International Archives of the History of Ideas 209
Archives internationales d'histoire des idées

Anne Dunan-Page
Clotilde Prunier *Editors*

Debating the Faith: Religion and Letter Writing in Great Britain, 1550-1800

Debating the Faith: Religion and Letter Writing in Great Britain, 1550-1800

ARCHIVES INTERNATIONALES D'HISTOIRE DES IDÉES

INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVES OF THE HISTORY OF IDEAS

209

DEBATING THE FAITH: RELIGION AND LETTER WRITING IN GREAT BRITAIN, 1550-1800

Edited by

Anne Dunan-Page • Clotilde Prunier

Board of Directors:
Founding Editors:
Paul Dibon†, Richard H. Popkin†

Director:
Sarah Hutton, *University of Aberystwyth, UK*

Associate Directors:
J.E. Force, *University of Kentucky, Lexington, USA*;
J.C. Laursen, *University of California, Riverside, USA*

Editorial Board:
M.J.B. Allen, *Los Angeles*; J.-R. Armogathe, *Paris*; S. Clucas, *London*;
G. Giglioni, *London*; P. Harrison, *Oxford*; J. Henry, *Edinburgh*;
M. Mulsow, *Erfurt*; G. Paganini, *Vercelli*; J. Popkin, *Lexington*;
J. Robertson, *Cambridge*; G.A.J. Rogers, *Keele*; J.F. Sebastian, *Bilbao*;
A. Sutcliffe, *London*; A. Thomson, *Paris*; Th. Verbeek, *Utrecht*

For further volumes:
http://www.springer.com/series/5640

Anne Dunan-Page • Clotilde Prunier
Editors

Debating the Faith: Religion and Letter Writing in Great Britain, 1550-1800

Springer

Editors
Anne Dunan-Page
Aix-Marseille Université
LERMA (EA 853)
Institut Universitaire de France
Aix-en-Provence, France

Clotilde Prunier
CREA (EA 370)
Université Paris Ouest
Nanterre La Défense
Nanterre, France

ISSN 0066-6610
ISBN 978-94-007-5215-3 ISBN 978-94-007-5216-0 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-5216-0
Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg New York London

Library of Congress Control Number: 2012952676

© Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht 2013
This work is subject to copyright. All rights are reserved by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed. Exempted from this legal reservation are brief excerpts in connection with reviews or scholarly analysis or material supplied specifically for the purpose of being entered and executed on a computer system, for exclusive use by the purchaser of the work. Duplication of this publication or parts thereof is permitted only under the provisions of the Copyright Law of the Publisher's location, in its current version, and permission for use must always be obtained from Springer. Permissions for use may be obtained through RightsLink at the Copyright Clearance Center. Violations are liable to prosecution under the respective Copyright Law.
The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.
While the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication, neither the authors nor the editors nor the publisher can accept any legal responsibility for any errors or omissions that may be made. The publisher makes no warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein.

Printed on acid-free paper

Springer is part of Springer Science+Business Media (www.springer.com)

Contents

Notes on Contributors

Reid Barbour is Professor of English at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He has written on a wide range of subjects, including Elizabethan fiction, classical reception, Stuart religion, John Selden, Lucy Hutchinson, and Sir Thomas Browne.

Anne Dunan-Page is Professor of Early-Modern British Studies at Aix-Marseille University and a member of the Institut Universitaire de France. Her research interests include Restoration and early eighteenth-century dissent. She is currently working on the records of gathered Churches. Her latest publication is *The Cambridge Companion to Bunyan* (2010).

David Finnegan is currently teaching at Goldsmiths, University of London and at Rugby school. He has published several essays on Irish Catholics and Catholicism in the early-modern period and is currently completing a monograph based on his doctoral dissertation entitled *The Politics of Irish Catholicism, 1534–1653* (forthcoming). He has also co-edited two essay collections, *The Flight of the Earls* (2010) and *Varieties of Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth-Century English Radicalism in Context* (2011).

Mark Greengrass is currently Senior Research Fellow at the School of History in the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS), Germany. He has worked for many years on the history of the Protestant Reformation, especially in France and England. From 2004 until 2009, he directed the British Academy John Foxe Project, based at the University of Sheffield, where he held a Personal Chair of Early Modern History. He is currently completing the Penguin History of Europe, vol. V (1517–1648) and working on a bigger project, focusing on epistolary culture in France, c. 1550–1643 entitled: 'Power and Communication in Renaissance France'.

Sarah Hutton is a graduate of New Hall, Cambridge and the Warburg Institute, London. She currently holds a chair at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. Her main area of research is seventeenth-century intellectual history, with a special interest in the Cambridge Platonists. Her publications include, *Anne Conway. A Woman Philosopher* (2004). *Platonism at the Origins of Modernity* (edited with

Douglas Hedley, 2008), *Newton and Newtonianism* (edited with James E. Force, 2004), *Women, Science and Medicine* (edited with Lynette Hunter, 1996). She is Director of the series *International Archives of the History of Ideas*.

James Moore is Emeritus Professor of Political Science at Concordia University. Among his many positions, he has been President of the Conference for the Study of Political Thought and President of the Eighteenth-Century Scottish Studies Society. A specialist of eighteenth-century Scotland, he has been working for some years on an edition of the correspondence of Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746). He has edited, among others, *Natural Rights on the Threshold of the Scottish Enlightenment: The Writings of Gershom Carmichael* (2002, with Michael Silverthorne), *Francis Hutcheson on Logic, Metaphysics and Natural Sociability* (2006, with Michael Silverthorne) and *Francis Hutcheson on The Meditations of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus* (2008, with Michael Silverthorne).

Claire Preston is Professor of Early-Modern Literature at the University of Birmingham. Recent books include *Thomas Browne and the Writing of Early-Modern Science* (winner of the British Academy's Rose Mary Crawshay Prize 2005) and, with Reid Barbour, *Sir Thomas Browne: The World Proposed* (2008). She is the General Editor of *The Complete Works of Sir Thomas Browne* (Oxford). She has held research awards from the British Academy, the Guggenheim Foundation, and Yale University. She is completing a book on early-modern literature and scientific investigation.

Clotilde Prunier is Professor in British history at the Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense. She is the author of *Anti-Catholic Strategies in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (2004), which focuses on the struggle between Presbyterians and Catholics in eighteenth-century Scotland, and in particular on how schools were used in the anti-Catholic crusade in the Highlands. She has published articles on eighteenth-century perceptions of the Highlands, on the role of education in eighteenth-century Scotland, and on Scottish Catholic correspondence. Her research has come to focus on the European correspondence of the clandestine Scottish Catholic community in the eighteenth century. She is currently working at a monograph on the continental networks—both human and epistolary—which enabled the Scottish Catholic Mission to weather the penal laws in the eighteenth century.

Gary Schneider is Associate Professor in the Department of English, University of Texas. He is the author of *The Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England, 1500–1700* (2005) and is currently working on a monograph entitled, 'Print Letters and Politics in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England.'

Alison Searle was a Research Associate on the the AHRC-funded *Complete Works of James Shirley* at Anglia Ruskin University. She was also Visiting Research Fellow at Dr Williams's Centre for Dissenting Studies and at the Centre for Baptist History and Heritage, Regent's Park College, University of Oxford. Her monograph entitled *The Eyes of Your Heart: Literary and Theological Trajectories of Imagining*

Biblically was published in 2008. She is currently preparing an edition of *The Sisters* (1642) by James Shirley for Oxford University Press. She is also working, with Dr Johanna Harris, on a complete edition of Richard Baxter's correspondence.

Daniel Szechi is a graduate of the University of Sheffield and St Antony's College, Oxford, and was appointed Professor of Early Modern History at the University of Manchester in 2006. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the Royal Historical Society. His books include: *The Dangerous Trade. Spies, Spymasters and the Making of Europe* (2010); with Paul Kléber Monod and Murray G. H. Pittock, *Loyalty and Identity. Jacobites at Home and Abroad* (2009); *1715. The Great Jacobite Rebellion* (2006); *George Lockhart of Carnwath 1689–1727: A Study in Jacobitism* (2002); *The Jacobites. Britain and Europe, 1688–1788* (1994); with Prof. G. Holmes, *The Age of Oligarchy: Pre-Industrial Britain 1722–1783* (1993); and *Jacobitism and Tory Politics, 1710–1714* (1984). He has also published articles in *Past and Present*, *English Historical Review*, *Scottish Historical Review*, *Journal of British Studies*, *Historical Journal*, *Catholic Historical Review*, *Parliamentary History* and *Studies in Church History*, and a number of essays in collective works.

Ann Thomson is Professor of British History and director of the 'Groupe de recherches en histoire intellectuelle' at Université Paris 8. Recent publications include: *Bodies of Thought: Science, Religion, and the Soul in the Early Enlightenment* (2008, awarded the 2009 National Research Prize, SAES/AFEA) and *Cultural Transfers: France and Britain in the Long Eighteenth Century*, edited with Simon Burrows and Edmond Dziembowski (2010).

Chapter 1
Introduction

Gary Schneider

1.1 Correspondences

Before she was executed for treason on 12 February 1554, Lady Jane Grey, the nine days' queen, wrote a letter to John Feckenham, a Catholic priest with whom Grey had discussed matters of faith. Grey also wrote another letter to her sister, Lady Catherine Grey, an exhortation to Catherine to continue to practice the Protestant faith. These two letters were printed after Grey's death together with a debate with Feckenham and Grey's scaffold speech as *An Epistle of the Ladye Jane … to a Learned Man of late Falne from the Truth of Gods Most Holy Word … also Another Epistle whiche She Wrote to Her Sister* (1554).[1] Although Grey likely had a future audience beyond her correspondents in mind, the letter may not have been written expressly for the press (Daybell 2006a, 172).[2] Yet the letters in *An Epistle of the Ladye Jane* have the distinction of being among the first spiritual letters composed by a woman to see print in England, and saw an enduring publication history, including publication as part of a 1792 biography, *Life & Death of Lady Jane Grey*, by Thomas Gibbons.[3]

[1] Place of publication of the early modern texts to which I refer is London unless otherwise indicated.

[2] Other letters of Lady Jane Grey of similar devotional tenor, for instance, were not printed at the time (Daybell 2006a, 172).

[3] These letters were first published by Gibbons in his *Memoirs of Eminently Pious Women*, vol. 1 (1777), 25–37, 39–41. See Edith Snook, *Women, Reading, and the Cultural Politics of Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 53n77, for more on the publication history of this material.

G. Schneider (✉)
Department of English, University of Texas – Pan American, Beverly Hills Lane, 610, Edinburg, TX 78542, USA
e-mail: garysch@panam.edu

A. Dunan-Page and C. Prunier (eds.), *Debating the Faith: Religion and Letter Writing in Great Britain, 1550-1800*, International Archives of the History of Ideas 209,
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-5216-0_1, © Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht 2013

Five years after Gibbons' book was printed, *A Pastoral Letter from a Minister to His Parishioners, Being an Earnest Exhortation to Them to Take Care of Their Souls* came out in its twentieth edition. First printed in 1699, this pastoral letter of an anonymous minister had accrued by 1797, besides the exhortation, a devotional exercise, a catechism, and prayers. Considering a publication history that in 1797 had spanned almost a century, it was plainly an enormously popular epistle among the great number of this sort of moral-didactic letter printed during the eighteenth century. The book was also translated into Welsh and German, 3,000 copies were sent to the English army in Holland in 1701, while later editions went out to the new world (Jacob 1996, 110; Jablonski 1822, 481; 'An Account' 1817, 375; Monaghan 2007, 420n25). It was also recommended reading on doctrine and practice for members of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and in 1708 acquired a companion piece, *The Christian's Daily Devotion … Being a Continuation of the Pastoral Letter from a Minister to His Parishioners*.[4]

Three years before *A Pastoral Letter from a Minister to His Parishioners* appeared in its last edition of the century, Congregationalist Elizabeth Wilson wrote to her sister Rebekah Bateman in 1794 that 'A loving letter is all the comfort one has when absent from each other,' and in a letter of the prior year hopes that 'the Lord make us good soldiers of Jesus Christ that we may war a good warfare' (qtd. in Whyman 2010, 142, 144). Elizabeth Wilson's correspondence with her sister embodies in it the struggle she endured for her nonconformity. She used letters to express and strengthen her faith as well as to participate in an epistolary community of Congregationalists. The letters were not intended for future reading audiences, were never meant to be printed—indeed, were never intended to circulate beyond the sisters' private epistolary circle; rather they served as personal spiritual vehicles where 'A truly Christian letter might … become a means of grace' (Whyman 2010, 144).

Two and a half centuries earlier John Philpot, imprisoned during the reign of Queen Mary, begins a letter to John Careless, 'My dearly beloved brother Careless, I have received your loving letters, full of love and compassion.' Philpot requests in the letter that Careless 'Commend me to all our faithful brethren; and bid them with a good courage look for their redemption, and frame themselves to be hearty soldiers in Christ' (Bickersteth 1837, 171, 172). Using language markedly similar to that employed by Elizabeth Wilson, Philpot maneuvers his letter to exhort and encourage others to whom he does not have direct personal access. Yet unlike the letters of Elizabeth Wilson, those of John Philpot were printed as Protestant propaganda, appearing in *Certain Most Godly, Fruitful, and Comfortable Letters of Such True Saintes and Holy Martyrs of God* (1564)—also known as *The Letters of the Martyrs*—a collection deliberately foregrounding in print epistolary communication within a conspicuous epistolary community. Philpot's letter was reprinted in the 1583 edition of John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* where it continued to serve as religious propaganda.[5]

[4] See *An Account of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge* (1775), 70, for the recommendation.

[5] See John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments*, vol. 2 (1583), 1833.

I have selected these letters expressly to outline the contours of this collection, which spans the years 1550–1800, yet I do not wish to imply that during this period no systemic shifts in epistolarity occurred—without doubt, crucial changes in the postal system, the ascendancy of print culture over manuscript culture, and marked increases in literacy (augmenting the number of those who could read and write letters) characterize these two and a half centuries. Rather, I wish to accentuate continuity and persistence within a broad early modern letter-writing culture that preceded the Industrial Revolution when novel modes of immediate communication over distances such as the telegraph, radio, and telephone transformed the way the letter was employed and epistolarity was imagined—continuities I think even more marked in letters of a religious, spiritual, moral-didactic, and controversial nature of Catholics and Protestants alike. Such continuities include the sustained use of letters purely as vehicles of communication among individuals within a specific religious epistolary community, as evident in the letters of Elizabeth Wilson and John Philpot; it includes the ongoing composition of handwritten religious letters by women in manuscript—as demonstrated by Elizabeth Wilson—and potentially for print—as in the case of Jane Grey; the persistence of forms of religious rhetoric, revealed in the letters of Philpot and Wilson; the continuing dynamic relationship between manuscript and print cultures, evidenced in that *A Pastoral Letter* may have been written expressly for print, Philpot's and Grey's letters for the possibility of print, while the spiritual letters that Wilson wrote were never intended for publication; and the fundamental consistency among all these letters to manifest an exhortatory character intended to energize faith. Moreover, the use of letters exchanged in handwritten texts or printed for mass circulation to hash out religious controversy and to level animadversion continued, while the use of letters as components of spiritual and ecclesiastical biography developed fully during this period.

1.2 Background

In one of the very few studies to evaluate the influence of the Pauline letters on Renaissance epistolarity, C.A. Patrides states that 'formal letter-writing during the Renaissance was affected after some fashion by the self-evident importance of the epistle in the New Testament' (Patrides 1981, 357). His study accentuates the influence of the Pauline epistle on early modern letter-writing culture over the classical tradition, represented principally by the letters of Cicero, Seneca, and Pliny the Younger—who have been discussed far more often in the context of letter writing during this period than the New Testament epistolists. John Donne, for instance, writing to Henry Goodyear around 1604, lists who he considers the important letter writers of the past—Seneca, Pliny the Younger, Cicero, Phalaris, Brutus, and St. Paul—all but one classical writers (Donne 1651, 105–6). Erasmus himself, *the* authority on letter writing of the European Renaissance, favored classical models of letter writing over others, at least in terms of epistolography: Cicero and Pliny the Younger are the classical letter writers to whom Erasmus most frequently refers, while the letters of Church Fathers such as Jerome, Cyprian, and Augustine are mentioned

far less often (Gerlo 1971, 111). Yet Church Fathers such as Jerome proved influential on epistolary writing in the Renaissance, while the letters of Augustine were prepared with an eye to future readers as patristic letter writers undoubtedly influenced future generations of letter writers; and the epistles of Paul were, of course, analyzed frequently, often at great length, by many early modern writers (Constable 1976, 28, 30; Patrides 1981, 361–5).

Perhaps it is no surprise, therefore, that the vast majority of modern scholarship on early modern letters and letter writing has likewise emphasized the classical tradition over the Christian tradition. Of course, there is no doubt that the classical legacy of letter writing, as Patrides points out, deserves considerable analysis. The work of Judith Rice Henderson is a good example of some of the fine scholarship on Renaissance epistolarity done with attention to the impact of classical letter writing.[6] Yet research on letters and letter writing detailing the impact of received tradition has betrayed an imbalance by concentrating on the authority and influence of classical letter writers.

During the late 1990s and into the new century, however, literary and historical scholarship on the early modern period has 'turned' to religion, as Ken Jackson and Arthur Marotti have termed it. Whereas race, class, and gender (and associated imperialist, materialist, and feminist approaches) have generally dominated literary scholarship since the advent of New Historicism, religion—though often implicit in such approaches—has generally either been forced aside or else subsumed within political, social, or economic paradigms; furthermore, historians have tended to elide religion and politics, or else read religion as a coded form of social, economic, and political phenomena (Jackson and Marotti 2004, 167–8).

The same can be said specifically of scholarship on letters and letter writing of the early modern period. Because spiritual, moral-didactic, and homiletic letters have a long pedigree stemming from Paul's epistles, religion has always been intrinsic to discussions of letters from the early modern period, but is often scattered and diffused within other categories. James Daybell's systematic bibliographies of scholarship on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century letters, for instance, do not contain a specific category for 'religion and letter writing' or 'religious letters'; rather they are classed within groupings of 'specific individual letter writers,' 'women's letters,' and 'genre studies,' which is a plain indication that the category of 'letters and religion' is difficult to define precisely because it is so pervasive (Daybell 2005, 2006b). Similarly, Daybell writes that 'Interest in letters and letter-writing has led to a range of truly interdisciplinary inquiries, including literary, lexical, historical, social, cultural,

[6] Henderson, 'Defining the Genre of the Letter: Juan Luis Vives' *De Conscribendis Epistolis*,' *Renaissance and Reformation* n.s. 7 (May 1983): 89–105; 'Erasmus on the Art of Letter-Writing' in James J. Murphy (ed.), *Renaissance Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Renaissance Rhetoric* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: Univ. of California Press, 1983), 331–55; and 'On Reading the Rhetoric of the Renaissance Letter' in Heinrich F. Plett (ed.), *Renaissance-Rhetorik/Renaissance Rhetoric* (Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 1993), 143–61, serve as representative examples.

intellectual, paleographical, manuscript, and gender-based approaches. Letters have been read as literary and cultural texts, and also as social documents' (Daybell 2005, 349–50). That no specific mention of 'religion' occurs is, again, a result of broader movements in modern scholarship on which Jackson and Marotti have commented—and which are presently being addressed. In a separate study Daybell, for instance, has also recognized that 'The history of the letter as a religious site can be traced back to biblical example and apostolic letters' (Daybell 2009, 522).

1.3 Letters and Religion, 1550–1800

The task of systematizing and organizing 'religion and letter writing' in the 1550–1800 period is no simpler now than it has ever been. The range of documents is enormous and the religious subject matter exceedingly broad. Letters, both those exchanged in handwritten texts and those printed during the early modern period, served a countless number of religious and spiritual functions during this time, and, while some of these continued uses common in Europe before the early modern era, others proved to be unique innovations of epistolarity.

Perhaps most frequently, sermons were often transmitted by letters, letters that were exhortatory, consolatory, and advisory in nature. To take but a handful of examples of the many representative illustrations, Lady Rachel Russell's epistolary exchange with Dr. John Fitzwilliam between the years 1680 and 1696 constitutes a correspondence whose primary purpose was for Fitzwilliam to exhort, console, and advise his correspondent Russell.[7] The extensive spiritual letters of non-conformist preacher William Huntington (1745–1813) to family, friends, and parishioners are also homiletic and exhortatory in nature.[8] Sermons as letters shade into advisory letters when such letters counsel on spiritual matters. Henry More sent such letters to correspondent Anne Conway, while women such as Anne Bacon, Katherine Paston, and Brilliana Harley wrote letters of spiritual advice to their sons.[9]

After the advent of print in England, sermons as letters began to be published to reach mass audiences. Letters as sermons were often printed posthumously, as in *The Christian Letters of Mr. Paul Bayne* (1620), but sometimes non-posthumously: the

[7] See *Letters of Lady Rachel Russell* (1773).

[8] See Huntington's correspondence in the British Library, Additional Manuscript 46886.

[9] See Sarah Hutton (rev. ed.), *The Conway Letters: Correspondence of Anne, Viscountess Conway, Henry More, and Their Friends* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992); Ruth Hughey (ed.), *The Correspondence of Lady Katherine Paston 1603–1627* (Norfolk: Norfolk Record Society, 1941); Thomas Taylor Lewis (ed.), *Letters of the Lady Brilliana Harley* (London: Camden Society, 1854). The scholarship includes Lynne Magnusson, 'Widowhood and Linguistic Capital: The Rhetoric and Reception of Anne Bacon's Epistolary Advice,' *English Literary Renaissance* 31.1 (Winter 2001): 3–33; and Raymond A. Anselment, 'Katherine Paston and Brilliana Harley: Maternal Letters and the Genre of Mother's Advice,' *Studies in Philology* 101.4 (Autumn 2004): 431–53.

letters in the first vernacular collection published in England by a living native Englishman, for instance, Joseph Hall's *Epistles* (1608, 1611), take the sermon-as-letter form. At 214 folio pages, *An Epistle of Comfort to the Reverend Priests* (1587) by Robert Southwell broadens the sermon-as-letter form into a martyrological discourse, while other sermons as letters, such as Robert Cottesford's *Two Very Godly and Comfortable Letters … One to a Godly and Zealous Lady wherin the Annabaptists Errour is Confuted … The Other an Answer to a Godly Merchants Letter* (1589) challenge the boundary between consolatory homily and religious polemic. *The Bishop of Hereford's Pastoral Letter to the Inhabitants of His Diocese* (Hereford, 1798) demonstrates that this frequent usage continued to the end of the eighteenth century.

Clerics also employed letters in associated ways. One usage consists of the letter to engage debate, controversy, and animadversion since the letter—based as it is on the paradigms of obligation, reciprocity, and exchange—ideally suited these practices. A correspondence between William Bedell and James Wadsworth, who had befriended one another in Cambridge and later both held livings in Suffolk, took place between 1615 and 1620 after Wadsworth had converted to Catholicism and left England for Spain.[10] The correspondence was not intended for print, but in 1624 it was published as an ongoing religious debate entitled *Copies of Certaine Letters which Have Passed betweene Spaine and England in Matter of Religion … betweene Master James Wadesworth … and W. Bedell*. Other collections inhabit the indistinct space between 'intended for print/not intended for print,' such as the doctrinal debate in epistolary form between John Jewel and Henry Cole, *The True Copies of the Letters betwene … John Bisshop of Sarum and D. Cole* (1560). Other letters prepared for the press to engage debate, controversy, and animadversion during the eighteenth century include *A True Copy of a Letter lately Written by Mr. Dowley to Dr. Wells … together with the Doctor's Answer* (Oxford, 1706) and *Letters which Passed between the Right Reverend Robert Lord Bishop of Corke … and Mr. William Penn, Concerning Baptism* (1756).

Ecclesiastics also continued in the early modern era to use the letter in Church organization, in determining articles of faith, in discussing biblical exegesis, and in gathering news and intelligence. The letters exchanged by reformers John Jewel, Peter Martyr, Henry Bullinger, John Parkhurst, and Edmund Grindal demonstrate for instance an epistolary community concerned with all of these activities.[11] Father Anthony Rivers wrote letters of religious and other news to correspondent Robert Persons, some of which correspondence was intercepted; Richard Verstegan was the center of a considerable Catholic correspondence network, Henry Garnet and Robert Southwell numbering among his correspondents in England, while a variety of informants and recipients on the continent—including Persons among the latter—sent

[10] *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, sub nom. Bedell, William; Wadsworth, James.

[11] See Hastings Robinson (ed. and trans.), *The Zurich Letters Comprising the Correspondence of Several English Bishops and Others*, 2 series (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1842–1845) and *Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1846–1847).

information to and received information from Verstegan (Arblaster 2004, 68, 70).[12] It has also been recognized how astutely the Quakers used letters, both in manuscript and print, to communicate, organize, and petition.[13] In the eighteenth century, handwritten letters helped Methodists carve out a distinct evangelical space for themselves; John Telford has called John Wesley's letters 'the marching orders of the Evangelical Revival' (Brant 2006, 312; Telford qtd. in Brant 2006, 282).

Letters from prison have always been a common sub-genre of epistolary writing, no more so than in religious contexts—Paul's epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon mark the Christian archetype. That Paul was imprisoned for his ministry was a fact, for example, not lost on Nicholas Ridley writing to the imprisoned John Bradford:

> since they [those who have imprisoned you] have changed their purpose, and prolonged [i.e., deferred] your death, I understand it is no other thing than that once happened to Peter and Paul. The which, although they were of the first which were cast in prison … yet God would not have them put to death with the first, because he had more service to be done by their ministry (Bickersteth 1837, 47).[14]

The Marian martyrs indeed wrote a number of letters from prison, as did Puritan separatist John Penry later in the century, while Mary Ward, founder of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, wrote letters in lemon juice on wrapping paper while imprisoned (Littlehales 2001, 206)—to give but a handful of instances. This type of letter swiftly migrated into print. Thomas More's prison letters of 1534–1535 were printed in 1557 in his *Englysh Workes*, but this type of gathering culminated relatively early (in 1564) in the massive collection, *Certain Most Godly, Fruitful, and Comfortable Letters*, which effectively comprises over 200 letters to and from imprisoned Protestants, which, as a collection of prison letters of multiple hands, was never to be duplicated in size during this historical period. The mid-seventeenth century saw Presbyterian Christopher Love's prison letters printed in *Love's Name Lives* (1651) and Leveller John Lilburne's in *A Coppy of a Letter Written by John Lilburne, Close Prisoner in the Wards* (London?, 1640), while *A Letter Written by Mr. John Dickson, (Late Minister of the Gospel at Rutherglen) from the Bass Prison* (Edinburgh?, 1719) exemplifies the persistence of this sort of publication into the following century.

Another textual practice, one that developed fully as a function of print culture, consists of the letter as 'relic,' where one's literary remains were printed to serve as textual (rather than as corporeal) memorials of that individual, either in the context

[12] See Henry Foley (ed.), *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus*, vol. 1 (London: Burns and Oates, 1875), 4–66, for Rivers' letters.

[13] See, for instance, Kate Peters, 'Patterns of Quaker Authorship, 1652–1656' in Thomas N. Corns and David Loewenstein (eds.), *The Emergence of Quaker Writing: Dissenting Literature in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Frank Cass, 1995), 6–24; and Matthew Horn, 'Texted Authority: How Letters Helped Unify the Quakers in the Long Seventeenth Century,' *Seventeenth Century* 23.2 (Autumn 2008): 294–318.

[14] See also Bickersteth 1837, 378, 380; and Sarah Covington, *The Trail of Martyrdom: Persecution and Resistance in Sixteenth-Century England* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 96–102.

of martyrdom or otherwise. This phenomenon was particularly true of Churchmen, where letters perform this function in, for instance, *The Genuine Remains of That Learned Prelate Dr. Thomas Barlow* (1693), yet *Reliquiae Sacrae Carolinae, or the Works of That Great Monarch and Glorious Martyr King Charls the I* (1650) includes a large amount of epistolary material and unmistakably celebrates the king's martyrdom and sanctification. On the other hand, *The Speeches, Discourses, and Prayers of Col. John Barkstead, Col. John Okey, and Mr. Miles Corbet* (1662)—which also includes letters—served to frame the printed relics of executed republicans as quasi-religious documents by tying these men to those that suffered for the primitive Church: just as 'the primitive Christians long[ed] for Martyrdom, seeking and pursuing after it: publicly and boldly to the very Teeth of the Tyrants and Persecutors proclaiming their Christianity,' so these men were martyred for supporting the Christian Commonwealth.[15]

Of course, the line between memorial and propaganda—as with the line between sermon and polemic—was not a clear one, since letters were utilized in a number of different ways in print to reach a wide reading public on matters of faith and religion. William Cecil, Lord Burghley, for instance, engaged in a propagandistic 'epistolary fiction' when taking the role of an English Catholic loyal to Queen Elizabeth in his *The Copie of a Letter sent out of England to Don Bernardin Mendoza* (1588). Richard Verstegan in his equally fictive print letter, *The Copy of a Letter lately Written by a Spanishe Gentleman* (Antwerp, 1589), responded to this pamphlet by taking the role of a Spanish gentleman newly freed from captivity after the failure of the Armada, who, in writing to his friend in England, has cause to dispute the content of *The Copie of a Letter Sent out of England to Don Bernardin Mendoza*. This sort of religious epistolary fiction persisted into the next centuries, for instance, in *A Letter from Father La Chaise, Confessor to the French King, to Father Peters* (1688), where François de la Chaise is ventriloquized, while similar forged letters as if by clergymen, such as *Copy of a Letter Addressed to the Father Rector at Brussels, Found among Some Jesuits Taken at London* (1643), masquerade as real 'discovered' letters. Yet other such letters are satirical in nature, such as the ventriloquized *The Popes Letter to Maddam Cellier* (1680) and Elizabeth Cellier's pretended response, *Maddam Celliers Answer to the Popes Letter* (1680).

Letters written by women alert us to the cultural meanings of gender and its impact on religious letter writing of all types. Throughout the period, moral-didactic subjects were generally ones on which it was acceptable for women to write and—eventually—in which to publish. Handwritten letters by women range from those seeking support in correspondence with ministers such as John Knox, Edward Dering, Thomas Cartwright, and Thomas Wilcox, to those of a confessional nature written by individuals such as Margaret Clifford to her chaplain,

[15] *Speeches, Discourses, and Prayers*, To the Reader, unsigned.

while other women such as Margaret Neville and Elizabeth Beaumont employed letters pragmatically when responding to charges of recusancy, often using gendered rhetoric in doing so (Daybell 2009, 524, 526, 529–32). Published religious letters by women were relatively few, and those chiefly printed posthumously, as in *An Epistle of the Ladye Jane*, but by the mid-seventeenth century living women letter writers published somewhat more often. Quaker women, among them Mary Howgill, Margaret Fell Fox, Anne Docwra, and Anne Gilman, engaged the press to print letters on behalf of the Friends, some of which were addressed to political leaders.[16] Later in the century Mary Astell in *Letters Concerning the Love of God between the Author of the Proposal to the Ladies and Mr. John Norris* (1695) demonstrated the growing phenomenon of women printing moral-didactic letters, a development that continued in the eighteenth century with writers such as Hester Chapone, who published the exceedingly popular *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind, Addressed to a Young Lady* (1773). Yet other moral-didactic letters in print—but ones never intended for print when composed—were published during the period, such as those included in *The Holy Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Walker, Late Wife of A[nthony] W[alker] D. D. Rector of Fyfield in Essex* (1690), in which six letters of a consolatory and exhortatory nature were included, set off from the biography proper.

Spiritual biography, biographically oriented martyrdom accounts, and biographies of ecclesiastics exploited letters during this period, as well. John Mush's 'Life of Margaret Clitherowe' contains a letter written by the Lord Mayor of York on behalf of Margaret's husband to the Earl of Derby seeking their daughter Anne's release from prison, among other documents. Jesuit John Gerard composed his 'life' at the request of his superiors, an autobiographical account in which Gerard quotes portions of letters in the narrative.[17] Other biographies printed during the early modern era incorporated letters, either threaded through the biography such as in William Newton's *The Life of the Right Reverend Dr. White Kennett, Late Lord Bishop of Peterborough* (1730) and William Gilpin's *The Life of Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury* (1784) or else set apart from the biography proper, as in Edward Smyth's *The Extraordinary Life and Christian Experience of Margaret Davidson* (Dublin, 1782) and Richard Parr's *The Life of the Most Reverend Father in God, James Usher, Late Lord Arch-Bishop of Armagh* (1686), to which Parr appends over 300 of Ussher's letters. The inclusion of letters in all such biographies points to the increasing use of letters as documentary evidence in religious contexts.

[16] Mary Howgill's *A Remarkable Letter of Mary Howgill to Oliver Cromwel* (1657) and Anne Gilman's *An Epistle to Friends … also a Letter to Charles, King of England* (1662) serve as two instances.

[17] See John Morris (ed.), *The Troubles of Our Catholic Forefathers Related by Themselves*, vol. 3 (London: Burns and Oates, 1877), 354; and John Morris (ed.), *The Life of Father John Gerard, of the Society of Jesus* (London: Burns and Oates, 1881), 284–5 and 378, for instance.

Many forms of epistolary rhetoric likewise persisted throughout the centuries. The language of epistolary propriety, reliability, authenticity, and that concerning postal processes such as delivery and reception are perhaps the most salient, but religious rhetoric is equally enduring in letters, as the shared usage of the language of spiritual warfare in the letters of John Philpot and Elizabeth Wilson demonstrate, where Philpot uses his letter to frame the fight for reformed religion against Catholicism, while Wilson exploits the same rhetoric to image Congregationalism's struggle against Anglicanism. The language is likewise employed by Robert Southwell in his *Epistle of Comfort*: 'Your lyfe is a warfare your weapons patience, your Captayne Christe, your standerd the Crosse. Now is the larum sounded, and the warre proclaymed' (Southwell 1587, 134v). Other forms of religious rhetoric found in letters include the rhetoric of suffering and martyrdom, also common to Catholics and various Protestant denominations alike. Secular priest William Hart uses the rhetoric when writing to his mother in 1584: 'I dy … onely for my faith … for my blessed Saviour Jesus Christ…. How glad then may he bee to see mee a martyr, a Saint, a most glorious and bright starre in heaven' (qtd. in Marotti 2000, 175 [third set of ellipses in original]), while in his farewell letter composed just before his execution, Nicholas Ridley writes that Christ 'hath vouchsafed to call me … unto this high dignity of his true prophets, of his faithful apostles, and of his holy, elect, and chosen martyrs; that is, to die, and to spend this temporal life in the defence and maintenance of his eternal and everlasting truth' (Bickersteth 1837, 61). The language of communion through Christ, sometimes in gustatory metaphor, is another sort of spiritual rhetoric. John Bradford begins a letter, 'I heartily commend me unto you in our common Christ: whom I so call, not that I would make him as common things be, that is, nothing set by; but because by him we are brought into a communion' (Bickersteth 1837, 294). Edmund Waller writing to fellow Quaker Henry Goulding echoes this language roughly a century and a half later: 'Thy letter of the 23rd inst. was extreame wellcome to me. A sober felowship and communion in Christ Jesus is food and refreshment to the soules of the Righteous' (Locker-Lampson 1910, 69). John Wesley writes similarly to Jane Bisson in 1787, beginning the letter, 'I have a great union of spirit with you,' and continues, 'What you speak of your communion with Him comforts and warms my heart. I love to read or to hear any part of your experience' (Wesley 1960). In these instances, the rhetorical drive of the letters is to unite writer, recipient, and Christ in communication/communion, a drive plain in Methodist letters like Wesley's where 'Letters played out etymological connections between communion, communication, and community' (Brant 2006, 313). Now, without doubt these various rhetorical strategies appear in religious discourses besides letters; yet their manifestation in correspondence—exemplified especially in the last set of examples—demonstrates the extent to which this language had considerable value in stimulating devotion and strengthening communion among the faithful outside of formal or ceremonial discourses (such as sermons, catechisms, and prayer books) and organized for a such as Church services. At the same time, the inscription of this rhetoric in letters suggests an internalized (and personalized) consciousness of tropes of spirituality found precisely in other sorts of religious texts.

1.4 The Current State of Scholarship on Religion and Letter Writing

Modern scholarship that deals in some way with early modern British letters and religion over roughly the last 40 years may be generally divided into five groups: (1) studies of women's letters and religion, (2) general studies of epistolary writing that in part investigate the relationship between religion and letters, (3) literary and historical studies of religious topics in which letters are examined or figure significantly in the analysis, (4) studies of individual Churchmen and their letters, and (5) religion in the personal letters or in the epistolary fictions of literary writers.[18]

The largest category of the secondary literature consists of research on women's letters and religion, and is directly associated with the rise of feminist scholarship. There are no book-length studies that deal solely with British women, letters, and religion, but numerous article- and chapter-length studies as well as monographs deal in part with women, letters, and religious subject matter. In general, this scholarship has revealed to what remarkable extent women of all religious denominations participated in the culture of epistolarity, the dexterous and multi-faceted uses to which letters were put, and the various contexts in which women wrote—from private, spiritual ones to public, controversial ones, the research spanning from letter writers such as Elizabeth Talbot, Countess of Shrewsbury, writing just after the mid-sixteenth century, to Eliza Gould, writing at the end of the eighteenth.

Monographs that explore early modern epistolary writing generally that in part investigate the relationship between letters and religion are fewer. Thomas O. Beebee's *Epistolary Fiction in Europe, 1500–1850*, Clare Brant's *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture*, James Daybell's *Women Letter Writers in Tudor England*, Gary Schneider's *Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England, 1500–1700* and Susan E. Whyman's *The Pen and the People: English Letter Writers, 1660–1800* are among them.[19] Each of these monographs speaks to religion and letter writing in some capacity, but even though Brant devotes an entire chapter to the topic of letter writing as a Christian, religion and letter writing are not the principal focus of any of these.

Literary and historical analyses of religious topics in which letters are examined or figure significantly in the analysis are exemplified by several monographs, among them Brad S. Gregory's *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern*

[18] I am indebted to Daybell's comprehensive bibliographies of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century letters and letter writing as these serve as the basis for the brief review of the 'religion and letter writing' scholarship I undertake here; I refer the reader to these bibliographies rather than list the numerous individual articles and book chapters here.

[19] Beebee, *Epistolary Fiction in Europe, 1500–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England, 1500–1700* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005). The others are included in the reference list.

Europe, which details the scribal communities of Protestants, Anabaptists, and Roman Catholics; John R. Knott's *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature, 1563–1694*, which tackles *The Letters of the Martyrs* and George Fox's *Epistles*; and Scott R. Pilarz's *Robert Southwell and the Mission of Literature, 1561–1595*, in which Southwell's *An Epistle of a Religious Priest unto His Father* (London?, 1597?) and his *Epistle of Comfort* are examined.[20] Additionally, several article- and chapter-length studies examine letters in the wider context of religious issues. Whereas letters are often used as standard documentary evidence in literary and historical research, in this scholarship letters themselves are given detailed analysis.

Studies of individual Churchmen and their letters are fewer in number and are chapter and article length. Edward Dering, John Sheterdon, and John Wesley are among the religious figures whose letters have been investigated in the scholarship, although a number of studies have focused on John Knox, in particular his correspondence with women. The fifth grouping, investigations of religion in the personal letters or in the epistolary fictions of literary writers, by contrast, constitutes a somewhat larger portion of scholarship on religion and epistolary studies. A number of these studies have focused on religion in and the spiritual features of John Donne's and Thomas More's letters, while others have examined religious dimensions in the epistolary work of Thomas Browne, Aphra Behn, Mary Wortley Montagu, and Hester Chapone.

1.5 Ongoing Correspondences: The Present Collection

The purpose of this collection, then, at its simplest, is to extend prior research as well as to remedy deficiencies in the current scholarship on religion and early modern letter writing by bringing together an array of essays from both historians and literary scholars. The research that constitutes this collection indeed reflects the range of scholarship on letters and religion that has begun to be written since the 'turn' to religion. This collection of scholarship on early modern letter writing, whose purpose is to focus exclusively on religion, is long overdue. Individually, each chapter advances prior research on early modern letters and religion, and shares a set of common concerns with other essays in the collection.

In Chap. 2, 'Scribal Networks and Sustainers in Protestant Martyrology,' Mark Greengrass addresses several of the issues with which modern scholarship has been engaged regarding religion and letter writing, concentrating on reformers' prison letters in print, namely the attention given to outlining, and sometimes purposefully manipulating, the presentation of the epistolary communities of the reformers in

[20] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature, 1563–1694* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Pilarz, *Robert Southwell and the Mission of Literature, 1561–1595: Writing Reconciliation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).