

Introduction

Elizabeth Clarke and Robert W. Daniel

In a dedicatory epistle to *The Mystery of Self-Deceiving* (1615), Jeremiah Dyke, the Church of England clergyman of Epping, Essex, remarked on the benefit and impact devotional writing possessed. Endorsing this treatise, penned by his elder brother and fellow clergyman Daniel Dyke, who had died the year previously, and having read Daniel's diary, 'a catalogue ... of his sinnes against God', Jeremiah hailed such literary endeavours as necessary spiritual acts because 'surely wee never beginne to know Divinitie or Religion, till wee come to know our selves'.¹ Jeremiah's message – that in order to understand 'Religion' people had to write about their own experience of it – clearly resonated with many Protestants, as by 1642 *The Mystery of Selfe-Deceiving* had reached eleven editions. Increased access to this kind of literature ensured, and not just amongst the literate class, that a large number of spiritual guides and religious books were read (or heard read aloud) during the Tudor and Stuart reigns. This was part of a pan-European appreciation for and consumption of printed devotional works following the printing boom of the Reformation.² In England, and to English Protestants like Jeremiah, devotional reading was a means and not an end; it helped shape devotional writing, which cultivated an individual or shared sense of devotional identity.³

The devotional exercises of England's lay and clerical Protestants have always fascinated scholars. As Roger Pooley has observed, it is the 'mixture of fury and faith' exhibited in early modern religious

writings that makes ‘many ... Christians so magnetic’ as figures for historical study.⁴ This notion is not a modern symptom of nostalgia for the past. As the contemporary poet and pamphleteer John Milton put it, ‘For Books are not absolutely dead things, but doe contain a potencie of life in them to be as active as that soule was whose progeny they are; nay they do preserve as in a violl the purest efficacie and extraction of that living intellect that bred them.’⁵ Milton’s notion could be extended to the ‘living intellect’ exhibited in manuscript writings such as diaries, sermon notes, commonplace books, wills and poetic miscellanies.⁶ One may question whether printed and scribal works, which in Milton’s age so often defined themselves by their shared *sententiae* and religious verbiage, provided the ‘purest’ portraits of those who wrote them.⁷ To seventeenth-century English men and women, however, devotional writing was a vital tool by which they could know their ‘Religion’ by better knowing ‘[them]selves’.

People and Piety is a collection of essays that examines the complexities and contingencies of Protestant devotional identity in religious writings during post-Reformation England. It brings together fresh investigations from established scholars and early-career researchers from sixteen institutions on either side of the Atlantic. Interdisciplinary in approach, their research shows how devotional acts and attitudes manifested themselves in a variety of spaces, literary styles and material forms.

Definitions and parameters

What are Protestant ‘devotional identities’? Such a broad term requires categorisation. On the one hand, it serves as a useful distinction from Protestant ‘denominational identities’. While the former demarcates religious rituals, texts, songs, gestures and gnomic phrases shared by a variety of writers, the latter marks out the rigid and often uncompromising practices of religious groups. In this way, ‘devotional identities’ accommodates scholarship that has shown how putatively Roman Catholic prayers and precepts were incorporated within Protestant devotional regimens in intriguing ways.⁸ The term also allows for studies that nuance our understanding of the wide assimilation of certain kinds of religious reading, writing and acting that occurred within the ‘broad church’ of Protestantism during early modern England. In short, it enables researchers to

better elucidate what Debora Shuger called ‘the sociocultural imbrications of religion’.⁹

On the other hand, Protestant devotional identities could be tied to, and be a symptom of, denominational ones. The heat of Church- and State-sponsored persecution in England, particularly after the Restoration in 1660, which saw the triumphant return of monarchic rule under Charles II, stiffened rather than eroded the pietistic practices of several religious groups, especially those who came to be known as ‘dissenters’.¹⁰ These groups rejected the rituals and liturgy of the Established Church and sought to maintain their own spiritual codes of conduct. A rooted sense of devotional exceptionalism took hold as Presbyterians, Independents, Quakers, Baptists and other religious movements each independently saw themselves as a select band of saints. Their congregational and domestic devotional performances crystallised their sense of religious identity and sharpened their resolve. Each saw their own pious beliefs and practices as above reproach and disputed those of others. This ensured that their religious communities narrowed, even if their social circles did not.¹¹ Though recent studies have shown how the boundary between the Established Church and moderate dissent was ‘highly porous’, it must be remembered that a great many dissenters were still willing to suffer fines, imprisonment, transportation or even death rather than recant their religious beliefs and cease their devotional activities.¹²

The tensions within Protestant devotional identities can be demonstrated in two examples from pre- and post-Restoration England. The first is the inclusion of the biblical passage in Exodus 18 – where Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, celebrates the Israelites’ crossing of the Red Sea – in the parliamentary victory hymns of the 1640s–50s. Here early hymn writers such as George Wither, John Goodwin, William Barton, Thomas St Nicholas and a balladeer by the name of ‘R. P.’ all paraphrased Exodus 18:11 (‘Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them’)¹³ in their songs to celebrate Parliament’s various victories over the Royalists, the Scots and the Dutch during the English Civil Wars and Interregnum.¹⁴ Though these authors all subscribed to the parliamentary cause – some, like Wither and St Nicholas, even served as officers in it – they came from different religious groupings and traditions. Goodwin, although later shunned by Parliament as an ‘Arminian puritan’, was a dependable supporter of the Commonwealth and his Coleman Street congregation were

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influential in the City of London.¹⁵ Wither was a fiery religious ‘radical’ and a friend to Levellers.¹⁶ By comparison, Barton was part of a godly, popular and ‘experienced parish clergy’ who later conformed to the Church of England.¹⁷ St Nicholas was an ardent Independent, part of the landed gentry, who fell out of favour with the Protector Oliver Cromwell.¹⁸ ‘R. P.’ was a London minister, likely of the Congregational persuasion.¹⁹

This demonstrates how devotional, and to some extent political, identities could be shared by any number of people who did not share the same religious identities. These writers may very well have ignored, or been ignorant of, the earlier and alternative uses of Exodus 18, but regardless it was these antecedent echoes that gave their use power and recognition, a profound sense that they conveyed a tangible truth as old as time itself. In doing so, English Protestants made religion their own by practising their own spiritual devotions, in spite of (or perhaps because of) the apparent historic continuity of those devotions with other strands of Protestantism.

Another example of the fluidity of Protestant devotional identities is the occasional and partial Prayer Book worship practised by some Presbyterians. This is evidenced in the life of the dissenting minister and diarist Philip Henry. When his son printed Philip’s autobiography in 1698, he remarked on his father’s fondness for the phrase ‘In the midst of Life we are in Death’ in his preaching and writing, openly acknowledging that it was an ‘expression of our English Liturgy in the Office of Burial’ that appeared in the revised 1662 version of the *Book of Common Prayer*.²⁰ The phrase formed part of an anthem said or sung at the graveside as the body was lowered into the ground. It was one of the few survivals of the medieval Catholic Prayer Book for the offices of the dead.²¹ Philip Henry’s use of the Prayer Book’s phraseology may have given his High Church opponents ammunition enough. Its repeated use, however, did not indicate that he, a dissenting clergyman, was an avid supporter of the Prayer Book or its burial service. He attended church funerals only to hear the sermon and left before the rubric could be read out over the coffin.²² His use of the Prayer Book’s quasi-scriptural *dictum* for his own pastoral and personal purposes did not make him less Presbyterian – or more Anglican. It did not indicate that he was more amenable to the possible comprehension of Presbyterians in the Church of England. Instead, the partial use of the Prayer Book cemented rather than discounted Henry’s

credentials as a thoroughgoing Presbyterian, for this practice was not uncommon amongst his brethren after 1662.²³ The above cases provide a useful spotlight on the shared and piecemeal ways English Protestants lived out their faith in early modern England, revealing how religious heterodoxy did not preclude occasional spiritual accommodation.²⁴

As our definition of Protestant devotional identities suggests, this volume encompasses the whole range of religious traditions, evolving denominations and competing faith systems in Reformation England. Contributors discuss puritanism (chapters 3, 6) Catholicism (chapters 6, 7, 13, 14), Anglicanism (chapters 11, 13) and a hybrid post-Calvinism (chapter 1), with a view to exploring the formation of Protestant devotional identities as either trans-confessional or distinct denominational exercises.

As Alec Ryrie has posited, ‘Christians are more than credal statements on legs,’ and this volume of essays both complements and challenges that claim.²⁵ This collection’s title – *People and Piety* – reflects the ‘lived religion’, or rather the ‘lived devotion’, as men and women of the period described it. Though their world was factious and refractory, their words describe a struggle of a different kind – to defend their own beliefs (to kin, kirk, God and themselves) rather than attack those of others. Denominational communities were important. They served as surrogate families, when blood relations were of a contrary faith. However, religious allegiances, just like political ones, were susceptible to change and contingent upon circumstance. In a similar way, devotional identities were not static. They were often a messy bricolage of experimental, folkloric and doctrinal concepts. In this way piety did not define people, it was people who defined their piety. This volume shows how Protestant authors worked out their faith in deeply personal, painstaking and sometimes painful ways. This approach allows scholars, as John Coffey has noted, to understand ‘early modern religion in its own terms’ and by its own devotional writings.²⁶ In doing so one discovers that English Protestantism was at once segregational and social, fixed in principle yet fluid in practice.

Sources

The volume’s sources include a rich array of manuscript and printed devotional works including hymns and poems, prayers and covenants,

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sermons and sermon notes, journals and diaries, martyrologies, and ballads and plays, as well as spiritual guides. This balance reflects the now voluble scholarship on how scribal culture could exist side by side with print.²⁷ Manuscript texts were just as devotionally potent and important as printed ones. Contributions to this volume (especially chapters 1, 3, 8, 10) reinforce Andrew Cambers' assertion that there existed a significant paradigm within religious manuscript writing which consisted of 'sociability and the self'.²⁸ William Sherman's research on the 'dynamic ecology of use and reuse' of printed books equally applies to manuscript life-writing, a major theme in this volume, whereby the use of devotional texts leads to their frequent 'transformation' and 'preservation'.²⁹ A wealth of recent research, outlined by Zeynep Tenger and Paul Trolande, shows how manuscript authors were not 'dead set against print' but 'made strategic choices' and 'deployed texts tactically'.³⁰ Through a study of various religious authors and their texts, *People and Piety* shows how this was just as true for manuscript writers when writing about their devotions.

Although this volume does not address the devotional practices of the illiterate, the subjects of it reflect a variety of social backgrounds, which include landed gentlemen and gentlewomen, clergymen and their wives, physicians, lawyers, apprentices, and printers. Thus, readers are presented with an eclectic gamut of English authors playing a variety of gendered roles (father, son, mother, daughter, husband, wife) who sought to express their faith in surprising, and sometimes surprisingly similar, ways. In this way, readers are introduced to the lives of rarely discussed male religious figures, such as the Cambridgeshire clergyman Isaac Archer (1641–1700) (chapter 9) and the Kent-born lawyer and religious poet Thomas St Nicholas (*bap.* 1602, *d.* 1668) (chapter 13). Its various case studies also reveal the intellectual culture and writings of under-investigated early modern women.³¹ These include the printing strategies, formats and designs employed in the work of the Baptist prophetess Katherine Sutton (*fl.* 1630–63) (chapter 2), the voluminous sermon notes and correspondences of the puritan patron Katherine Gell (*bap.* 1624, *d.* 1671) (chapter 3), and the recently discovered life in manuscript of the London dissenter Mary Franklin (*d.* 1711) (chapter 10). The literary output of these individuals furthers our understanding of how Protestant devotional identity was shaped through familial, domestic and congregational settings. Such biographical portraits

are glimpsed here on a small but important canvas. These figures sit alongside more familiar devotional authors of the period such as Oliver Heywood (chapter 4), George Fox (chapter 8), George Herbert (chapter 11) and Richard Baxter (chapter 12). Together these studies nuance our thinking about the role prosopography, poetry, letters and pamphlets played in encapsulating and shaping Protestantism and devotional identity in Reformation England.

Scope and structure

This collection brings new examinations into the field of devotional writing, which, as Susan M. Felch has argued, is sorely ‘underrepresented’.³² This area is vital to our understanding of how individual and corporate selfhood was expressed and incorporated into the socio-religious landscape of early modern England. Miri Rubin has argued, in her study of Medieval England, that ‘identity is as elusive as it is central to individual lives and collective experience’, and this includes identities forged through ‘devotional traditions’.³³ As Linda Tredennick has averred for the seventeenth century, there is ‘still no single issue more central’ to the study of that period today than the ‘definition and history of identity’ exemplified in religious writings.³⁴ The ‘devotional turn’ in recent scholarship is further evidence of the growing importance of studying the formation of Protestant identities and the literary styles that expressed them.³⁵

Previous studies have mined many fragmentary and variegated aspects of devotional identity in early modern England. This volume engages with this work in several ways. Where scholars such as Andrew Cambers have explored the ‘godly reading’ of this period, the essays in this volume investigate a corresponding ‘godly writing’.³⁶ Where John Doran, Charlotte Methuen and Alexandra Walsham’s edited volume examines *Religion and the Household*, this work broadens its scope by looking at religious practices within and beyond the home.³⁷ The studies in this collection build on Jessica Martin and Alec Ryrie’s edited volume *Private and Domestic Devotion* by examining performances of piety that were not confined to the domestic realm or defined by a narrow regimen of psalm-singing, prayers or Bible reading.³⁸ The scholarship in this volume also complements the work of Kate Narveson by revealing the creativity and ingenuity of lay devotional readers and writers.³⁹

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The time period covered by this volume (roughly 1517–1700) is of notable import. Suzanne Trill has been right to argue that while a lot of work has recently been done on the ‘intersection between public and private devotions’, with a special focus ‘on lay practice’, for the most part ‘general studies make 1640 their endpoint’.⁴⁰ While there are good reasons for this, the essays collected here, by contrast, represent a longer view of religious history by examining the devotional writings during sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. The investigations here also both confront and complement historiographical work since the 2000s that has stressed cross-confessional modes of religious expression.⁴¹

People and Piety is divided into two central sections: ‘Sites’ and ‘Types’. The ‘Sites’ section broadens our understanding of the places in which religious devotions and writings were performed. From the 2010s onwards, scholars have paid renewed attention to the home as the centre of religious life. In particular, as ‘new historicism’ gave way to ‘new materialism’, researchers have illustrated the physical objects, decorative styles and functional roles specific rooms within the home played in facilitating Protestant devotional activities.⁴² Chapters in this section provide an additional and alternative treatment whereby domestic religious activities were fostered by material texts such as storybooks, letters and sermon notes.

Whilst scholarship has elucidated the Protestant domestic sphere as a mediatory space that could serve both secular and sacred functions, not enough attention has been paid to the devotions performed outside the home – with perhaps the exception of the parish church.⁴³ For this reason, the ‘Sites’ section also examines other, often under-investigated, devotional spaces. The academy (chapter 1), the printing house (chapter 2), the theatre (chapters 5 and 6) and the prison (chapters 7 and 8) were all important zones in which devotional identities were forged, rehearsed, read and performed. The findings presented in this section open up these spaces as being equally crucial to the devotional lives, identities and writings of men and women of faith.

The ‘Types’ section explores some of the genres in which devotional identities were couched. These offer new ways of thinking about the various receptacles of religious expression: spiritual autobiographies (chapters 9 and 10), religious poetry (chapters 11 and 12), and accounts tied to the *ars moriendi* (chapters 13 and 14).⁴⁴ Chapters in this section reveal the persistent use of and reliance of authors

on devotional writing during moments of personal loss or public persecution. They add to an emerging scholarship that is revealing the heterogeneity of texts, writings styles and mediums in which people chose to defend or better comprehend their devotional acts.⁴⁵ Ultimately, the division of the ‘Sites’ and ‘Types’ sections is not intended to provide exhaustive coverage of these areas, nor are they mutually exclusive, rather they serve as springboards for further research.

Overview of chapters

Devotional identities through religious writing could be communal in character. Recent work has sought to re-evaluate the perceived insularity and introspective writing practices of some strands of English Protestantism.⁴⁶ It is in this vein that David Manning’s essay in chapter 1 examines the understudied writings of the little academy at Little Gidding (c.1631–33). He reveals how the Ferrar family’s use of oral, handwritten and printed forms of devotional expressions constituted a hybrid blend of Humanist, post-Calvinist and Arminian influences. Their cerebral musings foraged the past to feed their present, as part of a cycle of social and textual re-appropriation. Here Manning’s work provides a unique insight into the trajectory of devotional endeavours from minority to mainstream, and how these were dissected and assimilated by the industrious learners at Little Gidding.

Michael Durrant’s essay in chapter 2 continues this theme by demonstrating the social and material production (rather than just the literary or spiritual exercise) of devotional identities. By showcasing Katherine Sutton’s Particular Baptist conversion account *A Christian Woman’s Experiences* (1663) as a highly crafted and visually sophisticated product, Durrant adduces a lively interaction between what might be described as the ‘physicality’ of the text and the model of godly selfhood that it advanced. Manning and Durrant reveal how materially and socially imbricated devotional polemics were, pointing to the religious communities that forged them.

The Protestant household, itself a micro-community and ‘little church’, was a site where devotional selfhood was frequently practised, regulated and monitored in Reformation England.⁴⁷ Ann Hughes in chapter 3 examines how lay scribal practices of sermon note-taking linked individual spiritual crises to collective experience and became

a family project. Through examining the sermon notes kept by the Gell household from the 1640s to the 1710s, Hughes reveals them as devotional prompts that sustained the family's Presbyterianism across two generations. In evaluating the figure of Katherine Gell, Hughes demonstrates the crucial role played by women within the home in sustaining a nonconformist devotional culture both before and after the Restoration. Similarly, William J. Sheils in chapter 4 examines the domestic worship of Presbyterians both before and after the Act of Toleration (1689). By investigating the dissenting clergyman Oliver Heywood's diary and his printed treatise *A Family Altar* (1693), Sheils provides a case study on how centralising prayer became within the godly home. In particular, Sheils reveals how, through his writing on prayer, Heywood configured household worship as a substitute for chapel worship in dissenting circles, blurring the lines between corporate and domestic devotion. Hughes and Sheils demonstrate how the performance of household piety could be a unifying force that helped galvanise the faith of families during trying periods and periods of great change.

Unlike the home, the early modern theatre might seem a strange place to encounter devotional identities. Post-Reformation plays were often seen as inciting sin with their performance of lewd acts, adulteries and bedevilments.⁴⁸ Yet the English stage, like the English household, could be a site where the rituals of piety were re-enacted. Iman Sheeha in chapter 5 examines the modelling out of mothers' legacies, a genre of conduct books penned and left by mothers for their children, in the anonymous domestic tragedy *A Warning for Fair Women* (1599). Sheeha reveals how the play frames the 'gallows speech' of a convicted murderess – Mistress Saunders – as exemplifying this genre, and culminates in Saunders leaving a copy of John Bradford's *Meditations* (1560) to her children. This act, coupled with her dying words, completes Saunders' journey of rehabilitation from adulterous and murderous wife to redeemed and devoted mother. Sheeha emphasises the play's function as a proselytising tool that sought to reinforce the importance of godly motherhood by depicting those who had transgressed it.

Thomas Middleton's city comedy *The Puritan Widow* (1607) attacked puritan devotional practices and derided Catholic ones. This did not go unnoticed. William Cranshaw denounced the play in his Paul's Cross sermon, later printed, for irreligiously bringing 'religion and holy things vpon the stage'.⁴⁹ In chapter 6 Robert O.

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Yates takes a different view. He reveals how Middleton attempted to reconcile the conflicting religious roles of the play's protagonist – Lady Plus – as chaste widow to her sexualised potential as a remarried wife. The play wryly subsumes what Yates terms 'devotion to mirth' with devotion to God, whereby the dramatisation of communal feasting, festive combat and the wearing of livery leads to the marriage altar, the re-establishment of Protestant religious values and the play's denouement. In this way, audiences could be taught to adopt religious conformity through dramatic and festive re-enactment – satire could (and often did) point to the sacred. In doing so, English playwrights could mock devotions and model them too. Yates's and Sheeha's findings suggest that the sermonising of plays was arguably as important in inculcating Protestant devotional practices as the preachments of the pulpites who detested them.

Those who did not heed these minatory messages, and refused to conform to the Church of England, were frequently imprisoned. For, in an age of religious persecution, English prisons were not just for traditional criminals.⁵⁰ As one Quaker pamphleteer observed, 'Prisons turned into Churches' as the Word was regularly preached by inmates within (to their fellow cellmates) or without (to the wider public).⁵¹ As a result, several inmates became fervent devotional writers and readers. Lynn Robson in chapter 7 examines how early modern prisons in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries could sometimes serve as sacred spaces. Through her engagement with elite and popular texts, Robson draws the frequent connection between profane incarceration and the consecration of space achieved by an individual's pious actions: self-examination, religious conversation, praying, reading and writing. Robson further posits that the prison texts themselves that recorded these devotions might have been read more than other traditional Protestant works, thus propelling godliness across thresholds: from the prison into the booksellers, and finally into the home. Catie Gill in chapter 8 explores the autobiographical writings of the Quaker leader George Fox during his series of imprisonments in the 1650s. Through a detailed analysis of the textual variants in three editions of his prison accounts – found in the *Short Journal*, the *Cambridge Journal* and the *Ellwood Journal* – Gill adduces the role that Thomas Ellwood (as editor) played in shaping, and not just ventriloquising, the devotional identity of this dogmatic religious leader. In doing so, Gill reveals to what extent

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Fox's representation of imprisonment – and his own devotional character – had been censored, and the effects these changes had on the reception of him and his journal. Robson and Gill reveal how religious prison writing created a recognisable form of carceral piety that connected English prisoners textually, spatially and historically too.

Devotional identities were defined not just by where they were recorded and performed, but by the literary forms they came in. Arguably the most prolific of these during the period was autobiographical writing and its corollary, spiritual autobiographies.⁵² Bernard Capp in chapter 9 examines how internal disputes within families over devotional practices, particularly between fathers and sons, were played out in the confessional spaces of their diaries. Financial and filial concerns, rather than soteriological and casuistical ones, might emerge as the deciding factors in one's choice of faith. Capp shows that behind closed doors many agonised, deliberated and fought over the kinds of piety they were expected to perform, revealing how domestic piety could be coerced as well as co-opted. Vera J. Camden in chapter 10 shows how Mary Franklin, a newly discovered female voice, used her private manuscript devotions to create an identity that could defy and defend against State persecution. As a Presbyterian mother and wife, living in a Restoration London notoriously dangerous to dissenters, Franklin chronicles the trials her family endured for their religious beliefs in a manuscript account, later titled by Franklin's granddaughter 'The Experience of my dear grandmother, Mrs Mary Franklin'. A recourse to scripture proofs, coupled with her own dramatic experiences, allowed Franklin to write a spiritual autobiography that situated her belief in a distinct Protestant past as well as in the present tumultuous times she was living in. Franklin's writing provided an enduring material record that sustained not only her own faith, but that of successive generations of her family. Camden, through meticulous research, brings the hitherto unknown devotional life of Mary Franklin to bear with vivid detail and sensitivity. Capp and Camden reveal how religious autobiographical writing served as a pivotal spiritual exercise to defend one's own devotional identity, and contend with the devotional identities of others.

Like autobiography, poetry served as an appropriate form of both devotional expression and religious exercise.⁵³ Jenna Townend's essay in chapter 11 examines the political and religious fluidity

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of George Herbert's *The Temple* (1633) to link the devotional expressions of Royalists and Roundheads during the Civil Wars and Interregnum. Readers integrated Herbert's verse into their own piety, as they responded to unprecedented religious and political upheavals. Ironically, as Townend reveals, this meant that there was often more that united Herbert's admirers than divided them. This causes us to re-evaluate how religious verse was adaptable to, as it was contiguous with, the devotional needs of those on either side of England's truculent political aisle. Sylvia Brown in chapter 12 investigates the role 'passions' played in the life of the eminent Presbyterian dissenter Richard Baxter and his devotional works: *Poetical Fragments* (1681) and his *Additions* (1683). Like Herbert's, Baxter's poetry was defined by passions inspired by the Holy Spirit, but was also grounded in more earthly emotions. Baxter used the occasion of the devastating personal loss of his wife Margaret to present his readers with a new kind of practical divinity: consolation – of self as much as others – through a poetics of the passions. Brown shows how Margaret was intricately bound up with Baxter's sense of his own devotional identity, and how her figure loomed large over the hymns and poems he wrote, thus drawing important attention to the intimate role their connubial relationship played in inspiring his sacred poetry for a public audience. Townend and Brown remind us that the potency of religious verse was situational, linked to either the biographies of its authors or those of its readers.

The *ars moriendi*, or 'the art of dying well', was arguably the figurative end and literal pinnacle of religious writing in early modern England.⁵⁴ The Ludlow clergyman Robert Horne summed up the sentiment of the age well when he preached: 'I know not when I shall die, and therefore every day shall be as my dying day.'⁵⁵ A life of piety was thus the best preparation for a good death, and one never knew whether an illness would prove fleeting or fatal. Robert W. Daniel in chapter 13 examines the devotional identities exhibited through the acts and attitudes performed in the early modern sickchamber. Through exploring the manuscript accounts of various valetudinarians, he reveals a shared biblicism employing the same scriptures as sacred acts that mirrored or contested those outlined in printed devotional works which governed the correct behaviours during illness. He finds that one did not have to be a co-religionist to appreciate or practise the same kind of sickbed devotions. By recording their similar reading habits, covenants, prayers, gestures,

speeches and praises, the laity more than the clergy made their piety recognisable and thus repeatable. While Daniel examines the sickbed, Charles Green in chapter 14 examines the deathbed. Green explores the generic fluidity of Protestant deathbed narratives, and the devotions they described, in late Elizabethan and early Jacobean England. He sees such texts as deriving rhetorical power from the persuasive and cultural capital of the sermonic, liturgical and biographical genres in which they were enshrined in print. He argues that these accounts were polemically charged, describing not just how their subjects died, but how readers might also die a holy death. Empowered lay authors, and omnivorous readers, could see themselves as exemplifying the archetypal pious death in recorded dying speeches. Daniel and Green reveal the denominational parity in the Protestant piety performed within the early modern sick- and death-chamber. Though the ill might be treated and ministered to differently, if they were to perish they wanted to be seen to die in similar ways.

By elucidating the various ‘sites’ of devotional identities, and the various ‘types’ of religious writings that espoused them, *People and Piety* demonstrates the complexities and continuities of faith in early modern England: that individual or corporate devotion was not always driven by competition or distinction, but by a genuine and deep desire, in Jeremiah Dyke’s words, ‘to know our selves’.

Notes

- 1 Daniel Dyke, *The Mystery of Self-Deceiving* (London, 1615), A3^r, B1^r. He is not to be confused with Daniel Dyke (1614–88), General Baptist minister, who was Jeremiah Dyke’s (*bap.* 1584, *d.*1639) son.
- 2 As Matthew P. Brown avers, ‘devotional steady sellers must be reckoned a, perhaps the, canon of popular reading in the early modern West’. Matthew P. Brown, ‘The Thick Style: Steady Sellers, Textual Aesthetics, and Early Modern Devotional Reading’, *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 121.1 (2006), 67–86 (69).
- 3 Jeremiah Dyke was not alone in this thinking. The Presbyterian minister Isaac Ambrose insisted that ‘If we were read in the Story of our own lives, we might have a Divinity of our own, drawn out of the observation of God’s particular dealings towards us.’ Isaac Ambrose, *Media, or the Middle Things* (London, 1649), p. 93 (mispaginated as 98).
- 4 Roger Pooley, *English Prose of the Seventeenth Century 1590–1700* (London: Longman, 1992), p. 4.

- 5 John Milton, *Areopagitica* (1644), in Don M. Wolfe et al. (eds), *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, 8 vols (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1953–82), II:492. Milton was defending the liberty to publish and the tyranny of censorship. His argument, however, had an obvious devotional dimension. Nearly half of all books published during this period were about religious subjects. See Debora K. Shuger, *The Renaissance Bible: Scholarship, Sacrifice, and Subjectivity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 1.
- 6 Margaret Ezell compares the survival of scribal documents to ‘flies in amber’. Such glimpses, Ezell asserts, of a ‘long since deceased literary landscape’, ensure a ‘continuation of that presence which survives destruction, that matter which the living are permitted still to embrace’. Margaret J. M. Ezell, ‘The Posthumous Publication of Women’s Manuscripts and the History of Authorship’, in George Justice and Nathan Tinker (eds), *Women’s Writing and the Circulation of Ideas: Manuscript Publication in England, 1550–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 121–36 (128).
- 7 Such questions were posed by Stephen Greenblatt, who argued that Renaissance texts demonstrated ‘an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity’ as a ‘manipulable, artful process’. Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 2.
- 8 See Elisabeth Slater, ‘What Kind of Horse Is It? Popular Devotional Reading during the Sixteenth Century’, in Matthew Dimmock and Andrew Hadfield (eds), *Literature and Popular Culture in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 105–20; Janel Mueller, ‘Prospecting for Common Ground in Devotion: Queen Katherine Parr’s Personal Prayer Book’, in Micheline White (ed.), *English Women, Religion, and Textual Production, 1500–1625* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 127–46; Micheline White, ‘Dismantling Catholic Primers and Reforming Private Prayer: Anne Lock, Hezekiah’s Song and Psalm 50/51’, in Jessica Martin and Alec Ryrie (eds), *Private and Domestic Devotion in Early Modern Britain* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), pp. 93–113. Also see chapters 7 and 13.
- 9 Shuger, *The Renaissance Bible*, p. 2.
- 10 For comprehensive histories of this movement and its literary by-products see N. H. Keeble, *The Literary Culture of Nonconformity in Later Seventeenth-Century England* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 2nd edn, 1991); Margaret J. M. Ezell, *The Oxford English Literary History, Volume V: 1645–1714, The Later Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 54–70; Michael Davies, Anne Dunan-Page, and Joel Halcomb (eds), *Church Life: Pastors, Congregations, and the Experience of Dissent in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford

- University Press, 2019); John Coffey (ed.), *The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions, Volume I: The Post-Reformation Era, c.1559–c.1689* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2020).
- 11 See Alexandra Walsham, ‘Supping with Satan’s Disciples: Spiritual and Secular Sociability in Post-Reformation England’, in Nadine Lewycky and Adam Morton (eds), *Getting Along? Religious Identities and Confessional Relations in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 29–56. For the interlinking social circles of radical religious groups see William E. Smith III, ‘Henry Hills Goes Ranter’, *Seventeenth Century* 32.3 (2017), 257–68. Also see chapter 2. There also existed, however, friction between competing religious groups at the local level. See William Sheils, ‘Religious Divisions in the Localities: Catholics, Puritans and the Established Church before the Civil Wars’, in Trevor Dean, Glyn Parry and Edward Vallance (eds), *Faith, Place and People in Early Modern England* (London: Boydell and Brewer, 2018), pp. 29–42.
 - 12 Roger Morrice, *The Entering Book of Roger Morrice (1677–1691)*, ed. Mark Goldie et al., 7 vols (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer in association with the Parliamentary History Yearbook Trust, 2007), I:229–30.
 - 13 King James Bible.
 - 14 See Robert W. Daniel, ‘The Manuscript Poetry of Thomas St Nicholas and the Writing of “Scripturalism” in Seventeenth-Century England’ (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Warwick, 2018), pp. 182–232. This furthers Nigel Smith’s hypothesis about ‘battle hymns’ as a popular religious genre composed during Cromwellian England. Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640–1660* (London: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 260–76. It also supports John Coffey’s assertion about the persistence of the Exodus story as an expression of political liberation during the 1640s and beyond. John Coffey, *Exodus and Liberation: Deliverance Politics from John Calvin to Martin Luther King Jr* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), esp. pp. 25–55.
 - 15 John Coffey, *John Goodwin and the Puritan Revolution* (Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2006), pp. 4, 168–98.
 - 16 David Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 384–6.
 - 17 A. B. Grosart, revised by D. K. Money, ‘Barton, William (1597/8–1678)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (hereafter ODNB). <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/1606>. Accessed 12 March 2019.
 - 18 H. Neville Davies, ‘St Nicholas, Thomas (*bap.* 1602, *d.*1668)’, ODNB. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/66680>. Accessed 12 March 2019.
 - 19 Biographical details can be gleaned from R. P., *Berachab, or Englands memento to thankfulness being a hymne* (London, 1646), broadside.

- 20 Matthew Henry, *An account of the life and death of Mr. Philip Henry* (London, 1698), pp. 194–5.
- 21 Church of England, ‘The Book of Common Prayer, 1662’, in *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662*, ed. Brian Cummings (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 183–666 (455). For an earlier version of this prayer in the 1559 Prayer Book see p. 171.
- 22 See Richard L. Greaves, ‘Henry, Philip (1631–1696)’, *ODNB*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/12976>. Accessed 12 March 2019.
- 23 Philip Henry records attending Presbyterian meetings where parts of the Prayer Book were read and states they were only occasionally omitted through ‘hast[e] and careles[s]nes[s]’. Philip Henry, *Diaries and Letters of Philip Henry, M.A. of Broad Oak, Flintshire, A.D. 1631–1696*, ed. Matthew Henry Lee (London, 1882), pp. 135, 156. Also see Keeble, *The Literary Culture of Nonconformity*, p. 36; Robert W. Daniel, ‘Prayer “Bills” in Seventeenth-Century Britain’, *Notes & Queries* 66.4 (2019), 554–8.
- 24 Other examples can be found in devotional reading habits of the period. Printed devotional texts written by High and Low Church authors were read and recommended in the same breath by such contrasting figures as Anne Halkett, Lucy Hutchinson and Richard Baxter. See respectively, Suzanne Trill, *Lady Anne Halkett: Selected Self-Writings* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. xxvii; Robert Wilcher, ‘Lucy Hutchinson’, in Andrew Hiscock and Helen Wilcox (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern English Literature and Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 360–73 (361); John Coffey, ‘Between Puritanism and Evangelicalism: Heart-Work in Dissenting Communion Hymns, 1693–1709’, in John Coffey (ed.), *Heart Religion: Evangelical Piety in England and Ireland, 1690–1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 29–49 (note 22, p. 33). Readers also crossed the confessional divide in selecting texts that provided them with spiritual comfort. This was the case with the Whig Member of Parliament for Chester (1689–97) and ex-Royalist army officer Roger Whitley. Whitley records in his diary owning both the Protestant devotional bestseller *The Whole Duty of Man* (1658) alongside the Catholic hagiography *The Life of the Blessed Virgin, Saint Catharine of Siena* (1609). Bodleian Library, Ms Eng Hist C 711, fols 42^v, 51^v.
- 25 Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 3. For a contrasting view see Peter Lake, ‘Anti-Puritanism: The Structure of a Prejudice’, in Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake (eds), *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England* (Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2006), pp. 80–97. For the ongoing debate surrounding the nature of religious identity during this period see the foreword.

- 26 John Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England, 1558–1689* (London: Longman, 2000), p. 10. This point is developed more fully in John Coffey's 'Quentin Skinner and the Religious Dimension of Early Modern Political Thought', in Alister Chapman, John Coffey and Brad Gregory (eds), *Seeing Things Their Way: Intellectual History and the Return of Religion* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), pp. 46–74.
- 27 For the overlapping and competing mediums of print and manuscript during this period see Arthur F. Marotti and Michael D. Bristol (eds), *Print, Manuscript, Performance: The Changing Relations of the Media in Early Modern England* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2000); Zeynep Tenger and Paul Trolande, 'From Print versus Manuscript to Sociable Authorship and Mixed Media: A Review of Trends in the Scholarship of Early Modern Publication', *Literature Compass* 7.11 (2010), 1035–48 (1040); Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2nd edn, 2011).
- 28 Andrew Cambers, 'Reading, the Godly, and Self-Writing in England, circa 1580–1720', *Journal of British Studies* 46.4 (2007), 796–825 (802).
- 29 William H. Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), p. 6.
- 30 Tenger and Trolande, 'Print versus Manuscript', p. 1038.
- 31 For the growing scholarship on female interpretative and literary agency during this period see Erica Longfellow, *Women and Religious Writing in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Johanna Harris and Elizabeth Scott-Baumann (eds), *The Intellectual Culture of Puritan Women, 1558–1680* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Sarah C. E. Ross, *Women, Poetry, and Politics in Seventeenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
- 32 Susan M. Felch, 'English Women's Devotional Writing: Surveying the Scene', *ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes, and Reviews* 24.1–2 (2011), 118–30 (122).
- 33 Miri Rubin, 'Identities', in Rosemary Horrox and W. Mark Ormrod (eds), *A Social History of England, 1200–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 383–412 (383, 386). For devotional identities within the Henrician context see Peter Marshall, *Religious Identities in Henry VIII's England* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 1–18.
- 34 Linda Tredennick, 'Exteriority in Milton and Puritan Life Writing', *SEL* 51.1 (2011), 159–79 (159). Tredennick is primarily concerned with the development of the spiritual autobiography as a manifestation of the birth of modern subjectivity.
- 35 For a fuller discussion of the 'devotional turn' see the foreword.

- 36 Andrew Cambers, *Godly Reading: Print, Manuscript and Puritanism in England, 1580–1720* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). For Cambers’ exploration of religious writing as a product of devotional reading see ‘Reading, the Godly, and Self-Writing in England’, pp. 796–825. For similar investigations see Kathleen Lynch, *Protestant Autobiography in the Seventeenth-Century Anglophone World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 179–232; Femke Molekamp, *Women and the Bible in Early Modern England: Religious Reading and Writing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 119–50.
- 37 John Doran, Charlotte Methuen and Alexandra Walsham (eds), *Religion and the Household* (Woodbridge: Boydell (for the Ecclesiastical History Society), 2014).
- 38 Martin and Ryrie, *Private and Domestic Devotion*.
- 39 See Kate Narveson, *Bible Readers and Lay Writers in Early Modern England: Gender and Self-Definition in an Emergent Writing Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 199–215.
- 40 Suzanne Trill, ‘Lay Households’, in Hiscock and Wilcox, *Oxford Handbook of Early Modern English Literature and Religion*, pp. 397–413 (398).
- 41 See C. Scott Dixon, Dagmar Freist and Mark Greengrass (eds), *Living with Religious Diversity in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009); Thomas Max Safley (ed.), *A Companion to Multiconfessionalism in the Early Modern World* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2011); Randall J. Pederson, *Unity in Diversity: English Puritans and the Puritan Reformation, 1603–1689* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2014).
- 42 The pioneering work of Tara Hamling exemplifies this shift. See Tara Hamling, *Decorating the ‘Godly’ Household: Religious Art in Post-Reformation Britain* (London: Yale University Press, 2010); Tara Hamling, ‘Seeing Salvation in the Domestic Hearth in Post-Reformation England’, in Jonathan Willis (ed.), *Sin and Salvation in Reformation England* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2016), pp. 223–44; Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson, *A Day at Home in Early Modern England: Material Culture and Domestic Life, 1500–1700* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017).
- 43 See John Craig, ‘Psalms, Groans and Dogwhippers: The Soundscape of Worship in the English Parish Church, 1547–1642’, in Will Coster and Andrew Spicer (eds), *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 104–23; Amanda Flather, *Gender and Space in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2nd edn, 2011), pp. 135–60; Natalie Mears and Alec Ryrie (eds), *Worship and the Parish Church in Early Modern Britain* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), *passim*. A notable exception is Alexandra Walsham’s *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity, and Memory in Early Modern*

- Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2nd edn, 2012), esp. pp. 236–40, 431–54.
- 44 One could include to this list devotional genres explored in section I: sermon notes (chapter 3), printed prayer manuals (chapter 4), salvific plays (chapter 5), murder pamphlets (chapter 7) and spiritual journals (chapter 8).
- 45 There has been much recent work, for example, on the devotional mediums, genres and writing styles of lay religious women. See Narveson, *Bible Readers and Lay Writers*, pp. 101–30; Susan M. Felch, “‘Halff a Scrypture Woman’: Heteroglossia and Female Authorial Agency in Prayers by Lady Elizabeth Tyrwhit, Anne Lock, and Anne Wheathill”, in White, *English Women, Religion, and Textual Production*, pp. 147–66; Victoria Brownlee, *Biblical Readings and Literary Writings in Early Modern England, 1558–1625* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 143–68.
- 46 See Cambers, *Godly Reading*, pp. 1–7; Narveson, *Bible Readers and Lay Writers*, pp. 11–13; Robert W. Daniel, “‘Have a little book in thy Conscience, and write therein’: Writing the Puritan Conscience, 1600–1650”, in Willis, *Sin and Salvation*, pp. 245–58.
- 47 For variations on this theme see Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), pp. 443–81, Cambers, *Godly Reading*, pp. 84–6; Bernard Capp, ‘Republican Reformation: Family: Community and the State in Interregnum Middlesex, 1649–60’, in Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster (eds), *The Family in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 40–66.
- 48 For contemporary anti-theatrical polemics see Stephen Gosson, *The School of Abuse* (London, 1579); William Prynne, *Histriomastix* (London, 1632). For a comprehensive survey of this topic see Peter Lake and Michael Questier, *The Antichrist’s Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (London: Yale University Press, 2002), esp. pp. 425–82.
- 49 William Cranshaw, *The sermon preached at the Crosse* (London, 1608), p. 171.
- 50 See Lake and Questier, *The Antichrist’s Lewd Hat*, pp. 187–228; Peter Lake and Michael Questier, ‘Prisons, Priests, and People’, in Nicholas Tyacke (ed.), *England’s Long Reformation, 1500–1800* (London: University College London University Press, 1998), pp. 195–234.
- 51 *A narrative of the cruelties & abuses acted by Isaac Dennis, keeper, his wife and servants, in the prison of Newgate* (London, 1683), p. 28. A century earlier the martyrologist John Foxe made the same observation that ‘all the prisons in England were become right Christian schooles & Churches’. John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments of the English Martyrs*

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- (London, 1583), p. 1521. For preaching by and to prisoners see: Samuel Clarke, *A Generall Martyrologie* (London, 1651), pp. 400–1; Sharon Achinstein, *Literature and Dissent in Milton's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 61; Nigel Smith, 'Introduction', in *A Collection of Ranter Writings of the 17th Century*, ed. Nigel Smith (London: Pluto, 2014), pp. 1–31 (15).
- 52 For autobiographical religious writing during this period see John Stachniewski, 'Introduction', in *Grace Abounding with Other Spiritual Autobiographies*, ed. John Stachniewski with Anita Pacheco (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. ix–xliiii; Lynch, *Protestant Autobiography*, pp. 1–30; Abigail Shinn, *Conversion Narratives in Early Modern England: Tales of Turning* (London: Palgrave, 2018), pp. 1–28.
- 53 For religious verse during this period see Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979); Elizabeth Clarke, *Theory and Theology in George Herbert's Poetry: 'Divinitie, and Poesie, Met'* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997); R. V. Young, *Doctrine and Devotion in Seventeenth-Century Poetry* (Rochester, NY: D. S. Brewer, 2000); Sarah C. E. Ross, 'Epic, Meditation, or Sacred History? Women and Biblical Verse Paraphrase in Seventeenth-Century England', in Kevin Killeen, Helen Smith and Rachel Willie (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in Early Modern England, c.1530–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 483–97.
- 54 For the religious tradition of, and literary works associated with, the *ars moriendi* see chapters 13 and 14.
- 55 Robert Horne, *Life and Death, Foure Sermons* (London, 1613), p. 116.

