

## **Devotional Romance: Clerical Courtship Rituals in England, ca. 1600-1700**

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In the early 1650's, Oliver Heywood, the young minister of the Chapel of Coley, Yorkshire, decided to find a wife: "my necessitys within and without put me on seeking a suitable yokefellow."<sup>1</sup> Heywood's priorities are worth noting. Marriage in early modern England was as much an economic, as an emotional, transaction. Scholarship on early modern English courtship has emphasized the prominence of material and economic factors in decisions to wed. Historiographically, a prospective spouse's potential to contribute property and labor to the marriage is believed to have been an equal or higher consideration than that spouse's potential to be an affectionate and agreeable life-partner.<sup>2</sup> Heywood on the other hand, listed mental, emotional, spiritual and perhaps libidinal considerations before material ones. This was not accidental. As a clergyman, Heywood was expected to uphold a Christian discourse of human (and especially feminine) attractiveness that valued inner virtue over outer pulchritude. And he was expected to ascribe to a Christian ethic that sought spiritual attainments and well-being over worldly comfort and success.

Seventeenth-century English ministers certainly felt professional pressure to profess disinterest in wives well-endowed with physical beauty or material wealth. This pressure infused the rhetoric of love and courtship that clergymen both produced and in turn voraciously consumed in marriages sermons, domestic manuals and clerical biography.<sup>3</sup> In this paper, however, I want to take seriously the notion that some ministers paid more than lip-service to a courtship agenda centered around mental and spiritual needs. The clerical vocation in seventeenth-century England was a profession of mental and emotional labor. Ministers were at once preachers, teachers, counselors, peace-makers and specialist practitioners of Protestant spirituality. To function adequately in these roles, committed ministers were constantly attempting to regulate their thoughts, discipline their emotions and infuse their private lives with Christian values and piety, all in order to maintain a standard of personal holiness "fitting for a minister."<sup>4</sup> This standard was part of an externally imposed code of professional conduct, but also an internalized professional value.

In this paper I want to briefly explore how the rituals of clerical courtship were shaped by ministers' internalized imperative to think, feel and act as "befitting a minister." Traditional courtship in early modern England was governed by customs and rituals that included the couple, their friends and kin. Some of these rituals were financial negotiations; when successful, the final exchanges of cash and property unified the two parties as one family economy.<sup>5</sup> Other courtship customs helped the couple meet socially and bond emotionally. Traditional matchmaking practices brought available individuals together and provided them with the counsel of family and friends. These included the recreational gatherings at alehouses and neighbors' homes where people might meet, the calculated introductions of prospective spouses made by interested relatives and friends, and the ensuing consultations with parents, guardians, relations and intimates as decisions were made. Meanwhile, the cultural rituals of courtship communicated attraction and fostered liking and love. The essential stuff of early modern romance, these included giving gifts or tokens—typically small luxuries such as "coins, 'rings, ribbons, gloves, girdles and similar knick-knacks," exchanging letters and messages, and visiting.<sup>6</sup>

However, the cultural customs designed to connect couples socially and affectively could conflict with expectations of professional conduct and ideals of personal holiness. Resorting to worldly venues such as taverns or making flirtatious displays could violate public expectations of clerical sobriety. And even less provocative and less public practices, such as gifting small delicacies and exchanging love letters, could compromise a minister's efforts to sustain a consistent standard of holiness in his personal life. After all, giving jewels and trinkets to a fiancée on Friday and preaching against the vanity of adornment on Sunday could—at least for the more scrupulous—induce fears of personal hypocrisy and declension. Resetting courtship rituals within a devotional framework resolved many of these conflicts. It preserved clerical dignity from any potential improprieties. On public and personal levels, it allowed clergymen to engage in rituals of heterosocial intimacy in ways that complemented personal piety and seriousness. And it furthered their pursuit of a marriage which would add a companionate dimension to their private religiosity, satisfying those "necessities within."

I would argue that it also allowed them to alleviate some of the anxieties of courtship, by altering the balance of power between the clerical suitor and his possible bride. Elizabeth Foyster has pointed to the way in which courtship evoked the masculine fear of being overpowered by passion; the emotion of romantic love represented a potential, emasculating loss

of self-control. However, as Nicole Eustace has observed in her work on courtship in colonial Pennsylvania, masculine loss of control was not only a subjective but situational feature of courtship. The woman's prerogative in courtship to accept or reject a suitor temporarily reversed, albeit passively, the patriarchal power relationship between men and women.<sup>7</sup> But playing the pastor to one's future bride reshaped the power dynamic of courtship. It inserted the patriarchal relationship of pastor to pastoral client into the less conventional gender dynamic of courtship, in which women held temporary power. Devotional courtship thus not only set the future marital dynamic of domestic piety; it established the future marital dynamic of religious authority as well.

Courting was a physically situated practice; by both custom and necessity much of it took place in specific social locations or at specific social events where sufficiently intensive socializing between the sexes could occur. Whether in public inns and taverns or in private households, the convivial activities associated with some customary venues for courtship—such as drinking, playing games or dancing—were demeaning to clerical dignity and a departure from a minister's godly lifestyle. Devotional courtship relocated meetings and visits to more appropriate sites and times, such as post-sermon socializing in the churchyard, prayer meetings in private homes or pastoral visits. With the congregation assembled before him, worship was one public and appropriate opportunity for ministers to notice local women, especially those who were "forward in religion." As a curate, Ralph Josselin spotted his future wife his first Sunday on the job.<sup>8</sup> Isaac Archer's second wife caught his eye as "a diligent hearer of mee," attending his sermons "in the hardest weather."<sup>9</sup>

Seventeenth-century religious sociability extended beyond public worship to a range of voluntary, informal gatherings.<sup>10</sup> Although such events were vital to defining and sustaining early Stuart puritanism and late Stuart nonconformity, certainly prayer-book evangelicals also engaged in religious visiting. Invited by parishioners, patrons or fellow clergy, ministers attended and presided over such affairs, where group prayer was conducted, scripture and devotional works read aloud, sermons repeated and discussed. Eagerness to spend one's leisure time in voluntary religion was a promising sign of piety in a prospective clerical wife. The Lincolnshire vicar John Rastrick's relationship with his second wife, Mary Harrison, began when she attended the devotional reading sessions at his vicarage.<sup>11</sup> Dorothy Heathcote, the lionized first wife of the Yorkshire minister John Shawe, not only frequented but organized such gatherings in her youth. As a girl in 1630's she attended a

puritan devotional salon in a neighboring village; as a young woman managing her father's household after her mother's decease, she promptly turned the Heathcotes' Derbyshire manor into a "receptacle to the Saints."<sup>12</sup>

Such social occasions supplied wife-hunting ministers with circles of "serious Christian" women and offered an intoxication- and frivolity-free forum for heterosocializing. Once having met a heavenly spinster or widow, a minister could pursue her personally by making pastoral house-calls. Calling to offer spiritual conference and consolation gave ministers respectable and low-risk pretexts to see the women they fancied. This could place an odd premium on women who were not only "serious" but also afflicted with spiritual uncertainty or melancholy. The Restoration minister Anthony Walker met his wife Elizabeth Sadler when she was suffering from an episode of religious distemper; his pastoral visits to her "as a consolatory Friend" ultimately doubled as courting calls.<sup>13</sup> The convention of the pastoral visit could turn worldly events into opportunities for spiritual socializing and thus devotional courtship. In the guise of giving spiritual counsel, a minister could partly withdraw to speak privately and (according to them) piously with a woman. John Rastrick met his first wife at a wedding, where he was solicited to "administer by Discourse and Advice any Comfort and Satisfaction" regarding her salvation.<sup>14</sup>

For bookish men ill-at-ease with small-talk or gaiety, devotional gatherings and quasi-pastoral visits provided comfortable topics of conversation and placed ministers in a reassuring social role. Here, if a minister felt too awkward as a suitor, he could retreat into his pastoral persona. And if conversation grew too stilted, he could read aloud from an improving book. John Rastrick recorded at length his childhood and adult struggle with social discomfort; his "Melancholiz'd reserved temper" left him "straitened in my spirit unto...silence" around other people, unless he could discuss religion or "rea[d] to them from some serious book."<sup>15</sup> Tongue-tied on prosaic topics, devotional courtship was Rastrick's only viable option for charming a woman into marriage. Meanwhile, for ministers discomfited by their own convivial tendencies, sticking to religious social events imposed reassuring controls on conduct and conversation, keeping courtship within the behavioral and emotional bounds of personal holiness.

Thus, when ministers spiritualized the locations of courtship, they often spiritualized the gestures, language and relational dynamic of courtship as well. As discussed above, cleaving to the Christian aesthetic that ranked inner beauty over outward charms, ministers courting in a devotional

mode articulated sexual attraction in terms of spiritual attraction. They also conflated expressions of Christian agape and romantic love. Presenting their attraction and affection the guise of impersonal Christian love and concern—a presentation implied in Rastrick’s pastoral attentions to the spiritually ailing Jane Wilson and the “consolatory” visits paid by Anthony Walker to the religiously worried Elizabeth Sadler—effectively safeguarded ministers from any imprecations of unsuitable conduct. But it also alleviated the tension, for any serious Christian and especially a minister, inherent in the earthly investment of romantic love. Ministers like the chaplain Isaac Basire, writing to his intended in 1636, used the language of agape to moderate their earthly attachment. Basire urged his future wife Frances Corbett to join him in a “love be pure without passion...[a] true, cordiall and Christian love.” A few lines later Basire protested to Corbett that he “desire[d] neither thee nor any thing in the world, but for the glory of...[our] Maker.”<sup>16</sup> Throughout his pre-marital correspondence with Corbett, Basire’s was repeatedly concerned to define their affection as selfless and spiritual; his preoccupation suggests an anxiety over the potential conflict between the disinterested love of a fellow Christian and the creaturely love of a wife.

This combined semiotic of earthly and heavenly attraction and affection similarly shaped the exchange of courtship gifts. The sending and accepting of courtship tokens such as ribbons, fruits, coins and often ultimately a ring, were repeated gestures that proceeded courtship through its phases. Courtship tokens progressively signified interest, affection and finally an agreement to wed.<sup>17</sup> Food, poesies or little adornments, these gifts were often small pleasures for physical and aesthetic appetites, evoking the sensual nature of heterosexual affection. It is doubtful that even the most ascetic of ministers were above either the feeling or the expression of sensual affection towards their prospective brides. But devotional courtship enabled ministers to temper the earthly implications of courtship tokens by adding religious commodities to the mix.

The chaplain Isaac Basire, as we will see in more detail below, sent his intended Frances Corbet devotional books. Though the books’ bindings were prettified with gilt, Basire cautioned Corbett that it was the text, and not its sensual packaging, that should most count: “the insides are the thing I sent them [the books] to you for, more then the outsides.”<sup>18</sup> Courting his first wife Jane Wilson, John Rastrick presented her with a completely non-material token; he preached two visiting sermons written especially for her.<sup>19</sup> Ministers received as well as gave spiritual tokens of affection. Elizabeth Angier deftly fused romantic attachment to heavenly aspiration

when she gave her Oliver Heywood a kneeling cushion embroidered, in chivalric tradition, with her initials 'EA'. Heywood recorded after her death that the cushion still incited and inspired him with her memory each time he knelt on it at prayer.<sup>20</sup> Traditional courtship trinkets—especially wedding rings—could also be fortified with added moral or religious meaning. Thomas Crashaw, early Stuart minister of the city of York, presented his bride with a ring inscribed "Faith, Truth and Constance."<sup>21</sup> Anthony Walker sealed his betrothal to Elizabeth Sadler in 1650 with a ring inscribed "Joined in one by Christ alone."<sup>22</sup>

Stumbling upon that inscription on the first ring viewed at the goldsmith's shop, Walker wrote that he interpreted his find as an omen indicating God's blessing upon his marriage.<sup>23</sup> As David Cressy has noted, early modern Englishmen and women viewed life decisions such as marriage through a providential lens; God ultimately determined the fall of any sparrow and the espousal of any serving maid.<sup>24</sup> God was thus ultimate matchmaker and approving patriarch for every Christian betrothal. Ministers seeking a truly spiritual partnership consulted him exhaustively, through signs and solicitations. After all, in marriage ideally centered around Christian service and piety, God would be a constantly present third party in their relationship; the earthly union of minister and wife was ideally to facilitate each spouse's heavenly union with Christ.

During his courtship, Walker searched for other phenomenon that might signify divine approval. Waiting in the Sadlers' parlour to discuss his intentions with Elizabeth Sadler's father, he engaged in Augustine-style bibliomancy, throwing open the Sadler family bible to a random verse.<sup>25</sup> Turning up Proverbs 19:14, "House and Riches are inheritance of Fathers... a prudent Wife is from the Lord," reassured Walker that their marriage had both divine causation and sanction.<sup>26</sup> Walker no doubt among them, also sought God's marital advice and blessing more directly. Isaac Basire beseeched Frances Corbett in 1636 to pray with him "for an holy submission to his gracious Providence, about the manner, meanes, time, place in a word, all the circumstances of our preferment."<sup>27</sup> Both Oliver Heywood and John Rastrick record exhaustive day-long prayers and fasts in order to consult with God before proposing to their respective second wives. Rastrick also engaged local clerical colleagues to pray with him on his decision.<sup>28</sup> Heywood and Rastrick may have displayed special endurance in their premarital meditations (and special historical thoughtfulness in leaving an account of it). But it is impossible to conceive that they or Basire were exceptional in the act itself. For ministers invested in their vocation, prayer would have been a

reflexive preparation for any serious motion of marriage.

Praying for divine permission to marry, ministers humbly submitted to the highest authority, the will of God. Courtship subjected ministers to more than God's will; their hopes depended on the earthly cooperation of kin, guardians and the women they wanted to wed. But with God, unlike skeptical fathers or enigmatic spinsters, ministers arguably had a privileged relationship as ordained agents of the Gospel, special mediators of Christ's teaching, special facilitators of the "means of grace." Women, with a degree of family approval, generally held the power to accept or reject the minister who courted them. But by setting courtship practices in a devotional context, ministers could sidestep their relative powerlessness and assume a position of authority in the relationship. Devotional courtship shifted the focus of the relationship: from a man seeking a woman's love (or at least agreement to marry) to two Christians mutually seeking salvation. And in this heterosocial pursuit of grace, the clerical suitor was the superior in training, office and authority.

In the rituals of devotional romance, clergymen stressed their identity—and thus authority—as professional men of God. Oliver Heywood willingly acknowledged Elizabeth Angier's power over him, entreating her "as I have given my Heart to You, You ought to give me Yours, You cannot in Equity deny it me." But he also reminded her of his special status and "grave calling, as I am a Minister...very urgent at the Throne of Grace."<sup>29</sup> For a minister marrying for spiritual companionship, devotional courtship established desired patterns for the future marriage. It not only set in place practices of heterosocial piety, but also the husband's position as the spiritual superior within the relationship, the man of knowledge teaching his wife, as Paul instructed, at home. The pastoral visits paid by suitors such as Anthony Walker, the pastoral letters written by suitors such as Isaac Basire, the sermons preached by suitors such as John Rastrick, all worked to effect this. Such performances asserted a suitor's status as a minister. It displayed his mastery of his pastoral craft. And it established a ministering relationship (and thus patriarchal power dynamic) to his bride. This patriarchal power relation, however, was often subtle. After all, the goal of devotional courtship was to acquire a woman sufficiently gifted in intellect and grace to be a genuine partner in piety, a near equal in Christian striving. Clerical suitors such as Oliver Heywood tempered their clerical authority with the more egalitarian dynamic of general Christian fellowship (and in Heywood's case, with the humility and amiability of his own temperament), partly positioning themselves with their future wives as first among two intimate Christian equals.

On the other hand, this patriarchal power relation, however subtle, was also real. The courtship letters written by the twenty-eight year old chaplain Isaac Basire in 1635 and 1636 to the Shropshire gentlewoman Frances Corbett demonstrate in detail how a clerical suitor asserted his spiritual authority via the language and rituals of devotional courtship. Basire's letters conveyed the fear and sense of powerlessness of a man caught up in courtship. Basire's insecurity did not stem from the ambiguity of Corbett's affection; she had apparently assured him of her love.<sup>30</sup> But her more exalted social status and Basire's lack of benefice and property made her parents' approval uncertain.<sup>31</sup> Basire filtered the couple's shared uncertainty through a devotional language of disinterested love, submission to divine will and commitment to Christian service. He used this language in the letters to reassure both himself and Frances. However, he also used it as part of the couple's larger dynamic of devotional courtship. This dynamic included gifts, prayer and a defined position for Basire as Frances's spiritual counselor and teacher.

Basire's language defined their relationship as a "covenant" for mutual Christian improvement and service. Their affection he defined as "tempered...perfumed, and refined...with such religious respects, and spirituall considerations."<sup>32</sup> Basire justified their marriage by its potential to further the work of Christ in him, Corbett and the Church.<sup>33</sup> Consequently, he repeatedly evoked acceptance of God's providence if "it be not his will" and Corbett's parents nixed the match.<sup>34</sup> Basire's courtship of Corbett combined devotional language with devotional rituals. Even while apart—Corbett in Shropshire and Basire traveling abroad with the Bishop of Coventry—the couple used prayer to cement their attachment; Basire referred more than once to praying specifically for her and held her to her promise to "[j]oyne with mee in...prayer" (while apart) on specific topics.<sup>35</sup> Though separated, the shared activity presumably strengthened a sense of togetherness, with both each other and with God. Basire also sent her devotional books as courtship tokens: Bishop Francis de Sales's *Introduction to a Devout Life* (according to Basire, "free from popery" despite Sales's Catholicism) and Nicholas Byfield's *The Marrow of the Oracles of God*, both in expensive bindings; the de Sales title sexily bound by continental "devout virgins... who knows but the prayers they might bestowe at the binding."<sup>36</sup> Basire urged Corbett not to read them once and then admire them on a shelf, but to pore over them repeatedly. This repetition would no doubt benefit Corbett's soul; it would also, like the prayer-cushion given to Oliver Heywood by Elizabeth Angier, ritualistically keep Corbett continually in mind of her suitor.



Basire's identity as a minister was, at least in his view, central to the couple's dynamic of romantic piety. He stressed that Corbett claimed to love him foremost as a minister.<sup>37</sup> His religious language, rituals and gifts all reinforced his pastoral position and authority within their relationship. By the devotional terms of their relationship, Basire assumed the role of Corbett's spiritual advisor. He peppered his letters with exhortations and instructions. In March 1635 he "charge[d her]... to abound in the acts of devotion and true repentance...[to maintain] frequency in prayer, reading, &c." Their ritual of long-distance prayer gave him further opportunities to direct her. In 1636 he nagged her not "to slacke or be behind hand with mee" in the prayers they agreed upon.<sup>38</sup> In 1636 he pressed her to "strive in your prayers." He also assigned her reading. In March 1636 he recommended that she read the Psalm 37 to help resign herself to God's will regarding their marriage.<sup>39</sup> His courtship gifts enabled him to further assume the role of religious teacher. He enclosed instructions on how often to read the texts and on what mental disposition to approach them with. The De Sales text, titillating with its convent binding and whiff of popish danger, most acutely positioned Basire as Corbett's manly religious protector and guide. He assured her that he had "read it aforehand for your soule's saecke." He furthered annotated it with a "crosse at the margent" marking the religious errors in the text that she should avoid reading.<sup>40</sup>

Like all clerical brides, Corbett had power in courtship: to accept or reject her clerical suitor's hand, to refuse or consent to be schooled in spiritual discipline and in this pastoral dynamic of marital power. Basire's success in establishing his clerical authority and his desired pattern of marital piety rested partly on the spiritual seductiveness of devotional courtship and on his deftness in deploying its language and rituals. It also rested partly on Corbett's desire to acknowledge his authority and participate. Both appeared to converge. The couple married in December, 1636. Frances Corbett Basire, writing to her husband in 1654 during their involuntary separation by the English revolution[s], confirmed his joint spiritual and household authority: "faithfully abay[ing] you as my menester and husband."<sup>41</sup>

As historians have suggested, for men in the early modern British world, courtship represented a potential loss of control over their passions or their gendered power in relations with women. For seventeenth-century ministers committed to personal holiness, loss of control could be devastating. For such clergymen, personal holiness primarily comprised a practice of exerting control: over their conduct, over their thoughts and emotions, over their appearance in others' eyes and over their own self-perceptions.

Yet, the evidence in this essay has shown that some spiritually enterprising clergymen could transform courtship into a help, rather than a hindrance, to their personal holiness and their assurance in their own Christian leadership. By spiritualizing the profane rituals of courtship, ministers of all ages could reshape courtship activities into additional, dyadic expressions of their personal holiness. And by imposing a pastoral dynamic in their relations with their intendeds, these ministers could re-establish some masculine authority in the power dynamic between a suitor and a singlewoman. These elements of clerical courtship demonstrate one way in which courtship and marriage had become incorporated into the cultural practices and identity of the seventeenth-century English Protestant clergy. And each illustrates how courtship and marriage could come to be viewed by young Oliver Heywood as the singular means to satisfy his “necessity within.”

## NOTES

1. Joseph Horsfall Turner, ed., *The Rev. Oliver Heywood, B.A., 1630-1702; His Autobiography, Diaries, Anecdote and Event Books; Illustrating the General and Family History of Yorkshire and Lancashire* vol. 1, (Brighouse, UK: A. B. Bayes, 1881), 168.

2. David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death : Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Ralph A. Houlbrooke, *The English Family, 1450-1700*, Themes in British Social History. (London: Longman, 1984); Rosemary O'Day, *The Family and Family Relationships, 1500-1900 : England, France and the United States of America*, Themes in Contemporary History. (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 1994); Diana O'Hara, *Courtship and Constraint : Rethinking the Making of Marriage in Tudor England*, Politics, Culture, and Society in Early Modern Britain (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2000).

3. See for example: William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties Eight Treatises. I. An Exposition of That Part of Scripture out of Which Domesticall Duties Are Raised* (London, 1622); Thomas Gataker, *Marriage Duties Briefely Couched Together out of Colossians*, 3. 18, 19 (London, 1620); Robert Cleaver and John Dod, *A Godly Forme of Houshold Gouernment for the Ordering of Priuate Families, According to the Direction of Gods Word. Whereunto Is Adioyned in a More Particular Manner, the Seuerall Duties of the Husband Towards His Wife: And the Wiues Dutie Towards Her Husband: The Parents Dutie Towards Their Children; and the Childrens Towards Their Parents: The Masters Dutie Towards His Seruants; and Also the Seruants Dutie Towards Their Masters* (London, 1630); William Perkins and Thomas Pickering, ed., *Christian Oeconomie, or, a Short Survey of the Right Manner of Erecting and Ordering a Familie According to the Scriptures First Written in Latine by the Author M. W. Perkins* (London, 1609); Thomas Taylor, *A Good Husband and a Good Wife Layd Open in a Sermon*, (London, 1625); Simeon Ashe, *Living Loves Betwixt Christ and Dying Christians. A Sermon Preached at M. Magdalene-Bermondsey in Southwark, near London, June 6. 1654. At the Funeral of That Faithful Servant of Christ Mr. Jeremiah Whitaker, Minister of the Gospel, and Pastor of the Church There. With a Narrative of His Exemplarily Holy Life and Death... Together with Poems and Elegies on His Death, by Divers Ministers in the City of London.*

(London, 1654); Samuel Clarke, *The Lives of Sundry Eminent Persons in This Later Age in Two Parts : I. Of Divines, li. Of Nobility and Gentry of Both Sexes... To Which Is Added His Own Life and the Lives of the Countess of Suffolk, Sir Nathaniel Barnardiston, Mr. Richard Blackerby and Mr. Samuel Fairclough, Drawn up by Other Hands.* (London, 1683); Thomas Gataker, *A Good Vvife Gods Giftand, a Vvife Indeed. Tvvo Mariage Sermons* (London, 1623); Thomas Gataker, *A Mariage Praier, or Succinct Meditations Deliuered in a Sermon on the Praier of Eleazer the Seruant of Abraham, Genes. 24. 12, 13, 14* (London, 1624).

4. Matthew Storey, ed., *Two East Anglian Diaries, 1641-1729: Isaac Archer and William Coe*, Suffolk Records Society Vol. 36 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1994), 109. For other examples of anxiety regarding personal holiness and its relation to clerical identity see also Thomas Heywood, ed., *The Diary of the Rev. Henry Newcome, from September 30, 1661, to September 29, 1663* (Manchester: Chetham Society, 1849), 60; Richard Parkinson, ed., *The Autobiography of Henry Newcome, M.A, Vol. 1* (Manchester: Chetham Society, 1852), 12-13. For further examples from pastoral manuals and diaries see my paper: "Sacred Employments": Gendering Spiritual Space and Labour in the Clerical Household," presented at the Religion and Society in Early Modern England Conference, St. Mary's College, Surrey, UK, 22 April 2001. For the English regulations on clerical conduct as repeatedly articulated in visitation articles see Kenneth Fincham, ed., *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church*, Church of England Record Society Vol. 1, (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 1994), passim.

5. See Cressy, *BMD*, 233-281; O'Hara, *Courtship and Constraint*.

6. Cressy, *BMD*, 263

7. Elizabeth A. Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England : Honour, Sex, and Marriage* (London: Longman, 1999) 55-58; Nicole Eustace, "The Cornerstone of a Copious Work': Love and Power in Eighteenth-Century Courtship" *Journal of Social History* 34.3(2001); Cressy (Cressy, *BMD*, above) cautions that women, especially of the elite classes were under considerable patriarchal pressure via parents and guardians.

8. Alan Macfarlane, ed., *The Diary of Ralph Josselin 1616-1683*, Records of Social and Economic History New Ser. 3 (London: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1976), 7.

9. Storey, ed., *Diaries...Isaac Archer*, 183.

10. On voluntary religion and religious sociability see Tom Webster, *Godly Clergy in Early Stuart England, C. 1620-1643*, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants : The Church in English Society, 1559-1625* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984); Patrick Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England : Religious and Cultural Change in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries : The Third Anstey Memorial Lectures in the University of Kent at Canterbury, 12-15 May 1986* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988).

11. John Rastrick, *A Narrative; or an Historical Account of the Most Materiall Passages in the Life of John Rastrick* (ca. 1700-1710), Huntington Library, HM 6131, 83r.

12. John Shawe, *Mistris Shawe's Tomb-Stone. Or, the Saints Remains. Being a Brief Narrative, of Some Few (Amongst Many) Remarkable Passages in the Holy Life and Happy Death of That Precious Servant of the Lord Mrs. Dorothy Shaw, (Late the Dearly Beloved Wife of Mr. John Shaw Preacher of the Gospell at Kingstone Upon Hull,) Who Sweetly Slept in the Lord, Decemb. 10th. And Was Interred at Trinity Church, in Hull, Decemb. 12. 1657.*

*Collected by Her Dearest Friend: With Many Usefull Instructions, Especially for His Own and His Six Daughters Consolation and Imitation.* (London, 1658), C7r-v.; letter from Rev. John Heathcote in Shawe, *Mistris Shawe's Tomb-Stone*, B12v.

13. Anthony ed. Walker and Elizabeth 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....With Some Usefull Papers and Letters Writ by Her on Serveral Occasions* (London, 1690), 27.

14. Rastrick, HM 6131, 37v; 29r-30v.

15. Rastrick, HM 6131, 80r.

16. W. N. Darnell, ed., and Isaac Basire, *The Correspondence of Isaac Basire, D.D.: Archeacon of Northumberland and Prebendary of Durham, in the Reigns of Charles I and Charles II* (London, 1831), 18-19.

17. Cressy, *BMD*; O'Hara, *Courtship and Constraint*.

18. Darnell and Basire, *Basire Correspondence*, 21-22.

19. Rastrick, HM 6131, 80r.

20. Turner, *Heywood Diaries*, vol. 3, 112. I am indebted to Samuel Thomas for sharing this reference.

21. This was also a pun, her name was Faith Tattersall; the ring was described in the will of her second husband, the Ripon collegiate church canon Matthew Leverett. Surviving his wife, Leverett bequeathed the ring to their younger daughter, stating that this was his late wife's request. Bothwick Archives, York, York Consistory Wills: 32:98.

22. Walker and Walker, *Holy Life*, 28.

23. Walker and Walker, *Holy Life*, 28.

24. Cressy, *BMD*, 252; see also Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1999).

25. Walker and Walker, *Holy Life*, 28.

26. Walker and Walker, *Holy Life*, 28.

27. Darnell and Basire, *Basire Correspondence*, 19-20.

28. Turner, ed., *Heywood Diaries*, V. 1, 240; Rastrick, HM 6131, 86v-87r.

29. Turner, ed., *Heywood Diaries*, V. 1, 132.

30. Darnell and Basire, *Basire Correspondence*, 16.

31. Darnell and Basire, *Basire Correspondence*, 19.

32. Darnell and Basire, *Basire Correspondence*, 19-20.

33. Darnell and Basire, *Basire Correspondence*, 19.

34. Darnell and Basire, *Basire Correspondence*, 15.

35. Darnell and Basire, *Basire Correspondence*, 15.

36. Darnell and Basire, *Basire Correspondence*, 20-22. According to the ESTC, Early

Stuart English editions of de Sales include imprints dated 1613, 1614, 1616, 1617, 1622 and 1637; Byfield's *Marrow* has early Stuart imprints dated 1619, 1622, 1624, 1625, 1628, 1630, 1633 and 1636.

37. Darnell and Basire, *Basire Correspondence*, 17.
38. Darnell and Basire, *Basire Correspondence*, 15.
39. Darnell and Basire, *Basire Correspondence*, 20.
40. Darnell and Basire, *Basire Correspondence*, 20-22.
41. Darnell and Basire, *Basire Correspondence*, 136.

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In English literature the period from 1660 to 1700 is called the period of Restoration, because monarchy was restored in England, and Charles II, the son of Charles I who had been defeated and beheaded, came back to England from his exile in France and became the King. It is called the Age of Dryden, because Dryden was the dominating and most representative literary figure of the Age. The result was that the old Elizabethan spirit with its patriotism, its love of adventure and romance, its creative vigour, and the Puritan spirit with its moral discipline and love of liberty, became things of the past. For a time in poetry, drama and prose nothing was produced which could compare satisfactorily with the great achievements of the Elizabethans, of Milton, and even of minor writers of the Puritan age. Ritual plays a major role in the formation of social persons and relations in the related and overlapping societies of the Mozambique Channel, but can also serve as a useful point of comparison. Ngazidja (Grande Comore), as described and analyzed by Sophie Blanchy, epitomizes the society of the gift as developed by Marcel Mauss. This paper explores the gendering of architectural space by examining exchange rituals in spaces of courtship, such as assembly rooms, that provided places of public gathering outside the family home for making marriage arrangements. As a specific example, I take Almack's Assembly Rooms, King Street, St. James's, a place of aristocratic entertainment and leisure during the early nineteenth