his sons?

⁶⁴ Tittler, *Nicholas Bacon*, 62.

⁶⁵ Israel Levine, *Francis Bacon, 1561-1626* (New York: Kennikat Press, 1970), 16.

Before his death in 1579, Nicholas Bacon must have been disappointed with the progress of his two younger sons. During their time at Trinity, they studied the Latin language, the trivium and quadrivium, as well as natural, moral and metaphysical philosophy; however, with the impact of humanism, there was debate as to how the curriculum should be taught. Dr. William Rawley, chaplain, secretary and later biographer of Francis Bacon, claimed that while Bacon was a student at Cambridge, “he fell into the dislike of the philosophy of Aristotle, not for the worthlessness of the author, to whom he would ever ascribe all high attributes, but for the unfruitfulness of the way.”⁶⁶ In his biography of Francis Bacon, Richard Church concluded while it was not uncommon for students to criticize their textbooks, “it was worth noting that Bacon himself believed that his fundamental quarrel with Aristotle had begun with the first efforts of thought, and this is the one recollection remaining of his early tendency in speculation.”⁶⁷

Aside from this brief insight into the early thinking of Francis Bacon, little is known about the education of the Bacon brothers at Cambridge. During their three-year stay at Cambridge, the university closed twice due to outbreaks of the plague. The university was shut down between August, 1574 and March, 1575, and a second time in August, 1575 until October. Anne Bacon worried about the fragile health of both boys, Anthony in particular, who suffered from “rheumatic disorders and other infirmities.”⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Markku Peltonen, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Bacon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 3. Also see Anthony Quinton, *Francis Bacon* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1980), 2.

⁶⁷ Richard W. Church, *Bacon* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1894), 6-7.

⁶⁸ Thomas Birch, *Memoirs of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, vol., I (London: A. Millar, 1754), 12.

In an effort to make sure her sons were comfortable, Anne sent funds for elegant clothing, delicacies, fineries and coal during the summer months.⁶⁹

While Anne Bacon worried about the health of her sons at Cambridge and later, at Gray's Inn, she also was concerned about the course of their academic studies, and more importantly, their religious devotion. Following the example of their father and half-brothers, Anthony and Francis entered Gray's Inn during the summer of 1576, and began their study of law. Within the year, Nicholas Bacon arranged for Francis to accompany Sir Anyas Paulet, the ambassador to France, on a diplomatic mission to the Valois court and thus obtain an education in the art of diplomatic service. Three years later, when his father had died, Francis returned home and resumed his studies at Gray's Inn. It is at this point that the extant letters of Lady Bacon reveal her concern for the physical and spiritual health of her sons. One could argue that Anne Bacon had deferred to her husband in matters of education and career for their two sons; however, her voice became louder after his death. Unfortunately for Anne, her sons were determined to fulfill their ambitions, often ignoring her admonitions concerning finances, discipline and piety.

An examination of the letters of Anne Bacon serve to illuminate the relationship between a disciplined, pious and devoted mother and two sons, each intelligent and independent, but lacking in foresight and discretion. Anthony Bacon's desire for adventure in Europe after the death of his father and his subsequent employment as an intelligence source for the English government apparently distressed his mother, who voiced her concern over Anthony's Catholic company and his constant request for funds. Unaware of Anthony's role as a spy for the English government, Anne Bacon viewed

⁶⁹ Jardine and Stewart, *Hostage to Fortune*, 36-7.

Anthony's affiliations with English Roman Catholics living in exile as a threat to his faith and security. In a letter dated August 17, 1589, to his friend Anthony Bacon, Captain Frances Allen conveyed the frustration Lady Bacon felt over her son's association with Catholics and his blatant rejection of God's will. Allen also confirmed the report that Thomas Lawson, a Catholic and friend of Anthony Bacon, was imprisoned because of Lady Bacon's accusations of treason. Allen's account of his conversation with Anne Bacon reflects her disappointment with Anthony as well as her decision to take matters into her own hands. According to Allen, Lady Bacon was frustrated and angry when Anthony did not return home and "She is resolved to procure her Majesty's letter to force you (Anthony) to return; and when that should be, if her Majesty gives you your right or desert, she should clap you up in prison."⁷⁰

Although Anthony Bacon's activities abroad worried and often infuriated Lady Bacon, she could not hide her affection for him. When he ran out of funds and discovered the Queen would not provide additional aid, Anthony returned to London after being away for twelve years. At Gray's Inn, he received the following letter from his mother, which reflected her pious nature as well as her concern for his physical and emotional well-being: "...That you are returned at length I am right glad. God bless it to us both.... . I have entertained this gentleman, Mr. Faunt, to do so much kindness for me as to journey towards you, because your brother is preparing your lodging at Gray's Inn very carefully for you."⁷¹ Lady Bacon also made it clear to Anthony that he was not to forsake his religious devotion, and the "one counsel your Christian and natural mother doth give you before the Lord, that above all worldly respects you carry yourself ever at

⁷⁰ James Spedding, ed., *An Account of the Life and Times of Francis Bacon* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1880), 59.

⁷¹ Spedding, *The Letters and the Life of Francis Bacon*, vol. II, 58.

your first coming as one that doth unfeignedly profess the true religion.”⁷² Anne ends her correspondence by reminding Anthony, “I trust you, with your servants, use prayer twice a day, having been where reformation is.”⁷³

Lady Bacon’s Puritan prejudices did not prevent her from offering advice to her sons, especially when it came to their religious devotion and careers. Possessing close ties with the Court for most of her life, Lady Bacon understood the importance of distinguishing oneself in public. She hoped that Anthony would pursue a conservative life at Gray’s Inn where he could obtain the skills and contacts for a position in government. Perhaps Anne Bacon was disappointed with the career path of her first-born. Instead of following his mother’s wishes, Anthony chose to leave Gray’s Inn and take up residence with Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex. Skilled in foreign espionage networks, Anthony Bacon provided Essex with valuable foreign intelligence, necessary for the Earl’s planning and meeting with the Crown’s ministers. A young man who was a favorite of Elizabeth’s court, Essex benefited greatly from Anthony’s intelligence gathering.

Concerned about the company of her sons in London, especially about the poor health of Anthony who probably suffered from severe arthritis, Lady Bacon sent letters advising her elder son, “I pray you keep good diet and order,”⁷⁴ and “Believe not everyone that speaks fair to you at your first coming. It is to serve their turn.”⁷⁵ Despite her frustration with Anthony’s selection of friends and career, Anne Bacon did not waver in her devotion to him. When he needed money, she sent it, sometimes begrudgingly.

⁷² Spedding, *The Letters and the Life of Francis Bacon*, vol. II, 58.

⁷³ Spedding, *The Letters and the Life of Francis Bacon*, vol. II, 58.

⁷⁴ Spedding, *The Letters and Life of Francis Bacon*, vol. II, 74.

⁷⁵ Spedding, *The Letters and Life of Francis Bacon*, vol. II, 76.

During the summer months, both Francis and Anthony requested strawberries from the patches at Gorhambury, and their mother sent one of her servants with strawberries and a half-dozen young pigeons.⁷⁶ With a familial background steeped in intellectual pursuits and religious devotion as well as in government service, Anne Bacon found it difficult to witness the directions her sons chose as they grappled with adulthood.

Believing his influential connections might provide him with a position, Francis Bacon decided to pursue legal studies at Gray's Inn after the death of his father. His commitment to his studies and the long hours he devoted to reading must have worried his mother as she wrote to Anthony about her concerns for Francis' health:

I verily think your brother's weak stomach to digest hath been much caused and confirmed by untimely going to bed, and then musing *nescio quid* when he should sleep, and then in consequent by late rising and long lying in bed, whereby his men are made slothful and himself continueth sickly. But my sons haste not to hearken to their mother's good counsel in time to prevent.⁷⁷

Despite her strong Puritan beliefs and her support of nonconformist activists, Ann Bacon failed to obtain the support of her sons in her religious endeavors. In a letter to her brother-in-law Lord Burghley, Ann Bacon pleaded the case for Nonconformist preachers who were ordered to stop practicing by Bishop Whitgift and his followers. Ascertaining the efficacy of such clerics while conveying her pious commitment, Anne wrote:

I will not deny, but as I may hear them in their public exercises as a chief duty commanded by God to widows, and also I confess as one that hath found mercy, that I have profited more in the inward feeling of knowledge of God his holy will, though but in a small measure, by such sincere and sound opening of the Scriptures by an ordinary preaching within these seven or eight years, than I did by hearing odd sermons at Paul's wellnigh twenty years together. I mention this unfeignedly the rather to excuse this my boldness towards your Lordship to

⁷⁶ Daphne du Maurier, *Golden Lads: Sir Francis Bacon, Anthony Bacon and Their Friends* (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1975), 74-5.

⁷⁷ Spedding, *The Letters and Life of Francis Bacon*, vol. II, 112. See also Church, *Bacon*, 10.

think upon their suit, and as God shall move your understanding heart to further it.⁷⁸

Anne Bacon's support of the Puritan ministers was not adopted by either son and Francis decided to associate with the Anglican preacher Dr. Andrews instead of with the nonconformists Thomas Cartwright and Walter Travers whom his mother preferred. While James Spedding believed that Francis resented his mother's strong Puritan allegiance, and this is why he chose to go his own way,⁷⁹ might not Francis Bacon's action suggest that he recognized the political climate of the period and personally, if not professionally, realized Puritan activism would be a divisive force to the Protestant faith in England?

The religious disagreement between Francis and his mother did not interfere with Anne Bacon's persistence to help her son obtain a position in government. After Francis appealed to his uncle upon several occasions to help him with a position, Anne Bacon intervened in order to secure Francis the role as Attorney-General. William Cecil replied to his sister-in-law with a letter dated August 29, 1593, which acknowledged Anne's wish as well as the learning and virtue of her son. Politely but clearly, Cecil informed Anne that he would be unable to help Francis when he wrote, "I am of less power to do my friends good than the world thinketh."⁸⁰ Though her efforts failed, Anne Bacon continued to monitor the activities of Francis as well as those of his brother, with her consistent reminders to watch their health, remember God and keep good company. Anne Bacon was a woman in her seventies, however, and her failing health prevented her from continuing the active role she once assumed. Spedding concluded the latest

⁷⁸ Spedding, *An Account of the Life and Times of Francis Bacon*, 20.

⁷⁹ Spedding, *An Account of the Life and Times of Francis Bacon*, 21.

⁸⁰ Spedding, *An Account of the Life and Times of Francis Bacon*, 116.

reference he obtained of Anne Bacon was a letter from her to the Queen, dated March 12, 1599, in which Anne described her “health being worn.”⁸¹ Her voice was mysteriously absent when Anthony died in 1601 at the age of forty-three, and there is no record of how Anne or Francis received the news of his death. If it was not for the letter of Francis Bacon to Sir Micahel Hicks dated August, 27, 1610, Spedding claimed it would have been possible to conclude Anne had died after her letter to Elizabeth.⁸² This was not the case, however, as Francis thanked Mr. Hicks for his company at her funeral, in which Mr. Fenton, the preacher at Gray’s Inn, delivered the sermon. Anne Bacon died at the age of eighty-two, never to witness the eventual rise in political power of her son, or to realize the fame he would achieve as a philosopher.

Any attempt to reduce Anne Bacon’s life to an angry and aggressive matriarch who consistently monitored the activities of her sons ignores her unusual role as an intellect and as a mother. She certainly conveyed her dedication to learning as well as to strong religious convictions in her writings and in her allegiance to Puritan ministers, many of whom she assisted without the support of her husband or sons. Anne’s letters reveal her concern for the moral and spiritual education of her children and this can be seen well into their adulthood. Her school at Gorhambury provided a strong foundation for future scholarship; yet, despite her inquiries and admonitions, Anthony and Francis cultivated their intellect and pursued lifestyles that must have been both foreign and frustrating to their mother. Although historians such as Elaine Beilin speculated that Anne Bacon’s letters indicate attempts to “exert complete control over her sons’ lives,” as well as “reveal a woman trying to live a vicarious public life through her sons, attempting

⁸¹ Spedding, *An Account of the Life and Times of Francis Bacon*, 623.

⁸² Spedding, *An Account of the Life and Times of Francis Bacon*, 623-4.

to direct their friendships and their careers where her own could not go,”⁸³ the fact remains that Anne consistently forgave her sons, providing them with advice and support they seemed always in need of. Perhaps, then, it does not appear unusual that at the end of his life, Francis Bacon requested to be buried next to his mother. According to Bacon biographer Edwin Abbott, Anne Bacon’s impact on Francis’ religious views when he was young, “may perhaps in part account for his decision during his old age to be buried in St. Michael’s Church, near St. Albans, where his mother was buried.”⁸⁴

**Elizabeth Cary (Lady Falkland)
1585-1639**

Torn between a sense of religious conviction and maternal responsibility, Elizabeth Cary cultivated her role as the mother of eleven children. Contending with parental rule and then marital dominion, Elizabeth employed her intellectual skills and quiet demeanor to accomplish her goals within a patriarchal world where women possessed a voice, often mitigated by reminders of their social position. Yet Elizabeth Cary’s voice gradually made its successful ascent in her resolve to convert to Catholicism; such a decision would end her marriage, temporarily separate her from her children, but also liberate Elizabeth from a long struggle between the call to conform and the will to resist.⁸⁵

Although historians have drawn parallels between the strong will and determination of Elizabeth Cary and the personalities in her literary works such as *The*

⁸³ Beilin, *Redeeming Eve*, 60-1.

⁸⁴ Edwin Abbott, *Francis Bacon: An Account of His Life and Works* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1885), 12-13.

⁸⁵ See *The Lady Falkland: Her Life*, ed. Heather Wolfe, *Renaissance Texts from Manuscript*, No. 4 (Cambridge: RTM Publications, 2001). Also see Heather Wolfe, “The Scribal Hands and Dating of *Lady Falkland: Her Life*,” in *English Manuscript Studies, 1100-1700: Writings by Early Modern Women*, eds. Peter Beal & Margaret J.M. Ezell, vol. 9 (London: The British Library, 2000): 187-217.

Tragedie of Mariam, Faire Queene of Jewry, they have largely overlooked the relationship Elizabeth cultivated with her children.⁸⁶ Molded by her early life and her disdain for authority, Elizabeth Cary expressed her resistance by embracing Catholicism, and seeing to the Catholic conversion of six of her eleven children. This extraordinary development would be surpassed by the construction of a biography of Elizabeth Cary, authored by one of her daughters. Could it be that Cary had made such an impact upon her children that they honored her memory by writing a biography of her life? Or, was Elizabeth Cary's life one in which her children believed future generations should know? Drawing upon the major source on Elizabeth Cary's life, a biography entitled *Lady Falkland: Her Life*, one may begin to uncover her perceptions of self and motherhood.

Early Life

Unlike Margaret More Roper and Anne Cooke Bacon whose parents made a serious commitment to spiritual development and educational achievement, Elizabeth Tanfield Cary did not grow up in a household with a legacy of erudite parents who meticulously nurtured her studies. Elizabeth Tanfield, later Elizabeth Cary, was born in 1585, the only child of Sir Laurence and Lady Elizabeth Tanfield of Burford Priory, Oxford. During the Middle Ages, Burford Priory had been a religious house and hospital; however, with the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII in 1538, the property transferred to secular ownership, eventually acquired by Laurence Tanfield by

⁸⁶ See Meredith Skura, "The Reproduction of Mothering in *Mariam, Queen of Jewry*: A Defense of 'Biographical' Criticism," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, vol. 16, no. 1 (Spring, 1997): 27-56; Naomi Miller, "Domestic Politics in Elizabeth Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 37 (Spring, 1997): 353-69; Sandra Fischer, "Elizabeth Cary and Tyranny, Domestic and Religious," in *Silent but for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators and Writers of Religious Works*, ed. Margaret P. Hannay, 224-65; and Elaine Beilin, "Elizabeth Cary, *The Tragedy of Mariam* and History," in *A Companion to Early Modern Woman's Writing*, ed. Anita Pacheco (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 136-149.

the end of the sixteenth century. Under his ownership, Tanfield transformed the property into an Elizabethan mansion and regained the rights he possessed as a lord, thereby ending the policies of the town burgesses who had become accustomed to collecting various fees. As a wealthy lawyer and judge, Tanfield often clashed with his neighbors, especially the burgesses who considered him “harsh and unjust.”⁸⁷ Elaine Beilin concluded Elizabeth Cary’s parents had a reputation for arrogance and harshness; moreover, her mother Elizabeth Symondes Tanfield incensed the inhabitants who complained, “She saith that we are more worthy to be ground powder than to have any favour showed to us....”⁸⁸

While the manuscript of *Lady Falkland: Her Life*,⁸⁹ written by one of Elizabeth Cary’s daughters,⁹⁰ remains the primary source of her life, early references to Elizabeth as a child are sporadic, declarative, and, void of a certain degree of intimacy reflective of a daughter writing about her mother. One possible reason for this lack of intimacy might be that the author followed a writing style she had been taught while living as a nun in the Benedictine convent in Cambray. Though it was unusual that the text was written at all, might not the absence of intimacy also suggest that Elizabeth Cary’s daughter cherished her mother’s religious convictions while failing to develop a close and loving relationship? Elizabeth herself does not seem to have a warm, nurturing relationship with her mother, who appeared to become impatient with the precocious nature of her distant

⁸⁷ Arlene Shapiro, *Elizabeth Cary: Her Life, Letters and Art*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1984, 8.

⁸⁸ Elaine Beilin, *Redeeming Eve*, 160.

⁸⁹ *Life*, 86. According to Heather Wolfe, the manuscript of *Life* is preserved in the Archives Départementales du Nord in Lille, France, as MS 20H9.

⁹⁰ Wolfe concluded four different hands contributed to the manuscript, and handwriting evidence casts Lucy as the main scribe, 87. The remaining contributors to *Life* were Anne, Mary and Elizabeth. Wolfe reported the manuscript was probably written six years after the death of Elizabeth Cary, sometime between February and August, 1645; Patrick Cary, the fourth son, later amended the manuscript between March and May, 1649, 89.

but talented child. For example, young Elizabeth had “learnt to read very soone and loved it much. When she was but fower or five yeare old they put her to learne French, which she did about five weekes and not profitting att all, gave it over.”⁹¹

An anecdotal story included in the *Life* reveals Elizabeth Tanfield’s disapproval of her daughter’s great propensity to read. It seemed that young Elizabeth had run up quite a tab from the servants who were forbidden by her mother to provide the young girl with candles. However, Elizabeth being determined and to a certain degree, defiant, arranged for the servants to sell her “candles at a half crowne a peece, ... and not having the money so free, was to owe it to them, and in this fashion, was she indebt a hundred pound afore she was twelfe yeare old.”⁹²

The early accounts of Elizabeth’s childhood from the *Life* report further instances of her intellectual curiosity and social isolation. As an only child who withdrew to her books, Elizabeth attempted to learn several languages such as French, Spanish, and Italian, which “she learnt and understood very perfectly, without a teacher.”⁹³ The author of the *Life* reported Elizabeth to have “learnt Latin in the same manner and understood it perfectly when she was young, and translated the Epistles of Seneca out of it into English.”⁹⁴ It was not Elizabeth’s language ability, however, which attracted the attention of her father to her intellect. Instead, it was her insight about a case of an accused witch whom her father was defending that caught his attention. At the time of the trial, Elizabeth was ten years old, and she sensed the fear and distress of the woman on trial who answered “yes” to the accusations of the plaintiffs. Persuaded by his

⁹¹ *The Lady Falkland: Her Life*, ed. Heather Wolfe, *Renaissance Texts from Manuscript*, 105-6. All references to this edition of Lady Falkland’s life will be referred to as *Life*.

⁹² *Life*, 108.

⁹³ *Life*, 106. See Reynolds, *The Learned Lady*, 34.

⁹⁴ *Life*, 106.

daughter to pose the question as to whether the poor woman also bewitched to death Mr. John Symondes (Elizabeth's uncle), Laurence Tanfield received a response of yes. It was at this point that the woman was acquitted since Mr. John Symondes was alive and well, and the details of the threats against her if she did not confess, became known.⁹⁵

Elizabeth's father seemed intrigued with the intelligence of his daughter, and when Elizabeth was twelve, he gave her a copy of Calvin's *Institutes*. Elizabeth read the text, but not without objections, and her father concluded, "this girle hath a spirit averse from Calvin."⁹⁶ The next five years passed without any mention of familial interactions in the life of Elizabeth Cary. At the age of seventeen, Elizabeth was married at Burford Church to Sir Henry Cary, who was the son of Edward Cary of Barkhamsted in Harfordshire.⁹⁷ According to the author of the *Life*, Henry Cary married Elizabeth because she was the sole heir; he had no former acquaintance with Elizabeth and after the wedding, she stayed at her father's house for a year while her husband remained at the court of his father's house from which he left to conduct business in Holland.

Interestingly, Elizabeth's mother designated others to write letters on behalf of her daughter to Henry Cary while he was away.⁹⁸ One possible reason as to why Lady Tanfield chose to do this may be that she did not trust what her precocious and independent daughter would write. A second explanation may be simply that Elizabeth refused to write. This arrangement became worse for Elizabeth when she had to go to her husband's home and live with his mother Katherine Cary. Self-absorbed and intolerant of individual differences, Elizabeth's mother-in-law made her life miserable, confining

⁹⁵ *Life*, 106-7.

⁹⁶ *Life*, 108.

⁹⁷ *Life*, 108.

⁹⁸ *Life*, 109.

the young bride to her room and then taking away all her books “with command to have no more brought to her.”⁹⁹

The two people reported to have visited Elizabeth during this period were her sister-in-law Elizabeth Bland Cary, wife of Sir Philip Cary, and a gentlewoman who waited on her mother-in-law. Elizabeth withdrew into her writing and she wrote *The Tragedie of Mariam, Faire Queene of Jewry*, a work dedicated to Elizabeth Bland Cary.¹⁰⁰ Later on, Elizabeth would write a history of Edward II, complete translations of Seneca’s epistles, and saints’ lives in verse.¹⁰¹

Since she was at her husband’s home, Elizabeth’s mother no longer controlled her letters to Henry, who had been taken prisoner by the Spanish until his family paid his ransom in 1606. Henry Cary did notice a difference in the letters he now received and according to Elizabeth’s daughter, “these he liked much, but believed some other did them; till having examined her about it, and found the contrary, he grew better acquainted with her and esteemed her more.”¹⁰²

One year before the return of her husband, Elizabeth Cary experienced a major shift in her religious belief. Already rejecting the dogmatic nature of Calvinism, Elizabeth also began to challenge Anglican theology after she finished reading Richard Hooker’s *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. Her daughter wrote, “She grew into much doubt of her religion..., it seemed to her, he (Hooker) left her hanging in aire, for having

⁹⁹ *Life*, 109.

¹⁰⁰ Wolfe, 110.

¹⁰¹ Barbara K. Lewalski, “Writing Women and Reading the Renaissance,” *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 44, no. 4 (Winter, 1991): 806. See also Kim Walker, *Women Writers of the English Renaissance* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996); Betty Travitsky, ed. *The Paradise of Women: Writings by Englishwomen of the Renaissance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 209-231; Elaine Beilin, “Elizabeth Cary, The Tragedy of Mariam and History,” 136-149; *The Female Spectator: English Women Writers Before 1800*, eds. Mary R. Mahl and Helene Koon (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), 99-117.

¹⁰² *Life*, 110.

brought her so farre she saw not how, nor att what, she could stop, till she returned to the church from whence they were come.”¹⁰³ Elizabeth’s interest in Catholicism was further strengthened by her contact with her brother-in-law Adolphus Cary, who had recently returned from Italy. Following the suggestions of Adolphus, Elizabeth started to read the Church fathers, especially Augustine, and as a result, “her distrust of her religion increased by reading them.”¹⁰⁴ However, the year was 1605, and despite the fact that Elizabeth may have thought about converting at this time, it would be twenty-one more years before she took this monumental step.

Elizabeth Cary and Motherhood

Elizabeth Cary continued to struggle with the socially accepted female role of wife and impending motherhood and her more intellectual pursuits. When Henry Cary returned, the couple lived for some time at his family home, where Elizabeth would give birth to several of their eleven children.¹⁰⁵ In 1609, seven years after they were married, Elizabeth and Henry Cary had a daughter, Katherine. After the birth of her son Lucius one year later, Elizabeth’s daughter reported that he was taken away to live in the house of Lord Tanfield.¹⁰⁶ The *Life* does not provide any explanation as to why Lucius was to live with Elizabeth’s parents; the only reference to Lucius’ departure was the author’s recollection as to how her mother nursed and cared for her children, with the exception of Lucius, whom Laurence Tanfield took to live with him at the time of Lucius’ birth.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ *Life*, 110-11.

¹⁰⁴ *Life*, 111.

¹⁰⁵ Katherine was the oldest; Lucius was born in 1610; Lorenzo in 1613; Anne in 1614; Edward in 1616; Elizabeth in 1617; Lucy in 1619; Victoria in 1620; Mary in 1622; Patrick in 1624 and Henry in 1625. Elizabeth Cary had also suffered miscarriages, one of which took place after she fell from riding a horse.

¹⁰⁶ *Life*, 113.

¹⁰⁷ *Life*, 113.

One possible reason that Elizabeth's parents reared young Lucius was their interest in him as an heir. Laurence and Elizabeth Tanfield may have viewed young Lucius as the son whom they never had and may have decided to prepare him for his position in society.

According to the author of the *Life*, Elizabeth Cary was a caring mother. As a young mother, Elizabeth "did seem to shew herself capable of what she would apply herself to; she was very carefull and diligent in the disposition of the affaires of her house of all sorts."¹⁰⁸ During her beginning years as a mother, Elizabeth not only took care of her children, but also took great interest in working with her maids, who she patiently instructed about "curious peeces of work."¹⁰⁹ When the time came that Elizabeth had to hand over more authority over the care and management of her children because of "having other occasions to divert her," Elizabeth felt confident in the abilities of her servants because she had so carefully trained them.¹¹⁰

Despite her inner conflicts with Protestantism, Elizabeth Cary assumed an active role in the religious education of her children. Her aversion to the dogmatic nature of Protestantism, and perhaps to any position of power as evidenced by her parents, husband and mother-in-law, led Elizabeth to emphasize an inner sense of peace and goodness only obtained by a love of God and his teachings. Instead of instilling a sense of conformity and obedience with the use of a catechism, Elizabeth aspired to nurture a reflective Christian who understood his or her religion as a manifestation of God's love. Her daughter described Elizabeth's role was to avoid teaching her children "things learnt by roat and not understood," and instead, to "love and honor God, more than their father, for

¹⁰⁸ *Life*, 112.

¹⁰⁹ *Life*, 113.

¹¹⁰ *Life*, 113.

he sent them every good thing and made it for them.”¹¹¹ Elizabeth’s belief in the active and contemplative nature of her children as Christians, enabled her to guide her children to think critically about their relationship with God.

Motherhood presented Elizabeth with her share of heartaches, challenges and compromises. Her daughter noted that Elizabeth believed she might die after the birth of her third child Lorenzo, which led Elizabeth to contemplate the effect of her mortality upon her children. In response to her anticipated death, Elizabeth wanted to make sure her children possessed “morall precepts, as she judged most proper to them,” and, therefore, “she wrote a letter of some sheets to be given to them when they were older.”¹¹² When her eldest daughter Katherine married James, the Second Earl of Home, at the age of thirteen, Elizabeth had inscribed on her wedding band the words “Bee and Seeme.”¹¹³ Passing down such wisdom, Elizabeth Cary imparts how she viewed married life for a woman. To a certain degree, Elizabeth found little conflict with obedience to the will of a husband; however, she was not willing to forfeit her individual will or conscience in order to remain obedient. Specifically, Elizabeth advised Katherine before her marriage to observe the rule she had given her “That whersoever conscience and reason would permit her, she should prefer the will of another before her owne.”¹¹⁴ What is significant about Elizabeth Cary’s advice is the word “permit,” which indicates a woman should retain a certain degree of autonomy despite the fact that she might ostensibly be submissive to her husband.

¹¹¹ *Life*, 113.

¹¹² *Life*, 114.

¹¹³ *Life*, 118.

¹¹⁴ *Life*, 115.

The death of Katherine at the age of sixteen deeply saddened her mother, and at the same time, provides some insight as to how Elizabeth Cary wrestled with the mother-daughter relationship, a bond that had not been a happy one with her own mother. Katherine or Lady Home had taken a fall during her journey to Bedford to see her mother; she died in childbirth and her daughter expired three hours later. Katherine had gone to live with her husband's family in Scotland, and as she lay dying "in the child bed of her first child," Elizabeth had asked her "what she had done to gaine all their affections in so great a degree?"¹¹⁵ Such a question at such a time remains puzzling, but Elizabeth Cary was an individual who had not experienced the affection and warmth Katherine's mother-in-law had shown to her. In reply to her mother, Katherine conveyed that she did not remember doing anything in particular to receive such tenderness, but she "had bene carefull to observe, as exactly as she could, the rule she (Elizabeth) had given her, when she tooke her leave of her att her first going from her. That Whersoever conscience and reason would permit her, she should prefer the will of another before her owne."¹¹⁶

In her marriage to Henry Cary, Elizabeth followed her belief of "Bee and Seeme." In order to please her husband, Elizabeth dressed and curled her hair, and even went riding when she did not care very much for the activity.¹¹⁷ Cary continued horseback riding in order to please her husband, and it was not until she suffered a serious accident (at the time she was pregnant with her fourth child) while leaping a hedge, that her husband excused her from riding when she was pregnant or nursing¹¹⁸ Although her

¹¹⁵ *Life*, 114-5.

¹¹⁶ *Life*, 114-5.

¹¹⁷ *Life*, 115-6.

¹¹⁸ Skura, "The Reproduction of Mothering in Mariam," 33.

daughter reported, “dressing was all her life a torture to her,”¹¹⁹ and “she being excessive in all that concerned their (her children’s) cloaths or recreation,”¹²⁰ the inference was the unselfish and devoted nature of Elizabeth Cary. While this may be true, this was a small price to pay the opportunity to pursue her intellectual interests. Elizabeth continued with her reading and writing and her servants “walked round the rome after her (which was her custome) while she was seriously thinking on some other business, and pinne on her things and bread haire; and while she writ or redd, curle her haire and dress her head.”¹²¹

Henry Cary’s advancement in his career also created new challenges and opportunities for his wife. Already weathering two episodes of depression after the births of Lucius and Anne¹²² and continuing to take care of her six children after losing her third son, Edward, who died in his first year in 1616, Elizabeth had to make some adjustments to her life when Henry Cary was appointed Comptroller of the King’s Household in 1618. Since her husband had to spend more time at the royal court, Elizabeth hired more servants to care for her children in order to be with him. Two years later, Henry Cary was raised to the Scottish Peerage as Viscount Falkland, and two years after this, he was appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland.¹²³ Before her trip to Ireland, Elizabeth had given birth to her ninth child, a girl whom she named Mary after the mother of Jesus. Her daughter noted that although Elizabeth was still a Protestant, “she bore a great and high reverence to our Blessed Lady,... and offered up that child, promising if it were a girle it should (in

¹¹⁹ *Life*, 116.

¹²⁰ *Life*, 115.

¹²¹ *Life*, 116.

¹²² *Life*, 118.

¹²³ Shapiro, *Elizabeth Cary*, 36.

devotion to her) beare her name, and that as much as was in her power, she would indeavour to have it be a Nunne.”¹²⁴

Elizabeth also incurred the wrath of her father when she moved to Ireland with her family. Despite their titles of Lord and Lady Falkland, Henry and Elizabeth Cary did not have the financial resources for his installation as Lord Deputy. In an effort to provide for her husband with the necessary funds, Elizabeth mortgaged the lands her father had set aside for her support after his death. Such an act infuriated Lord Tanfield who disinherited Elizabeth and made Lucius the sole heir to his fortune.¹²⁵

Elizabeth’s experiences in Ireland had a significant impact on the rest of her life. During her three years in this country, Elizabeth gave birth to her last two children, Patrick (whom she named after the patron saint of the country) and Henry. Elizabeth met many Catholics to whom she developed a strong attachment, and as a result, she became aware of their poverty and religion. Her daughter noted that Elizabeth tried an economic venture in order to “teache beggar children trades they were thought most fitt for, as making points, tags , buttons, or lace....”¹²⁶ However, Elizabeth’s good intentions did not insure she was adept at business and her economic enterprise collapsed. Elizabeth attempted to read Gaelic in an Irish Bible “but it being very hard and few bookes in it she quickly lost what she had learnt.”¹²⁷ Dermot O’Brien, the fifth Baron of Inchiquin, a scholar and an “exceedingly good catholike,”¹²⁸ influenced Elizabeth Cary during his brief life that ended at the age of twenty-nine, and “she highly esteemed him for his witt,

¹²⁴ *Life*, 119.

¹²⁵ Shapiro, *Elizabeth Cary*, 36.

¹²⁶ *Life*, 120.

¹²⁷ *Life*, 119.

¹²⁸ *Life*, 123.

learning and judgement.”¹²⁹ After conversing with Protestants who had converted to Catholicism, and developing a disdain for her husband’s proclamation banning Catholic priests from Ireland, Lady Falkland decided to leave Ireland “with her eldest unmarried daughter and her three youngest children.”¹³⁰ While Elizabeth left Ireland with Anne, Mary, Patrick and Henry, Lorenzo, Elizabeth, Lucy and Victoria stayed with Lord Falkland.

Her personal belief in Catholicism, as well as her wish to have the children raised as Catholics, inspired Elizabeth to choose the next course of action. No longer would her conscience and reason permit her to continue as a Protestant. Shortly after her long, stormy journey home and the death of her daughter Katherine in childbirth, Elizabeth left Burford and returned to London. It was here that she conversed with her Catholic friends at court—Mary, Countess of Buckingham, Dr. John Cosin, one of the King’s chaplains, and Lady Denbigh, sister to the Duke of Buckingham who was a friend of Elizabeth’s and who considered conversion to Catholicism. It was at this point that Elizabeth decided to take the fateful step of becoming a Catholic. After her confession “to white father Dunstan (the full name of the priest was Father Dunstan Pettinger) he being the first Benedictine she had knowne,”¹³¹ Elizabeth encountered mild opposition from her friends at court and was ordered by Charles I “to remaine confined to her house during his majesty’s pleasure.”¹³²

The action taken by Lord Falkland’s agent in London was much more severe. Elizabeth had her allowance stopped, and her children first sent to friends, and then taken

¹²⁹ *Life*, 123.

¹³⁰ *Life*, 125.

¹³¹ *Life*, 129.

¹³² *Life*, 130.

away from her. The only maid who stayed with her was Besse Poulter, “a young maide who she (Elizabeth) had brought up from a child.”¹³³ Existing on “peeces of piecrust or bread or other such thinge, taken from the table privatly and put into a handkercher by Besse Poulter,”¹³⁴ Elizabeth lived in poverty. Her emotional and physical condition became worse because of Lord Falkland’s deceitful and manipulative measures to convince the Council to order Elizabeth to go to Burford to live with her mother. However, there was one problem Henry Falkland had not considered: the relationship between Lady Tanfield and her daughter. In a letter dated May 6, 1627, Lady Tanfield refused to help her daughter who was alone and destitute. Elizabeth’s mother scolded her because of her decision to convert, and reminded her of the pain and disgrace she had brought upon her and her deceased father. Lady Tanfield showed little compassion for Elizabeth as she informed her daughter that she respected, “nayther him that most good man, nor me, for if you had, you cold never have erred, nor falne into that myschef herin you are now,... I will not except of you, and if by any exterodenary devis he cold compel you, you shall fynd the worst of it.”¹³⁵

Rejected by her mother and husband, and deprived of her children, Elizabeth lived in poverty and isolation until the King received news of her deplorable condition. Instructing his council to order Lord Falkland to provide his wife with “five hundred pound a yeare,”¹³⁶ Charles I showed his sympathy not only for Elizabeth Cary but also for those who were Catholic; the king’s own queen, Henrietta Maria, was a Catholic. Elizabeth continued to show her resilient nature as she existed on the occasional

¹³³ *Life*, 132.

¹³⁴ *Life*, 133.

¹³⁵ Letter of Lady Tanfield to Lady Falkland, May 6, 1627 in *The Lady Falkland: Her Life*, ed. Heather Wolfe, *Renaissance Texts from Manuscript*, No. 4 (Cambridge: RTM Publications, 2001), 278-9.

¹³⁶ *Life*, 138.

allowance from her husband and the meager allotment from her mother, who had died in 1629, leaving the “estate to her (Elizabeth’s) eldest sonne.”¹³⁷ During this time Elizabeth wrote mainly religious works, and she “writ the lives of St Mary Magdalene, St Agnes Martir, and St Elizabeth of Portingall in verse.”¹³⁸

By the end of 1629, Lord Falkland returned to England and Elizabeth had every intention of formulating reconciliation as well as seeing her children. After a tempestuous exchange between husband and wife, Elizabeth did manage to form a civil relationship with Henry who appeared to mellow with age. After spending four years working for Charles I, Henry realized a more conciliatory attitude toward Catholics and Elizabeth might very well be advantageous to his career. Henry’s change of heart toward Elizabeth and her faith ended abruptly with his death in 1633, the result of a hunting accident. Falling from his horse, Henry had broken his leg in three places. The doctors decided to amputate the leg after gangrene had set in, and Henry ultimately bled to death. Before his death however, Henry did ask Elizabeth “if her man was there, calling it *homme*; which she tooke only for an ill phrase, but having told him, he that used to waite on her abroad was there; and that he sayd he ment not him; she saw he ment her Priest....”¹³⁹ With no priest available, Elizabeth stayed for three hours with her dying husband, and prayed while he listened. When one of the surgeons asked him “to professe he died a protestant, or ells his Lady being there and speaking much to him, it would be reported he died a Papist; to this he only still turned away his head without answering him.”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ *Life*, 141.

¹³⁸ *Life*, 141.

¹³⁹ *Life*, 150.

¹⁴⁰ *Life*, 150-1.

Saddened by the death of her husband, but determined to get her children to live with her, Elizabeth composed a plan to get her two youngest sons to a Benedictine monastery in France where they could be raised as Catholics. Patrick and Henry, who were nine and eight respectively, had been living with their eldest brother Lucius and his wife Lettice at Burford. Elizabeth, who had her daughters Anne, Elizabeth, Lucy and Mary living with her in London, formulated a plan to remove the boys from the influence of William Chillingworth, a tutor who wanted to make sure the boys became Protestant. Elizabeth's plan was successful as Patrick and Henry did eventually go to France where they became Catholics. Her daughter recorded "For the maintainance of her sonnes where they were, she did allotte somethinge which she received from the Charity of her Most Excellent Maiesty, who was graciously pleased to continue it to them."¹⁴¹

Elizabeth did reconcile with her eldest son Lucius, who insisted she live near him on the family estate. Elizabeth and her son became "good frinds" and she spent her last days "imployed in setting poore folks on worke with yarne and wolle."¹⁴² Beyond a doubt, Elizabeth Cary shaped the lives of her children. She lived to see six of her surviving children as Catholics, and by 1639, her four daughters, Anne, Elizabeth, Lucy and Mary became nuns in the Benedictine convent in Cambray.¹⁴³

"Be and seeme," was a concept essential to Elizabeth Cary's outlook on life. From her unhappy childhood to her volatile marriage, Cary managed to follow what her conscience would permit her to do, and in the process, she pursued an intellectual life as well as deeply shaped the lives of her children. According to Sandra Fischer, she

¹⁴¹ *Life*, 205-6. After the death of Elizabeth, Henrietta Maria supported Patrick and Henry from 1639 until 1646.

¹⁴² *Life*, 207.

¹⁴³ Naomi J. Miller, "Domestic Politics in Elizabeth Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam*," 356.

possessed a maverick self-image and maintained “an apparently perverse personal integrity against the conflicting voices of authority.”¹⁴⁴ Committed to her moral and religious convictions, Elizabeth still was able to compromise as a daughter, wife and mother. While she adjusted to the conventional norms of married life among the upper classes in the seventeenth century, Elizabeth also held on to her principles, which she refused to negotiate. This tenacity is clearly seen in her decision to become a Catholic, whereby she angered her family and compromised her welfare.

In her bold act of defiance, Elizabeth Cary emerged as a model for six of her eleven children, who converted to Catholicism. Might not the action of her children to convert attest to the close relationship Elizabeth was able to cultivate as a mother? Moreover, her daughter believed Elizabeth Cary’s life was so important that it should be remembered—the act of writing a history of the life of one’s mother was a remarkable development in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There is little doubt that Elizabeth Cary’s perception of religion was a reflective one, and that she wanted her offspring to live moral and altruistic lives. Her embrace of Catholicism and the subsequent conflict she endured as a result, proved to be a testament to her resilience and perseverance. What is perhaps more extraordinary, is that her writings reflect an insightful and devoted individual who possessed the capacity to influence all who knew her.

¹⁴⁴ Sandra Fischer, “Elizabeth Cary and Tyranny,” 13.

**Susanna Wesley
1669-1742**

“You must not think to live like the rest of the world.”¹⁴⁵ This quotation by Susanna Wesley illuminates a spirit that was resolute and independent in purpose, and altruistic and insightful in design. As the mother of nineteen children, ten of whom survived into adulthood, Susanna navigated a challenging world as the daughter of a nonconformist minister, the wife of an obstinate and struggling Anglican cleric, and as a devoted and intelligent mother who recognized the importance of education and moral development. A scholar whose decision to become an Anglican was the result of her reflective nature, Susanna remained committed to discipline and compassion in her life and in the lives of her children.

Although historians have recognized the writings of Susanna Wesley and have credited her for the support that she gave to her two famous sons, John and Charles Wesley, many have overlooked how she reconciled her vibrant and profound intellect with the demands of her role as a mother.¹⁴⁶ An examination of Susanna’s perception of her maternal role will reveal not only her confidence in intellectual pursuits, but also her

¹⁴⁵ Rebecca Lamar Harmon, *Susanna: Mother of the Wesleys* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), 165.

¹⁴⁶ Studies include: Arnold Dallimore, *Susanna Wesley* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1993); Rita F. Snowden, *Such A Woman: The Story of Susanna Wesley* (Nashville: The Upper Room, 1962); Abel Stevens, *The Women of Methodism: Its Three Foundresses, Susanna Wesley, The Countess of Huntingdon, and Barbara Heck* (New York: Carlton & Porter), 1866; John Newton, *Susanna Wesley and the Puritan Tradition in Methodism* (London: Epworth Press, 1968); Harmon, *Susanna: Mother of the Wesleys*. Relevant primary works include: *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings*, ed. Charles Wallace Jr. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); *The Prayers of Susanna Wesley*, ed. William L. Doughty (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Clarion Classics, 1984); *The Heart of John Wesley’s Journal*, ed., Percy L. Parker (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1903); Adam Clarke, ed. *Memoirs of the Wesley Family* (New York: N. Bangs and T. Mason, 1824); and Henry Moore, ed. *The Life of the Rev. John Wesley, A. M., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford; in Which Are Included the Life of His Brother, The Rev. Charles Wesley, A.M., Student of Christ Church; And Memoirs of Their Family*, 2 vols. (New York: N. Bangs and J. Emory, 1826); Richard P. Heitzenrater, “A Tale of Two Brothers,” *Christian History* 20 (February, 2001): 10-18; Charles Wallace, “Like Mother, Like Son,” *Christian History* 20 (February, 2001): 18-19; “‘Some Stated Employment of Your Mind’: Reading, Writing and Religion in the Life of Susanna Wesley,” *Church History* 58 (September, 1989): 354-66.

determination to foster a sense of discipline as well as scholarly curiosity in her children. Central to such an investigation will be an analysis of her letters and personal reflections, which not only convey her concerns and ideas but also indicate the decisions she has made about herself and the direction of her sons and daughters.

Early Life

Although her father Dr. Samuel Annesley is well known, little mention has been made of the mother and siblings of Susanna Wesley. Samuel Annesley's first wife had one child, and after her death, his second wife bore twenty-four children. Born in 1669, Susanna was the youngest of twenty-five children. Early accounts of Susanna's childhood fail to mention her mother who was referred to as the daughter of John White, a Puritan lawyer.¹⁴⁷ In his *Memoirs of the Wesley Family*, Adam Clarke, a contemporary of the Wesley children, also provided a vague account of Dr. Annesley and his young family with an anecdote describing the baptism of one of them. When Dr. Menton asked how many children Dr. Annesley had, he answered, "he believed it was two dozen or a quarter of a hundred."¹⁴⁸

A devout Puritan who strongly contested the policies of the Anglican Church, Dr. Annesley actively participated in the Dissenter movement, which had suffered economic deprivation and political repression with the restoration of the monarchy and the royalists in 1660. Under the Act of Uniformity of 1662, the government ejected Puritans from their positions as leaders of congregations and as professors in the universities.

Susanna's father refused to consent to the policies of the government, and he, along with

¹⁴⁷ Newton, *Susanna Wesley*, 20.

¹⁴⁸ Clarke, *Memoirs of the Wesley Family*, 26.

other devout Puritan leaders, maintained small groups of worshippers under the constant watch of the Crown. By the early 1670's, Charles II relaxed some of the government's restrictive policies against the Dissenters, and Puritans such as Dr. Annesley were able to form new ministries. He leased a meetinghouse in the London district known as Little St. Helen's, Bishopgate Street, and soon developed a flourishing congregation.¹⁴⁹

As the daughter of a well-known Puritan minister, Susanna developed not only an interest in books but also understood the important practice of religious devotion.

Annesley was reported to have read twenty chapters of the Bible each day since the age of five, and he instilled the same kind of religious discipline in his daughter, who read from his library while maintaining a life devoted to prayer and personal reflection.¹⁵⁰

While Susanna received instruction from her father, she became engaged in reading classical and religious texts, philosophy and anatomy.¹⁵¹ Susanna also inherited her father's "energetic character" and "independence of opinion," which she exercised as a young girl, much to her father's delight.¹⁵² With a degree from Oxford University and a circle of friends who included leading Puritan ministers such as Richard Baxter, Thomas Manton and John Owen,¹⁵³ Susanna's father created an environment of religious study and discipline.

Although Susanna was raised in a household where Puritan doctrines were followed and discussed, she did not choose to become a Dissenter. Instead, she decided to

¹⁴⁹ Dallimore, *Susanna Wesley*, 13.

¹⁵⁰ Dallimore, *Susanna Wesley*, 11.

¹⁵¹ Snowden, *Such A Woman: The Story of Susanna Wesley*, 6. See also Parker, *The Heart of John Wesley's Journal*, xvii.

¹⁵² Stevens, *Women of Methodism*, 25.

¹⁵³ Dallimore, 15-6. Of the many works of Richard Baxter, Dallimore stated that he was most remembered for *The Reformed Pastor*, *The Saint's Everlasting Rest* and *A Call to the Unconverted*. Thomas Manton wrote a twenty-two volume set entitled *Works*; and John Owen was a former Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University and a respected theologian.

become a member of the Established Church of England at the age of thirteen. The reason as to why Susanna made this decision remains a subject of discussion. Historians such as Newton claim Susanna's exposure to the discussions of her father's Puritan colleagues might have shaped her decision to follow the moderation of the Anglican Church with its "carefully ordered worship and its sense of Christian continuity."¹⁵⁴ Wallace and Dallimore suggest that Susanna made a conscientious decision after carefully examining the issues separating the Nonconformists and the Established Church.¹⁵⁵ While Susanna's written report of her decision to become a member of the Church of England was burned in a fire that destroyed the Epworth rectory in 1709, the fact remains that she chose this course of action not as an act of youthful rebellion but as a result of study, assessment and personal conviction.

In a letter to her son Samuel while he was away at school, Susanna shared her thoughts about her decision to become an Anglican at the age of thirteen, and at the same time, advised him how to go about making a decision about his religious thoughts. This letter reflected Susanna's methodical approach to religion as well as her encouragement of self-discovery. In her letter, Susanna recalled how she evaluated the positions of both the Dissenters and the Established Church, having "drawn up an account of the whole transaction under which head I included the main controversy between them," and then decided in favor of the Church of England.¹⁵⁶ In her letter dated October 11, 1709, Susanna also conveyed to Samuel that she had prepared a list of the reasons for her religious decision but her writings were lost in the fire that consumed their home. This setback did not stop Susanna from encouraging her son to create his own list of reasons

¹⁵⁴ Newton, *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings*, 58.

¹⁵⁵ Dallimore, *Susanna Wesley*, 16-7; Wallace, *Susanna Wesley*, 5.

¹⁵⁶ Letter to Samuel Wesley Jr., October 11, 1709, Wallace, *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings*, 71.

for his religious position, and she advised him to “write down the principles upon which you build your faith, . . . and I’ll gladly assist you what I can in explaining any difficulty that may occur to your thoughts, that you may be able to give a reason of the faith that is in you.”¹⁵⁷

The decision of Susanna to join the Anglican Church must have been a grave disappointment for her father who had suffered a great deal for his piety and nonconformist position. Though Samuel Annesley had carefully nurtured the religious education of his youngest daughter, he did accept her decision to choose at the young age of thirteen, the beliefs of the Established Church. Might not this action suggest the profound and unusual relationship that existed between Annesley and his daughter? Instead of forcing Susanna to abandon her religious beliefs, Annesley acknowledged her resolve to become an Anglican. Could it be that he was well aware of the precocious nature of his daughter who formulated such a decision after careful study and contemplation? Did he not encourage religious study and reflection as well as commitment to personal conviction? Despite such speculation, it is safe to conclude that Samuel Annesley provided Susanna with a rare gift from a father to a daughter in the seventeenth century: Susanna received confirmation of her ability to think independently and to pursue personal convictions.

Susanna Wesley and Motherhood

The intellectual curiosity, religious devotion and self-reliant spirit Susanna cultivated as a young girl sustained her as the wife of Samuel Wesley and as the mother of nineteen children. Susanna met her future husband at the wedding of her sister

¹⁵⁷ Letter to Samuel Wesley Jr., October 11, 1709, Wallace, *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings*, 71.

Elizabeth to bookstore owner and publisher John Dunton. Dunton encouraged the writings of Samuel Wesley, a graduate of Oxford and a clergyman, who abandoned his Nonconformist background and supported the Anglican Church. In 1688, at the age of nineteen, Susanna married twenty-six-year-old Wesley, who was a struggling minister beset with financial worries. Their forty-six-year union was tested with the arrival of nineteen children, ten of whom survived into early adulthood; financial difficulties; two fires and the occasional confrontation between two individuals who possessed strong wills.

Susanna's personal relationship with her father remained strong after her marriage to Wesley, as she maintained her independent spirit and resilient nature, often quoting Annesley in her letters to her children. Susanna also named two of her nineteen children after her father—the first child Samuel and the fourth child Annesley, who was a twin and died after one month.¹⁵⁸ During the early years of their marriage, they lived with Annesley while Wesley struggled to find work as a minister. Susanna gave birth to the first of her nineteen children in the Annesley home. In 1690, Wesley moved his young family to South Ormsby, Lincolnshire, where he took over a poor ministry in a remote, rustic setting. During their seven years at South Ormsby, her husband continued to fail at the management of his finances, and Susanna persevered as his wife and as the mother of eight children. Susanna had lost three of the children, Susanna, at age one; and a set of twins, Annesley and Jedidiah, who died after one month. Although there is no record of how Susanna coped with the loss of her children, she showed considerable fortitude in

¹⁵⁸ Newton, *Susanna Wesley*, 61-2.

her efforts to maintain the household while caring for Samuel, age seven; Emilia, age five; Suky, age two; Mary, age one; and Hetty, a newborn.¹⁵⁹

After seven years of poverty and constant childbearing, Susanna and her family moved to Epworth, Lincolnshire where the family stayed for the next thirty-eight years. From 1698 to 1709, Susanna gave birth to eleven more children, three girls (Anne, Martha and Kezia), six boys (John, Benjamin, John Benjamin, John, a child listed as “son,” and Charles) and two children listed in the parish registers as unknown.¹⁶⁰ Of the eleven children, four—John, Martha, Charles and Kezia—survived into adulthood. Despite Wesley’s new position and increase in salary as rector at Epworth, Susanna’s life remained difficult, as she had to take care of her large family’s needs as well as assume the responsibilities of her husband while he was away on church business. Money remained a serious problem for the Wesleys and Walter Elwell¹⁶¹ claimed there was poverty that had extended to the point of starvation. On one occasion when her husband was in prison for debt, Susanna described her anguish over the need to get bread to feed her family. The task of providing food became so difficult for Susanna that she concluded:

Strictly speaking, I never did want bread; but then I had so much care to get it before it was eaten, and to pay for it after, as has often made it very unpleasant to me. And I think to have bread on such terms is the next degree of wretchedness to having none at all.¹⁶²

Susanna’s challenges in her marriage were not only financial; sometimes she clashed with her husband concerning the instruction and education of the children. In

¹⁵⁹ The extant letters of Susanna do not begin until 1701. Both Clarke and Moore are silent during this period.

¹⁶⁰ Wallace, *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings*, 8.

¹⁶¹ W.L. Doughty, *The Prayers of Susanna Wesley*. Walter Elwell wrote the introduction to the *Prayers of Susanna Wesley*.

¹⁶² Elwell, x.

spite of the hardship that her pregnancies had on her health, Susanna continued to focus on what was most important to her—the education and spiritual development of her children. Partially from her own thinking about children and to a certain extent, from her experience, Susanna developed an ideology pertaining to the training and discipline of children. In 1732, when her son John Wesley requested Susanna’s insight about the education of children, Susanna responded with a letter outlining as well as rationalizing her thoughts about raising intelligent, obedient and spiritual children. Included within her suggestions was a provision whereby no child would be beaten if he or she confessed the truth.¹⁶³ Indicative of her rational and reflective nature, Susanna explained her approach to handle children in this way by “observing that cowardice and fear of punishment often led children into lying; till they get a custom of it which they cannot leave.”(372) To prevent this, Susanna created a rule whereby “whoever was charged with a fault, of which they were guilty, if they would ingenuously confess it, and promise to amend, should not be beaten.”(372) Susanna concluded that this rule prevented a great deal of lying; and “would have done more, if one in the family would have observed it. But he could not have been prevailed on, and therefore was often imposed upon by false colours and equivocations, which none would have used but one had they been kindly dealt with....”(372) As the “one in the family would have observed it,” Wesley did not follow his wife’s belief that if honesty and contrition were reinforced, physical punishment would not be necessary.

Susanna’s sense of her religious role also conflicted with the perception of her husband. In 1711, Susanna displayed her independence of spirit and religious devotion

¹⁶³ Letter to John Wesley, July 24, 1732, Wallace, *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings*, 372. In the following pages, references to Susanna Wesley’s Complete Writings will appear in text in parenthesis. See also Clarke, *Memoirs of the Wesley Family*, 219.

when she conducted a prayer service in the rectory kitchen while her husband was away as a delegate to the Church of England's convocation in London. Continuing her practice of meeting each child once a week and conducting a special family prayer service each Sunday night, Susanna attracted the attention of some of the parishioners of Epworth who chose to attend her sessions of devotional prayers and discussion rather than remain with the dull curate Reverend Mr. Inman.¹⁶⁴ As a result, Inman informed Susanna's husband in London who wrote to his wife instructing her to stop her Sunday meetings. Susanna did not remain quiet upon receiving Wesley's reprimand. Although she acknowledged her husband's objections, she also voiced her conscience and justified her actions in two letters dated February 6, 1711/12 and February 25, 1711/12. In her first letter, Susanna upheld her decision to conduct the Sunday evening meetings by explaining her meetings "advance the glory of God or the salvation of souls," and therefore do not have to be given from the pulpit.(80) In addition, Susanna claimed that gender did not prevent her from talking about God or spiritual concerns of society. She maintained, "I am also mistress of a large family, and though the superior charge of the souls contained in it lies upon you as head of the family and as their minister, yet in your absence I cannot but look upon every soul you leave under my care as a talent committed to me under a trust by the great Lord of all the families of heaven and earth."(79) Furthermore, Susanna argued, "And if I am unfaithful to him or to you in neglecting to improve these talents, how shall I answer unto him, when he shall command me to render an account of my stewardship?"(79)

In the letter dated February 25, Susanna not only reminded her husband of her role as a caretaker of religious instruction, but she also referred to the envious nature of

¹⁶⁴ Wallace, *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings*, 78.

Inman and the positive results of her Sunday meetings. Susanna asserted, “There is not that I can hear of more than three or four that is against our meeting, of which Inman is the chief, for no other reason, as I suppose, but that he thinks the sermons I read better than his own.”(81-2) In addition to accusing Inman of ill will, Susanna contended that her religious exercises “brought more people to church than ever anything did in so short a time. We used not to have twenty or twenty-five at evening service, whereas now we have between two and three hundred, which is many more than ever came before to hear Inman in the morning.”(82)

Composed in a letter for John Wesley in 1732, Susanna Wesley’s thoughts on corporal punishment were only one dimension of her compilation of advice about the education and rearing of children. Charles Wallace, her biographer and editor of her writings, suggested Susanna’s essay on the education of her family was transcribed in the form of a letter and became “something of a statement of evangelical child-rearing practices.”¹⁶⁵ Of the seventy-two extant letters of Susanna Wesley, this particular one was written when she was sixty-four, and it represented Susanna’s insight about children, methodology and parental responsibility. In the introduction of her letter, Susanna informed John that she has “collected principal rules I observed in educating my family.”(369) Among Susanna’s beliefs, was the idea of a rational and responsive regimen that would develop confident, obedient and educated children.

Susanna believed the physical care of infants and young children parental development of judicious and steadfast routines, sensitive to the needs of the young person, but at the same time, capable of shaping the child’s will. Firmly believing children needed to learn patterns of sleeping, eating and interacting with others, Susanna

¹⁶⁵ Wallace, *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings*, 367.

described and justified her methods. For example, after the arrival of the newborn, Susanna underscored the importance of sleep in the development of the child and she therefore detailed practices that were necessary to provide the baby with scheduled sleep practices. Shortly after birth when it was time to place the newborn in the cradle, Susanna recommended the infant “be placed into the cradle awake and rocked to sleep; and so they were kept rocking till it was time for them to awake. This was done to bring them to a regular course of sleeping; which at first was three hours in the morning and three in the afternoon; afterwards two hours, till they needed none at all.”(369) When the children were older, bedtime continued to be a customary practice as they retired by eight, after prayer, dinner and washing. Susanna detailed the process:

At six, as soon as the family prayer was over, they had their supper; at seven, the maid washed them, and beginning at the youngest, she undressed and got them all to bed by eight; at which time she left them in their several rooms awake, for there was no such thing allowed of, in our house, as sitting by a child till it fell asleep.(369)

Susanna Wesley also believed eating was a practice that required parental supervision in order for children to consume the right food and to develop healthy eating habits. As the children became “stronger,” they were “confined to three meals a day,” in which they were required to eat “as much as they would” of what was placed on their plates. When they wanted something, the children could not call out but were instructed “to whisper to the maid which attended to them, who came and spake to me.”(369) Susanna closely monitored the eating practices of her children by instructing her servants not to feed the children between meals (except when the child was sick), and maintaining a presence when the children were fed. As toddlers, the children ate in the same room with the adults, and when “they could handle a knife and fork,” they graduated from the

small tables and chairs to the adult table.(369) Susanna claimed disciplined eating patterns enabled parents to ensure the welfare of their offspring (children experienced little difficulty taking unsavory medicine) and nurtured compliance as a valuable attribute.

Although Susanna proposed children should “be taught to fear the rod, and to cry softly,” she did so believing prudent and timely punishment would preclude “an abundance of correction they might otherwise have had.”(369) Parents needed to be vigilant and discerning in breaking the will of a child, so that their child could be “guided by the reason (and piety) of its parent(s), till its own understanding comes to maturity (and the principles of religion have taken root in the mind).”(370) Susanna noted that this was a process requiring time and devotion, and when carefully implemented, there would be no need for “severity as would be painful to me as to the child.”(370) Such parental diligence would also prevent the development of “cruel parents” who indulge their children and “permit children to get habits which they know must be afterwards broken.”(370)

The development of obedience in children enabled parents to provide the needed religious foundation for their offspring. Conquering the will, according to Susanna, constituted “the only strong and rational foundation of a religious education, without which both precept and example will be ineffectual.”(370) Susanna rejected parental extravagance and lenience with their children, indicating that, “it does the devil’s work; makes religion impracticable, salvation unattainable, and does all that in him lies to damn his child soul and body for ever.”(370) She espoused religion as “doing the will of God,

and not our own,” and maintained that a parent who “subdues the will of its child, works together with God in the renewing and saving a soul.”(370)

Susanna vigilantly monitored the religious instruction of her own children. Starting from the time they could speak, Susanna taught her children the Lord’s Prayer, and carefully added religious exercises as they matured. Cursing, swearing and rudeness were forbidden, and her children could not “call each other by their proper names without the addition of brother or sister.”(371) After the second fire at Epworth, Susanna recalled the interruption of religious instruction among her children when they were placed with various families while the house was rebuilt. Upon their return, she needed to correct the bad habits they obtained and to ensure their strict observance of the Sabbath and recitation of psalms and daily prayer.(371)

Susanna Wesley also possessed strong and passionate ideas concerning the education of her children. In her letter to John, she stated that her children were not taught to read until they were five years old, but she did not indicate as to why she selected this particular age. One possible reason for Susanna’s decision might be that she simply did not believe children were ready to read before this age and that any effort compelling them to do so might be detrimental to the process. Susanna does claim that her daughter Kezzy was forced to read earlier than five, “in whose case I was overruled; and she was more years learning than any of the rest had been months.”(371)

Susanna carefully planned the educational setting in which she taught her children. She imposed specific school hours for learning whereby no other activities were permitted to interrupt the process. Children were in the classroom from nine to twelve and again from two to five, with explicit instructions to guide their learning.

Susanna prescribed one day for a child “to learn its letters, and each of them did in that time know all its letters, great and small, except Molly and Nancy, who were a day and a half before they knew them perfectly.”(371) Susanna’s account of her teaching is interesting because she ruminates about her initial perception of believing Molly and Nancy “to be very dull,” but she withdraws this discernment and claims, “since I have observed how long many children are learning the hornbook, I have changed my opinion.”(371) Furthermore, Susanna admits she originally believed one day was sufficient because the other children “learned so readily,” and her first child, Samuel, “learned the alphabet in a few hours.”(371) After her children mastered the alphabet, they learned spelling and then reading. The school day did not end for them until they could review what they had learned that day.

Susanna’s love and admiration for her oldest son Samuel is evident in her early description of him and later in her extant letters while he was away at school. She included a meticulous account of the precocious nature of Samuel in her letter to John, describing how Samuel “as soon as he knew the letters began at the first chapter of Genesis ...went on to the second... for he read continually and had such a prodigious memory that I cannot remember ever to have told him the same thing twice.”(371) Later on when Samuel attended Westminster School at the age of fourteen, Susanna wrote long letters reminding him of his moral virtues and “of your obligations as a member of a Christian community.”(42-3) She encouraged young Samuel to continue praying and reading Scripture, as Susanna disclosed, “I desire nothing in this world so much as to have my children well instructed in the principles of religion that they may walk in the narrow way which alone leads to happiness.”(48) Susanna might have been

disappointed when she received a letter from Samuel while he was at Christ Church College, Oxford, which reported some of the students did not possess the moral virtues that her son was taught to have. Susanna wrote back reminding Samuel, “to take the world as we find it,” and to know that “perhaps their parents were vicious or did not take early care of their minds to instill the principles of virtue into their tender years, but suffered them to follow their own inclinations till it was too late to reclaim.”(74) This statement is consistent with Susanna’s belief that parents were responsible for the development of their children.

The independence and sense of purpose, so evident in Susanna’s words and actions, shaped her relationship with her children throughout their lives. The fact that Susanna continued their religious discussions as adults was a testament to the relationship she cultivated with her sons and daughters. Susanna felt as comfortable writing to her daughter Suky (nickname for Susanna) as she did to her two sons, John and Charles, who became ministers. In her letters to John and Charles Wesley, she freely conversed with them in matters of religious doctrine, often citing authors and texts clarifying her point of view. In a letter to John Wesley, dated June 8, 1725, Susanna discussed the ideas of Thomas Kempis, informing her son that she cannot recollect the specific passages he mentioned, but she concurs with him in his assessment of Kempis’ error concerning the misery of man. Unlike Kempis, Susanna argued, “all the miseries incident to men here or hereafter proceed from themselves.” In addition, Susanna writes, “eternal happiness or misery are proposed to our choice, the one as the reward of the virtuous, the other as a consequence of a vicious life.”(107-8)

Susanna continued her discussion of religious beliefs with her son Charles, who along with Samuel and John, attended Oxford. In her letter to Charles, Susanna discussed the subject of faith, citing it as “certainly the gift of God wrought in the mind of man by his Holy Spirit,” and given to those who “sincerely desire and endeavor to perform the conditions of the gospel covenant required on their part.”(175-6) Susanna also counseled her son in this particular exchange as she reminded him, “You say you have peace but not joy in believing. Blessed be God for may his peace rest within you. Joy will follow, perhaps not very close, but it will follow faith and love.”(177)

In her letter to Suky, who at the time was fifteen, Susanna expressed not only her affection but also her desire for Suky to read and to develop an understanding of her faith. It is not surprising that Susanna believed Suky’s religious decisions should be her own, and this in turn, would provide a sense of accomplishment and peace. Susanna began her letter by stating, “my tenderest regard is for your immortal soul and for its eternal happiness; which regard I cannot better express than by endeavouring to instill into your mind those principles of knowledge and Virtue that are absolutely necessary in order to your leading a good life here, which is the only thing that can infallibly secure your happiness hereafter.”(370-80) Susanna encouraged Suky to devote herself to her study of Scripture and reminded her that she had “already been instructed in some of the first principles of religion.”(380) In an effort to enable Suky to “understand what you say,” and to “practice what you know,” Susanna offered to instruct her in the Apostle’s Creed so that Suky could attain the knowledge “requisite in order to understand and to practice.”(380) Susanna’s letter provided evidence of her determination to guide the

religious development of her children beyond their childhood, and to make sure their religious preparation surpassed rote learning and prayer.

Determined and deeply religious, Susanna delineated in her writings how the Wesley children ate, prayed, performed their daily responsibilities, refrained from indulgences, received their punishments and conducted their academic studies. Susanna recounted significant principles to live by, and a careful review of her insights reveals an individual who was firm, compassionate and progressive. Perhaps one of the most insightful beliefs of Susanna Wesley was her insistence on letting a child learn not only from his or her mistakes but also enabling the individual to take responsibility for his actions.

After the death of their mother, John and Charles Wesley rarely referred to Susanna in their correspondence and sermons.¹⁶⁶ There is however, one sermon, Sermon 95, delivered by John Wesley in which he fondly remembered his mother. In 1783, John Wesley delivered “Sermon on the Education of Children.” In this address, Wesley warned parents against the failures of pride, self-will and indulgence. He instructed parents to lead by example, encouraging not only education and moderation, but also instilling in their offspring the virtues of Christian living.¹⁶⁷ In doing so, John Wesley echoed the voice of his devoted mother.

¹⁶⁶ John Wesley and Charles Wesley, *John and Charles Wesley: Selected Prayers, Hymns, Journal Notes, Sermons Letters and Treatises*, New York: Paulist Press, 1981.

¹⁶⁷ John Wesley, “Sermon on the Education of Children,” in *Child-rearing Concepts, 1628-1861*, ed. Philip Greven (Itasca, Illinois: F.E. Peacock Publishers, 1973), 52-66.

Conclusion

It would be difficult *not* to imagine how the authors of the prescriptive literature would react to the dilemma Jane Martindale's mother experienced in the beginning of this dissertation. (Recall that she faced a family crisis when her daughter Jane fled to London and lived under dire circumstances for a period.) Perhaps clerical admonition might be in order for the willful daughter who failed to follow parental guidance and pursue an obedient and virtuous life. On the other hand, maybe the parents are also to blame for their unsuccessful attempt at childrearing—after all, their daughter disobeyed their wishes and married without their consent. Fully aware of the judgments of authorities who wrote on proper and moral conduct, Jane Martindale's parents chose to follow their perception of their role and come to the aid of their daughter, immediately forgiving her and securing her well-being. As she continued to send her daughter essential and comforting provisions, Jane's mother internalized the profound anguish she felt at the thought of her daughter's prior destitute and perilous condition.¹

The account of the actions of Jane's parents, in particular those of her mother, provides an example of how primary sources, in this case Adam Martindale's (Jane's younger brother) diary, illuminates their compassionate nature, and exhibits their decision to assume an unexpectantly more active role in the well-being of their child. A careful reading of autobiographies, memoirs, letters, and personal accounts of families enables us to obtain this perspective of mothers as they conformed to and deviated from the prescriptive literature of the period. Previous studies about women and the family have

¹ Martindale, *The Life of Adam Martindale*, 8.

focused on general surveys highlighting female activities in chapters such as “Women and Religion” or “Women and Education,” in which brief references are made to prescriptive literature or of familial accounts. This dissertation contributes to the ongoing conversation by examining what male authorities professed about three main areas of the maternal role— physical care, religious training, and educational instruction—and how mothers perceived their roles.

The result is a more intimate and circumspect understanding of the roles of mothers within the family, mindful of the patriarchal nature but aware of the profound maternal guidance. To what extent did mothers abide by the advice of clerics, humanists, doctors and moralists? Mothers knew and believed the counsel of such authorities but they also modified such directives in order to cope with and fulfill their roles in early modern England. This conclusion might help explain why mothers, beset with grief when their children died, appear resigned to the fact that it “was God’s will.” A closer examination of the child’s death, however, as in the case of Lady Ann Fanshawe who lost her young daughter to small pox, reveals a distraught mother wishing “to have gone to the grave with her.”² In her memoirs, Lady Fanshawe described her nine-year-old daughter Ann as a “beloved child whose beauty and wit exceeded all that ever I saw of her age. She was between nine and ten years old, very tall, and the dear companion of our travels and sorrows. She lay sick but five days of the small-pox; in which time she expressed many wise and devout sayings, as is a miracle for her years.”³

² Lady Ann Harrison Fanshawe, *The Memoirs of Ann Lady Fanshawe*, 84.

³ Lady Ann Harrison Fanshawe, *The Memoirs of Ann Lady Fanshawe*, 84. Lady Ann Fanshawe and her husband would bury nine of their fourteen children, with four girls and one son surviving their parents’ deaths.

Mothers also were expected to fulfill their roles as the religious instructors of the household where in a passive but devoted nature they committed themselves to the spiritual edification of their children and servants. A judicious examination of both familial recollections and the content of funeral sermons eulogizing pious mothers, however, also supports the empowerment mothers must have gained from their prescribed roles as religious caretakers. Clerics extolled the piety and religious example of mothers to the point that mothers assumed a public image as exemplars for others to emulate; in other instances, the religious training and devotion mothers provided were presented as a tremendous service to the state. Perhaps gentlewoman Elizabeth Brooke understood the magnitude of her role as spiritual guide of her household—a wife, mother, widow, scholar and benefactor, Elizabeth had written an earnest but intriguing selection in her text entitled *Observations and Experiences*:

It is our Interest to be Religious

It is a most experienced Truth, that we shall never be well reconciled to Religion, and steady in Piety, until we see it is our Interest to be Religious.⁴

Family members, especially children recalled the significant impact of maternal religious instruction upon their lives. When he was summoned from college at the age of sixteen, Simonds D' Ewes remembered his visit to his mother's chamber where he noticed "her so changed and altered with sickness as that I scarcely knew her. 'Ah child,' said she, 'thou has a sick mother,' to which I answered her with silent tears."⁵ After the death of his mother, D'Ewes composed an affectionate memorial of her life. Describing

⁴ Parkhurst, *The Faithful and Diligent*, 86.

⁵ D'Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 110.

her holy and industrious manner, he concluded, “Very careful was she in the godly education of her children and orderly government of her family.”⁶

Although humanists and educational authorities advised mothers to oversee the beginning years of their children’s education, personal accounts of family members prove that mothers did more. Mothers continued to remain active participants in the educational lives of their children as evidenced by the letters of Lady Brilliana Harley, Katherine Paston, and Alice Hatton. Such sources elucidate not only the affectionate and devoted relationship between mothers and their sons, but they also reveal the concerns and interests of mothers as their children struggled with the demands of a new environment. Some mothers, exceptional because of their ancestry and educational background, developed such meaningful relationships with their children that they continued to inspire them after their death. John Wesley’s “Sermon on the Education of Children,” is a testament to his mother’s educational ideals.

Now that the relationship between the prescriptive literature and how mothers actually perceived their roles has been explored, the question remains—where do we go from here? Perhaps the seventeenth-century diarist Adam Martindale can be of some help once again. When mothers reconciled their roles with the prescriptive advice of the period, what effects, if any, did this have on their children’s perceptions of such roles? In the case of Adam Martindale, he followed the example of his mother. As a parent, Martindale also suffered the abandonment of his son Thomas who left the family nest to pursue a life heavily shaped by his friends. When Martindale and his wife Elizabeth received word that their eldest son was very sick with a fever, they went to him and took care of him before he died. Grief-stricken, Martindale revealed that Thomas requested

⁶ D’Ewes, *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 117.

“four things: 1. To be freely forgiven by us; 2. That we heartily pray for him; 3. That we would be kind to his poore fatherlesse child; 4. That his body be carried to Rotherston, and buried by the bodies of his brethren and sisters.”⁷ Adam and Elizabeth Martindale honored their son’s wishes, and cared for their grandson after the death of Thomas.

⁷Martindale, *Diary*, 220.

**Private Literature Consulted in this Study Concerning Mothers:
Short Titles (Consult Bibliography for Full Citations)**

1493-1656	Holles, Gervase	<i>Memorials of the Holles Family</i>	Memoirs
1513	Rösslin, Eucharius	<i>When Midwifery Became the Male Physician's Province</i>	Treatise
1522	Erasmus, Desiderius	<i>The Colloquies of Erasmus</i>	Colloquies
1524	Vives, Juan Luis	<i>The Education of a Christian Woman</i>	Treatise
1531	Elyot, Sir Thomas	<i>The Book Named the Governor</i>	Treatise
1532-1611	Mulcaster, Richard	<i>The Educational Writings of Richard</i>	Treatise
1533-1540	Byrne, Muriel St. Clare, ed.	<i>The Lisle Letters</i>	Letters
1540-1591	Thompson, Edward N., ed.	<i>Correspondence of the Family of Hatton</i>	Letters
1544	Phaer, Thomas	<i>The Booke of Chyldren</i>	Treatise
1545	Raynalde, Thomas	<i>The Birth of Mankind</i>	Treatise
1557	Strype, John	<i>The Life of the Learned Sir John Cheke</i>	Biography
1560	Becon, Thomas	<i>The Catechism</i>	Catechism
1564	Becon, Thomas	<i>The Catechism</i>	Treatise
1567	Harfsfield, Nichols	<i>The Life and Death of St. Thomas Moore</i>	Biography

1567	Strype, John	<i>The Life and Acts of John Aylmer</i>	Biography
1570	Ascham, Roger	<i>Whole Works of Roger Ascham</i>	Treatise
1573	Heywood, Reverend Oliver	<i>His Autobiography, Diaries, Anecdote and Event Books</i>	Autobiography
1575-1611	Wall, Alison, ed	<i>Two Elizabethan Women: Correspondence of Joan and Maria Thynne</i>	Letters
1579	Salter, Thomas	<i>The Mirrhor of Modestie</i>	Treatise
1580	Tusser, Thomas	<i>The Points of Housewifery</i>	Treatise
1580	Dering, Edward	<i>A Short Catechisme for Householders</i>	Catechism
1581	Mulcaster, Richard	<i>Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children</i>	Treatise
1582	Bentley, Thomas	<i>The Monument of Matrones</i>	Treatise
1582-1642	Betty, J.H., ed.	<i>Calendar of the Correspondence of the Smyth Family of Ashton Court</i>	Diary
1584	Cecil, William	<i>Certain Precepts for the Well Ordering of a Man's Life</i>	Treatise

1587-1590 1577-1639	Rogers, Richard Ward, Samuel	<i>Two Elizabethan Diaries: Richard Rogers and Samuel Ward</i>	Diary
1587-1637	Holles, John	<i>Letters of John Holles</i>	Letters
1591	Stubbes, Philip	<i>A Crystal Glass for Christian Women</i>	Treatise
1594	Sylvester, Joshua	<i>An Elegy in Commemoration of the Virtuous Life Dame Helen Branch</i>	Sermon
1596-1599	Southwell, Robert	<i>A Short Rule of Good Life</i>	Treatise
1599-1605	Hoby, Margaret	<i>Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby</i>	Diary
1600-1657	Cholmley, Hugh	<i>The Memoirs and Memorials of Sir Hugh Cholmley of Whitby</i>	Memoir
1600-1672	Fanshawe, Lady Ann Harrison	<i>The Memoirs of Ann Lady Fanshawe</i>	Memoir
1600	Partridge, John	<i>The Treasurie of Hidden Secrets</i>	Treatise
1603-1627	Paston, Katherine	<i>The Correspondence of Lady Katherine Paston</i>	Letters
1604	Grymeston, Elizabeth	<i>Miscellanea. Prayers. Meditations. Memoratives</i>	Memoirs
1605-1675	Whitelocke, Bulstrode	<i>The Diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke</i>	Diary

1607-1642	Henry Oxinden of Barham and His Circle	<i>The Oxinden Letters</i>	Letters
1609	Perkins, William	<i>Christian Oeconomie</i>	Treatise
1612	Cleaver, Robert	<i>A Godly Form of Householde Gouernment</i>	Treatise
1613-1644	Bacon, Lady Jane Cornwallis	<i>The Private Correspondence of Jane Lady Cornwallis Bacon</i>	Letters
1615	Cleaver, Robert	<i>A Brieffe Explanation of the Whole Booke</i>	Treatise
1616-1619	Clifford, Anne	<i>The Diary of Anne Clifford</i>	Diary
1616-1683	Josselin, Ralph	<i>The Diary of Ralph Josselin</i>	Diary
1616	Leigh, Dorothy	<i>The Mothers Blessing</i>	Treatise
1617	Brinsley, John	<i>Pueriles Confabulatiunculæ</i>	Treatise
1619	Mayer, John	<i>A Pattern for Women</i>	Treatise
1620	Gataker, Thomas	<i>Sermon ...Mrs. Rebecca Crisp</i>	Sermon
1620	Ussher, James, Dr.	<i>The Honor of Virtue; or, The Monument Erected...Memory of Mrs. Elizabeth Crashaw</i>	Sermon

1620	Williams, Geo.	<i>To the ...Memory of, Mrs. Elizabeth Crashaw</i>	Elegy
1622	Clinton, Elizabeth	<i>The Countesse of Lincolne's Nurserie</i>	Treatise
1622	Gouge, William	<i>Of Domesticall Duties</i>	Treatise
1624	Jocelin, Elizabeth	<i>The Mothers Legacie, To Her Unborn Childe</i>	Treatise
1627	Donne, John	<i>On the Decease of Lady Danvers Mother</i>	Sermon
1628-1632	Searle, Arthur	<i>Barrington Family Letters</i>	Letters
1629-1699 1625-1680	Halkett, Lady Anne Fanshawe, Lady Ann	<i>The Memoirs of Anne, Lady Halkett and Ann, Lady Fanshawe</i>	Memoir
1631	Brathwait, Richard.	<i>The English Gentlewoman</i>	Conduct Literature
1631	Comenius, John	<i>The School of Infancy</i>	Treatise
1632		<i>Two Sermons Preached at the Funerals of Mrs. E. Montfort</i>	Sermon
1633	Markham, Gervase	<i>A Way to Get Wealth</i>	Treatise
1635	F., I.	<i>A Sermon... Funerall of Vertuous Lady Elizabeth Stanley</i>	Sermon

1639	Du Bosc, Jacques	<i>The Compleat Woman</i>	Treatise
1639	Wolfe, Heather, ed.	<i>The Lady Falkland: Her Life</i>	Memoir
1640-1710	Allestree, Richard	<i>The Ladies Calling</i>	Conduct Literature
1641	Baxter, Richard	<i>A Breviate of the Life of Margaret</i>	Memoir
1641	Brathwait, Richard	<i>Holy Memorials</i>	Treatise
1641-1722	Sibbald, Robert	<i>The Memoirs of Sir Robert Sibbald</i>	Memoirs
1641-1729	Archer, Isaac Coe, Williams	<i>Two East Anglican Diaries</i>	Diary
1642	Harley, Lady Brilliana	<i>Letters of The Lady Brilliana Harley</i>	Letters
1642	Bedell, William	<i>Life and Death of the Right Reverend ... William Bedell</i>	Memoir
1642	Bayly, Lewis	<i>The Practice of Pietie</i>	Treatise
1642-1645	Verney, Frances P.	<i>Memoirs of the Verney Family, During the Civil War</i>	Memoir
1645	Richardson, Elizabeth	<i>A Ladies Legacie to Her Daughters</i>	Treatise
1645-1662	Thornton, Alice	<i>The Autobiography of Mrs. Alice Thornton</i>	Autobiography
1646-1660	Taylor, Jeremy	<i>The Whole Works of Rev. Jeremy Taylor</i>	Prayers/Treatise

1649	Porter, Endymion	<i>Life and Letters of Mr. Endymion Porter</i>	Letters
1649	Dugard, Thomas	<i>Sermon Preached at the Funeral... Ladie Alice Lucie</i>	Sermon
1650	Carey, Mary	<i>Upon the Sight of My Abortive Birth</i>	Memoir
1650	D'Ewes, Sir Simonds	<i>Correspondence and Diary</i>	Diary
1650-1661	Verney, Margaret	<i>Memoirs of the Verney Family, During the Commonwealth</i>	Memoir
1651	Culpeper, Nicholas	<i>A Directory for Midwives</i>	Treatise
1651	Grey, Elizabeth	<i>A Choice Manuall or Rare and Select Secrets in Physick</i>	Treatise
1652	Carey, Mary	<i>Wretten by me at the death of my 4th sonne and 5th Child Perigrene Payler</i>	Memoir
1652-1664	Philips, Katherine	<i>The Collected Works of Katherine Philips</i>	Personal Writings
1654	Bramston, John	<i>The Autobiography of Sir John Bramston</i>	Autobiography
1656	Osborne, Frances	<i>Advice to a Son</i>	Treatise

1659	Reynolds, Edward	<i>Imitation and Caution... The Life and Death... Gentlewoman, Mrs. Mary Bewley</i>	Sermon
1661	Argyle, Archibald Campbell	<i>Instructions to a Son</i>	Treatise
1661	Barker, Edmund	<i>A Sermon... the Lady Elizabeth Capell Dowager</i>	Sermon
1661	Calamy, Edmund	<i>...Sermon Preached at the Funeral of the Lady Anne Waller</i>	Sermon
1661-1688	Verney, Margaret	<i>Memoirs of the Verney Family, Restoration to the Revolution</i>	Memoir
1662-1671	Delaval, Lady Elizabeth	<i>The Meditations of Lady Elizabeth Delaval</i>	Prayers
1664	Codrington, Robert	<i>The Second Part of Youths Behaviour</i>	Treatise
1664	Hutchinson, Lucy	<i>The Life of Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson</i>	Autobiography
1664	Hall, Edmund	<i>A Sermon Preached... at the Funerall Lady Ann Harcourt</i>	Sermon
1665	Ford, Simon	<i>A Christian's Acquiescence... Sermon, Preached... the Lady Elizabeth Langham</i>	Sermon

1666-1672	Walker, Anthony	<i>Memoir of Lady Warwick: Also Her Diary</i>	Memoir
1667	Ruthuen, Lord	<i>The Ladies Cabinet Enlarged and Opened</i>	Treatise
1667	Sh., Jo.	<i>A Funeral ...Lady Viscountesse Castleton</i>	Elegy
1669	Littleton, Adam	<i>A Sermon at the Funeral of the Right Honourable the Lady Jane</i>	Sermon
1669-1742	Wallace Jr., Charles, ed.	<i>Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings</i>	Letters
1669-1742	Wesley, Susanna	<i>On the Education of Her Family</i>	Personal Writing
1671	Sharp, Jane	<i>The Midwives Book</i>	Treatise
1671-1714	Mrs. Elizabeth Freke	<i>Mrs. Elizabeth Freke, Her Diary,</i>	Diary
1672	Gurnall, William	<i>The Christian's Labour... Sermon Preached at the Funeral of Lady Mary Vere</i>	Sermon
1672	Rainbowe, Edward	<i>A Sermon Preached ... at the Funeral of Anne Countess of Pembroke, Dorset and Montgomery</i>	Sermon

1673	Bell, Susanna	<i>A True Relation of Some of the Experiences of Susanna Bell</i>	Autobiography
1673	Makin, Bathsua	<i>An Essay to Revive the Antient Education of Gentlewomen</i>	Treatise
1673	Palmes, William	<i>Life of Mrs. Dorothy Lawson</i>	Biography
1674	Pennyman, John	<i>Instructions to His Children</i>	Treatise
1675	Trye, Mary	<i>Medicatrix or The Woman Physician</i>	Treatise
1675	Woolley, Hannah	<i>The Gentlewoman's Companion</i>	Treatise
1677	Dillingham, William	<i>A Sermon at the Funeral of the Lady Elizabeth Alston</i>	Sermon
1677	Horneck, Anthony	<i>A Sermon Preached ...the Funeral of Mrs. Dorothy St. John</i>	Sermon
1678	Evelyn, John	<i>The Life of Mrs. Godolphin</i>	Biography
1678	Walker, Anthony	<i>Sermon Preached ...Funeral of Mary, Countess Dowager of Warwick</i>	Sermon
1679	Mordaunt, Elizabeth	<i>The Private Diarie of Elizabeth, Viscountess Mordaunt</i>	Diary

1679	Sparke, Robert	<i>A Sermon Preached...Funeral of Frances Fenn</i>	Sermon
1680	Woolley, Hannah	<i>A Supplement to the Queen-like Closet</i>	Treatise
1681	Baxter, Richard	<i>Compassionate Counsel to All Young Men</i>	Treatise
1683	Markham, Gervase	<i>The English Housewife</i>	Treatise
1683	Clark, Samuel	<i>The Lives of Sundry Eminent Persons</i>	Memoir
1684	Parkhurst, Nathaniel	<i>Diligent Christian ...Sermon Preached at the Funeral Lady Elizabeth Brooke</i>	Sermon
1686	Martindale, Adam	<i>The Life of Adam Martindale</i>	Autobiography
1688	Cellier, Elizabeth	<i>To Dr.—An Answer to His Queries Concerning the College of Midwives</i>	Letter
1689	Browne, Sarah Featherstone	<i>Living Testimonies Concerning the Death of... Joseph Featherstone and Sarah, His Daughter</i>	Personal Writing
1690	Walker, Anthony	<i>The Holy Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Walker</i>	Sermon
1691	Baxter, Richard	<i>The Autobiography of Richard Baxter</i>	Autobiography

1693	Locke, John	<i>Some Thoughts Concerning Education</i>	Treatise
1699	Halkett, Lady Anne	<i>The Autobiography of Anne Lady Halkett</i>	Autobiography
1701	C., S.	<i>The Life of the Lady Halket</i>	Diary
1701	Halkett, Lady Anne	<i>Meditations</i>	Prayers
1706	Bowle, John, ed.	<i>The Diary of John Evelyn</i>	Diary
1710	Barnes, Ambrose	<i>Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Ambrose Barnes</i>	Memoir
1720	Tong, William	<i>An Account of the Life and Death of Mrs. Elizabeth Bury</i>	Sermon
1734	North, Roger	<i>Notes of Me: The Autobiography of Roger North</i>	Autobiography
1754	Birch, Thomas	<i>Memoirs of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth</i>	Memoir
1824	Clarke, Adam, ed.	<i>Memoirs of the Wesley Family</i>	Memoir
1826	Moore, Henry, ed	<i>The Life of the Rev. John Wesley, ...Life of His Brother, The Rev. Charles Wesley, ...And Memoirs of Their Family</i>	Memoir

1868	Spedding, James, ed.	<i>The Letters and the Life of Francis Bacon</i>	Letters
1872	Wesley, John	<i>Sermon on the Education of Children</i>	Sermon
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1903	Parker, Percy L., ed.	<i>The Heart of John Wesley's Journal</i>	Journal
1938	Blackstone, B., ed.	<i>The Ferrar Papers Containing A Life of Nicholas Ferrar</i>	Memoir
1947	Campell, Mildred, ed.	<i>Roper's Life of More and Letters of More and His Daughter Margaret</i>	Biography/Letters
1961	Rogers, Elizabeth, ed.	<i>Selected Letters of Sir Thomas More</i>	Letters
1963	Roper, William and Nicholas Harfsfield	<i>Lives of Saint Thomas More</i>	Memoir
1966	Stapleton, Thomas	<i>The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of St. Thomas More</i>	Biography
1976	Shuttleworth, J.M., ed.	<i>The Life of Edward, First Lord Herbert of Cherbury</i>	Memoirs
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Wright, Louis B.,
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Francis Osborne*

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