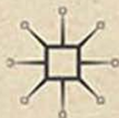
Christianities in the Trans-Atlantic World, 1500–1800

Puritans and Catholics in the Trans-Atlantic World 1600-1800

Edited by

Crawford Gribben

Scott Spurlock



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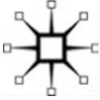

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Preface

This book emerges from a series of seminars and conferences which were convened over several years to consider the nature and expansion of radical religion in the early modern trans-Atlantic world. The project was developed by the editors when we were colleagues at Trinity College Dublin, an institution that generously funded a number of early events. The school also administered the funding for the project which was later awarded by the Irish Research Council (2012–13). We subsequently moved to positions in the United Kingdom – Spurlock to the University of Glasgow and Gribben to Queen's University Belfast – where we have benefited from additional project funding provided by our new institutions and the Ministerial Advisory Group on Ulster Scots (MAGUS) within the Northern Ireland Department of Culture and Leisure (2013–14). We would like to thank those colleagues who have spoken at or facilitated our conferences and the audio-visual seminars which have linked the universities of Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Manchester with Queen's University Belfast, Trinity College Dublin, and Westminster Seminary Philadelphia. We are especially grateful to our contributors and to Jenny McCall and Jade Moulds for their extraordinary patience as this volume was – slowly – completed. Unless otherwise noted, all sixteenth-, seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries' texts are published in London.

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Introduction

Crawford Gribben

A great deal of recent scholarship has focused on the emergence in early modernity of one or more Atlantic worlds. These publications have explored – often in extraordinary detail and with exceptional nuance – the processes by which individuals, institutions, communities, and states expanded in power and prestige as a new continent gradually emerged on the other side of the Atlantic. Religion and religious identity have, of course, played an important role in many of these scholarly narratives. For many English Puritans, for example, the New World represented new opportunities for the reification of reformation, if not a site within which they might begin to experience the conditions of the millennium itself. For many Irish Catholics, by contrast, the New World became associated with the experience of defeat, forced transportation, indentured service, cultural and religious loss. And yet, as the chapters in this volume demonstrate, the Atlantic experience of Puritans and Catholics could be much less bifurcated than some of the established scholarly narratives have suggested. Puritans and Catholics could co-exist within the same trans-Atlantic families; Catholics could prosper, just as Puritans could experience financial decline; and Catholics and Puritans could adopt and exchange similar kinds of belief structures and practical arrangements. As Polly Ha and Philip Lockley illustrate in different periods and contexts, this could even reach to the level of being mistaken for each other. Of all the 'odd couples' represented in Francis J. Bremer's contribution to this volume, Puritanism and Catholicism may have been the most strange in the early modern Atlantic world.

This volume suggests some of the new kinds of religious relationships which were made possible within the Atlantic world. Throughout early modernity, Protestant and Catholic churches routinely defined themselves as being in opposition to each other. For many years, historians

took those claims at face value. The Reformation was imagined to be a primal moment: Christendom was divided and states entered new and rival religiously driven alliances; and when, with the assault on the doctrine of purgatory, links were broken between the living and the dead. But recent scholarship has questioned this narrative, and the scholarly moves and motives which often lay behind this thinking. Historians are now increasingly reluctant to describe the relationship between Protestant and Catholic institutions as binary and oppositional. Eamon Duffy's work has insisted that reformist ideas in Protestant England were adopted neither rapidly nor universally, for example. Protestants continued to consume Catholic texts into the seventeenth century. Much of their reading was focused on the classics of medieval theology, but Protestants also adopted a number of contemporary Catholic works. Richard Baxter's experience of conversion was, after all, driven by his reading of an adaptation of the Jesuit Robert Person's *Resolution* (1580). This volume sets out to consider how the context of the early modern Atlantic allowed for the circulation of Puritan and Catholic ideas, institutions and personnel, and how the Atlantic experience fostered internal change within these communities, as well as changes in the relationship to each other of their ideas, institutions, and personnel. It explores some of the implications of a shift in scholarly focus on Puritan-Catholic relationships, from England looking east towards the zero-sum contest of the Thirty Years War to England looking west towards the challenge and promise of the New World.

This volume represents a necessary and often innovative perspective on the religious experience of trans-Atlantic expansion. A number of contributions offer important new case studies in the experience of and relationship between Puritans and Catholics in the early modern Atlantic world. A number of the following chapters illustrate the processes by which puritans adopted fixed positions in the rhetorical and theological debates of the period. Ema Vyroubalová's chapter focuses on a single text which encoded some of the key tensions between Catholics and 'hot protestants' in the English world. The positions adopted in Samuel Ward's print, *The Double Deliverance* (1621), were re-inscribed with each reprinting of the text until the plates began to wear. And yet, as Vyroubalová indicates, this technically and linguistically complex print may have been more troubled than many of its readers may have realised. Polly Ha's consideration of 'the politics of prayer' shows how a single debate could resonate with concerns which drew upon the rhetorical and theological environment of the eastern Atlantic. By focusing on a party within the broader movement of the godly, Ha demonstrates

that Puritans defined themselves as being necessarily in opposition to what they perceived to be a Catholic faith with the imperial ambition of destabilising the English church. Yet in Ha's account, Puritan identity depended on the identification of a Catholic threat far more than Catholic identity depended on the existence of the hotter sort of Protestants. A much greater degree of ideological mutuality is demonstrated in Bremer's chapter, which illustrates the concerns of a series of families which internalised the religious divisions of Christendom. Bremer's argument is made compelling by the fact that so many of the individuals he describes struggled to find a permanent spiritual home, and that some of those who moved from the Church of England to that of Rome eventually came home again. Within that cycle, it is ironic that some of those who most vigorously defended their conversion to the Catholic faith were among those who would ultimately abandon it. Theological positions are, after all, discursive, and never as monolithic as apologists would want us to believe. Nor are they always projected against an 'other' on the opposite side of the Reformation. Michael Winship's exploration of the emergence of a distinctive ecclesiological party within the 'big tent' of trans-Atlantic Puritanism illustrates the early existence of tensions which would shatter the unity of the godly in the British and Irish civil wars of the 1640s. Edward Simon's reflection upon spiritual geography and its inversions illustrates how a close reading of American texts can identify moments of cohesion and inversion within the Puritan world. For Cotton Mather was among a new generation of writers to self-identify as American in opposition to the declining Protestant zeal of England.

Other chapters in this volume offer useful reminders that the aims and concerns of Puritans and Catholics in the Atlantic world were often shared. Members of both groups could see the realities of colonial expansion in similar terms. David Manning's description of a long-standing moral critique of Port Royal, Jamaica, represents striking similarities between advocates of these competing religious discourses. In truth, many members of these communities experienced colonial expansion in parallel. For example, the subjects of Jordan Landes's discussion of Quaker institutionalism would have found much in common with those of R. Scott Spurlock's chapter on the condition of Catholicism in the British Atlantic. Quakers, Baptists, and Catholics all had to negotiate the experience of marginality and (at least initially) the absence of traditionally identified spiritual leaders. Each of these communities responded to this challenge in different ways: the Quaker hostility to clerical authority was shared partially by other 'radicals' such as Baptists, and not at all by

Catholics (although, in many Atlantic contexts, it was Catholics who faced the greatest difficulty in securing adequate pastoral care). Andrew Crome, by contrast, illustrates the extent to which these communities could develop shared hopes, which were mutually reinforced through extensive extra-confessional reading. Crome demonstrates that a belief in the conversion of the Jews, long thought to be an apocalyptic trope peculiar to Puritans, was also an expectation of Iberian Catholics, whose writing these Puritans eagerly consumed. His conclusions should be compared with those of Robert Armstrong, who describes the extent to which the opportunities of the Atlantic experience provided Ulster Presbyterians with an important foil for understanding their situation at home. And yet, as in Ha's discussion of the 'politics of prayer', Crome demonstrates that Puritans may have appropriated Catholic texts more often than vice versa. Puritan identity needed Catholics in a way that Catholic identity did not need Puritans. In other words, throughout the period, in a variety of contexts and with a variety of ends, Catholics and Puritans shared experiences – and sometimes even books – as they experienced, together, the contingencies of life in the trans-Atlantic world.

2

Families and Religious Conflict in the Early Modern Atlantic World

Francis J. Bremer

On 13 July 1597, Adam Winthrop, a patron of the Puritan Reformed movement in England's Stour Valley and the father of the future Massachusetts Governor John Winthrop, recorded in his diary that 'my cousin Alabaster *fatebatur se esse papistam* [admitted that he was a papist]'.[1] A little more than a year after his visit to Groton and confession of his conversion, William Alabaster was admitted to the English College in Rome, where he provided answers to a series of six questions put to all seeking admission. In the course of those answers, he referred to his mother's family as the 'ancient and renowned family of Winthrop'.[2]

The story of William Alabaster is one of three examples which I will use to explore why and how individuals in the same family, raised in the Protestant Church of England, chose to embrace Puritan reform in some cases, and, in other cases, Roman Catholicism. One might expect that members of a family, possessing the same heredity and raised in virtually the same circumstances, would display similar religious commitments. Yet, neither nature nor nurture explains the choices of the individuals I wish to discuss – men who not only chose different religious camps, but who became leaders in those camps. In the end, I should admit, I will have no definitive answer to explain their choices. But I hope that by telling these stories, I may prompt useful discussion that can help us to better understand the complexities of the religious age investigated in this book.

William Alabaster was born in Hadleigh, Suffolk, in 1568, the son of Roger Alabaster, a merchant, and Bridget Winthrop. William's uncle, Thomas Alabaster, was a London merchant engaged in the Spanish trade who occasionally acted as an agent for William Cecil. Another uncle, William Winthrop, had been a member of the underground Protestant

church in London during the reign of Queen Mary and a patron of Puritan livings in the years that followed. Alabaster's uncle, Adam Winthrop was the father of the John Winthrop who would lead the Great Migration to establish the Puritan colony of Massachusetts. Adam Winthrop was married to Alice Still, the sister of John Still, rector of Hadleigh, who became Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and later Bishop of Bath and Wells – remaining a Puritan sympathiser in all these positions. Still, he married Alabaster's cousin, Anne Alabaster. There were few more Protestant and reform-inclined families in England.[3]

Through Still's influence, Alabaster entered Westminster School in 1578, and was chosen one of the Queen's scholars to Trinity College, Cambridge in 1583. He graduated with a BA in 1588 and was elected a fellow of the college. Alabaster had already shown a flair for literature, and it is thought that his Latin tragedy *Roxana* was first performed at this time in the college. He was also working on an epic poem in praise of Queen Elizabeth, the 'Elisaeis' (never completed), which he showed to Still's friend, Edmund Spenser, when the latter visited Cambridge in 1591. Spenser subsequently praised Alabaster in his *Colin Clouts Come Home Again* (1595).[4]

In 1595, Alabaster played a prominent role in a set of academic disputations organised by the earl of Essex for the Cambridge commencement. The following year he was appointed catechist at Trinity College, Cambridge, and in the same year, joined the earl of Essex as a chaplain on the Cadiz expedition. It was in that captured city that he had his first close contacts with Catholics and Catholic worship. On returning to England, he turned down the living at Brettenham, Suffolk, but accepted the richer living of Landulph, Cornwall, from the earl of Essex, who by then was identified as his patron. William's cousin Joshua Winthrop was one of the guarantors for the first fruits for the living.[5]

At Eastertide in 1597, Alabaster travelled to London in search of further preferment, which he felt he needed to be able to afford to marry. But while staying with Dean Gabriel Goodman of Westminster, he encountered Father Thomas Wright, a Roman Catholic priest under house arrest. It was hoped that the brilliant Alabaster would convert Wright, but it was Alabaster who ended up being converted. Alabaster returned to Cambridge, broke off his planned marriage, and began to share with friends his attraction to Roman Catholicism. It was during this summer of 1597 that he visited his Winthrop kin in Groton, the same summer that he wrote many of his religious sonnets. In September, intercepted letters of Wright indicated Alabaster's conversion, and Richard Bancroft, the bishop of London, sent orders to Cambridge that the college

authorities place Alabaster under close confinement. When efforts by the various college heads failed to shake him from his new beliefs, he was sent to London. Meanwhile Alabaster had expressed his reasons for converting in a manuscript referred to as the 'Seven Motives'. It was intercepted when he tried to have it delivered to Essex, whom he hoped would protect him. Although never published, the 'Seven Motives' can be reconstructed from references to it in two published answers, by John Racster and Roger Fenton.[6]

Through the winter of 1597, Alabaster was interrogated in London by various church leaders – including Richard Bancroft, Alabaster's kinsman John Still, and Lancelot Andrewes – all of whom attempted to undo his conversion. When these efforts failed, he was deprived of his orders and benefices on 20 February 1588. Because he was denied both a martyr's fate and a public chance to defend his views, Alabaster took advantage of loose security to escape his confinement in the Clink, a prison in Southwark.[7] In November 1598 he took up residence at the English College in Rome, where he prepared a lengthy manuscript narrative of his conversion. By early 1599, Alabaster was in Spain, and in the summer of the same year he set out to return to England. Captured by English agents in La Rochelle, he was transported to London and lodged in the Tower, where he was questioned by William Cecil. Alabaster claimed to have been sent to England to conspire on behalf of the Pope with the earl of Essex, charges which played into the hands of the earl's enemies and surfaced at Essex's trial in 1601. Alabaster was moved to Framlingham Castle in 1601. He was pardoned at James I's accession in 1603 but was arrested again in 1604. While there is no evidence at this point that he had abandoned his conversion to Catholicism, he was clearly troubled by the conflicts within the English Catholic community, and offered to spy (for Cecil) on Catholic priests acting against the crown. He was released and returned to Europe. In 1607 he published, without an imprimatur, his *Apparatus in revelationem Jesu Christi*, a book of cabbalistic divinity that some Catholics considered heretical. In 1609, he was back at the English College in Rome where he became alienated from Father Robert Persons, then head of the college. He became involved in college plots and denounced Persons to the Inquisition. But it was Alabaster who was brought before that tribunal, which condemned his *Apparatus* in 1610 and ordered him to remain in Rome.[8]

Disenchanted, Alabaster fled to Amsterdam and then returned to England. He made his peace with the Church of England, and won the king's favor with a Latin poem presented to the monarch on the marriage of the royal favourite, Robert Carr, in 1613. At the king's command,

he was absolved from his heresy by Archbishop George Abbot, and subsequently created Doctor of Divinity at Cambridge in 1614.[9] He was granted the living of Therfield, Hertfordshire. In 1615 he preached before the king at Whitehall and two years later preached a sermon at St. Paul's which some felt smacked of popery – according to an account reported in 1629 by Oliver Cromwell in his maiden speech to Parliament.[10] In 1618, Alabaster was admitted to Gray's Inn and was referred to as a royal chaplain. He married Katherine Fludd, *née* Bufkin, widow of Thomas Fludd of Gray's Inn, and sister-in-law of Dr Robert Fludd. In 1625, he received the living of Little Shelford in Cambridgeshire. Alabaster spent the rest of his life publishing various works. He was interested in the world of John Dee and others, where the occult, medicine, cabbalism, and alchemy blended.

As for the other side of the family, Adam Winthrop, John's father, had often welcomed his nephew, Alabaster, to his Groton home and noted in his diary key events in Alabaster's life after his confession that he had turned to Rome. In 1610, he recorded that he had heard that Alabaster had revolted from Rome, but recorded in Latin that 'I hardly think that, but I would wish it to be true'.[11] Adam's son, John Winthrop, was twenty years younger than his kinsman William Alabaster. As a youngster, he accompanied his father on visits to the Alabasters in Hadley. He may have accompanied his father to Cambridge when Adam journeyed there in his capacity as auditor of Trinity College and there spent time with Alabaster and the college Master, John Still. Young John was undoubtedly impressed by the successful Cambridge fellow when Alabaster visited the Winthrops in Groton, and as a nine-year-old would likely have been enthralled by his kinsman's stories of the expedition against Cadiz. There are no direct references to the two meeting after the stay in 1597 when Alabaster confessed his initial conversion to Adam, but there is likewise no expression of antipathy toward William.

Any interest the Winthrops showed in their kinsman Alabaster would not have been unusual. Despite the reputation of the Stour Valley as a bastion of Puritanism, and notwithstanding his own strong Puritan sensibilities and close friendship with Puritan clerical leaders such as Henry Sandys and John Knewstub, Adam Winthrop had cordial relations with local Catholics such as the Mannock family. Adam and William Mannock dined at each other's homes and exchanged New Year gifts.[12]

Unlike William Alabaster, his cousin John Winthrop followed a life course more in keeping with what one would expect of one who grew up in the Stour Valley. Around the age of ten, he began to experience strong religious feelings. He considered the ministry and was admitted

to Trinity, Cambridge. While he abandoned college and a ministerial career, he became a respected Puritan lay leader who formed a prayer group with like-minded reformers. His advice was regularly sought by other believers.

John's reputation led to his being elected governor of the Massachusetts Bay Company in 1629. He led the Great Migration to Massachusetts in 1630 and set the tone for that Puritan godly experiment in his famous lay sermon, 'A model of Christian charity'. At the heart of that sermon was the belief that, if one strove to lead a godly life, God would reveal further light and understanding of his wishes. This set him apart from those Puritans who were convinced they already had sufficient understanding of what God wanted. Winthrop served as governor of the colony for most years until his death in 1649 including a number of occasions when he preached to the Boston church and neighbouring congregations by way of prophesying. His understanding that, though saved, he was a fallible sinner and further light was possible, made him a moderate figure among the leaders of Massachusetts. He valued a friendship with Roger Williams though he disagreed with him on some issues, warning Williams of the plans of his fellow magistrates to send him back to England. Even after Williams's banishment from Massachusetts, Winthrop maintained a mutually respectful relationship. On the other hand, he showed little sympathy for Anne Hutchinson, whose stance was more theologically radical than that of Williams, and who was adamant in her belief that the majority of the colony's religious and civil leaders were false guides.[13]

The Davenports of Coventry

A second 'odd couple' – in terms of religion – were John Davenport and his nephew Christopher. Both were born in Coventry, England. John was born in 1597. Christopher, the son of John's oldest brother Barnabas, was born in 1598 and was thus one year younger than his uncle. The Davenports were a prominent family in Coventry. John's father (and Christopher's grandfather), Henry, was a prosperous draper who was elected sheriff in 1602 and mayor in 1613. Then he was named one of the permanent aldermen in the city charter of 1621. Henry's brother, Christopher, was even more successful – a wealthy pewterer and property-holder, he was chosen mayor in 1602 and was also named a permanent alderman in the 1621 charter. This Christopher was also noted for his charitable efforts, donating money for sermons at Holy Trinity church, and funds for a free school for the city's poor. Because he

and his wife were childless, he would underwrite the education of his nephew, John, and his great-nephew, Christopher.[14] Both of the young Davenports were raised in a godly community as well as a godly family. They would have heard the preaching of clergy such as Richard Eaton, Humphrey Fenn, and Thomas Cooper. Henry and the older Christopher were among the city leaders who refused to kneel to receive communion until being ordered to do so by Bishop Neile at the insistence of King James I.

In 1613, John and his nephew, Christopher, matriculated as battlers at Merton College, Oxford, where they shared a room and a tutor. After a year, they both left Merton, presumably because the Warden, Henry Saville, was unwilling to allow them to continue there in a status below what their family background should have dictated. They migrated to Magdalen Hall to complete their studies. Christopher, who evidently was given credit for a prior stay at Trinity College, Dublin, received his BA in May of 1614. In August of 1616, he crossed the channel and entered the English Catholic College at Douai, signifying his conversion to Roman Catholicism. There he met and befriended John Gennings. Gennings had, like Christopher, been raised a Protestant – a 'perverse Puritan' in his own words. But John Gennings had converted to Catholicism following the death of his older brother, Edward, a Catholic convert who became a priest and was executed for treason in 1591. John Gennings entered the Franciscan order in 1614 or 1615, and Christopher Davenport followed him, entering that order as Franciscus à Sancta Clara. He was ordained a priest in 1620 and studied theology in Spain before returning to Douai to teach philosophy and theology.[15]

As Father Sancta Clara, Christopher returned to England in the mid-1630s to join the entourage of Charles II's French Catholic queen, Henrietta Maria. He took up residence at Somerset House and became a key figure in trying to move England back toward Rome. While his Uncle John was supporting John Dury's irenic efforts to unite the Church of England with the leading Protestant churches on the continent, Sancta Clara was trying to forge a union between the Church of England and Rome. In 1634, he published *Deus, natura, gratia*, which he dedicated to Charles I. The tract contained an appendix entitled 'The Articles of the Anglican Confession … considered as to how far they can be reconciled with the true faith', an attempt to demonstrate that the Church of England's Thirty-Nine Articles were not incompatible with Catholic teachings. Among other points, he argued that the formula of ordination in the English church was essentially the same as that employed by the Catholic Church. The king was reported to have looked favourably

upon his effort.[16] Sir Francis Windebank, the English Secretary of State, indicated to the papal agent in England, Georgio Panzani, that the king wished that Sancta Clara's work not be condemned in Rome, as some English Catholics were urging it ought to be.[17]

Though Sancta Clara was chosen Provincial of his order for the first of three terms in 1637, many English Catholics were sharply critical of his efforts. Some argued that in showing the Church of England to be compatible with Roman Catholicism Sancta Clara hindered the effort to actually get Englishmen to convert to Rome by making conversion seem unnecessary.[18] Sancta Clara did not share that view and he was personally involved in some of the conversions to Catholicism of prominent members of the court. He was also a close friend of the Church of England bishop, Godfrey Goodman.[19] Such friendships and the failure of the English Church to strongly oppose efforts of Davenport and others to reunite England to Rome contributed to the belief that Archbishop William Laud was soft on popery.[20] Years later, one of the charges in the impeachment trial of Laud was his presumed intimacy with Sancta Clara. Sancta Clara's movements following the outbreak of the English Civil Wars are unclear, but he was back in Douai in 1647 to resume his position as director of studies.[21]

In 1648, Father Sancta Clara published *Systema fidei*, a defence of Ecumenical Councils in which he maintained that, while the Pope was the supreme pastor of God's people, infallibility was limited to positions ruled on by General Councils so long as those positions were rooted in scripture.[22] He also contended that the church could not police internal thoughts and that all legitimate probable opinions on doctrinal matters should be freely discussed. Two years later he published a *Treatise of the schism of England* under the name Philip Scott. In 1651, he was living openly in England. In 1656, he even presented a document expounding his interpretation of Catholic beliefs to Oliver Cromwell.[23] Following the Restoration, Father Sancta Clara became chaplain to Catherine of Braganza and lodged at the Savoy. He was instrumental in the conversion of Ann Hyde, the Duchess of York.[24] He died in 1680.

Meanwhile, John Davenport, Sancta Clara's uncle, also chose a ministerial career. Too young to be ordained in 1615, he served for a year as a chaplain at Hilton Castle, outside Sunderland in the heart of a strongly Catholic region. Following ordination in October 1616, he settled in London. He was a lecturer at St. Mary Aldermanbury, lecturer and curate at St. Michael Huggen Lane, and then elected curate and lecturer of St. Lawrence Jewry in 1619. He became known as a powerful preacher and was elected vicar of St. Stephen Coleman Street by that parish's vestry

in 1624. Over the following decade, he became a leader in the Puritan movement in London. He was one of the organisers of the Feoffees for Impropriations, a fund for placing godly preachers in English pulpits. He joined with Richard Sibbes, Thomas Taylor, and William Gouge in soliciting funds for the relief of Protestants displaced by the Thirty Years War, and offered a home to one himself. He became a member of the Hartlib Circle and a strong supporter of both the ecumenical efforts of John Dury and the educational reforms of Jan Amos Comenius. During these years he emphasised the importance of subordinating minor differences in the Protestant camp in order to maintain a united front against Roman Catholicism.[25]

In 1633, troubled by the increasing pressures to conform from William Laud and the Church of England hierarchy, and prompted by discussions with fellow Puritans such as Philip Nye, as well as with members of the separatist community in London, John Davenport adopted nonconformist practices that brought him to the attention of the ecclesiastical authorities. He journeyed to the Netherlands where he spent time serving English congregations in Amsterdam, The Hague, and Rotterdam. These experiences moved him to commit himself to policies of congregational autonomy and lay authority within congregations. With a return to England no longer possible, he decided to emigrate to New England.

Davenport had been an early member of the Massachusetts Bay Company and ally of John Winthrop, but in 1638, after a short stay in Boston (where he sought to calm the disturbances swirling around Anne Hutchinson), he and his followers established their own town and colony in southern New England, which they called New Haven. He became – and remained until his death in 1670 – one of the church fathers of early New England. He was noted for his defence of congregational principles against an encroaching clericalism, and for his strong commitment to linking the colonies to international religious reform.

While it is hard to imagine that John and Christopher Davenport had no contacts when both were (in their different ways) prominent members of the London religious scene and while each would have found it impossible to not know of his kinsman's career, there is no direct evidence of any meetings, nor of how they viewed each other.[26] What is striking, however, is that each in his own way pursued irenic agendas – John Davenport was a strong supporter of John Dury's attempts to unite the Church of England and all Protestant Christendom while Christopher, as Sancta Clara, laboured to reconcile the English church with Rome. Furthermore, both showed a familiarity with and drew upon

Jewish writings, and both supported pan-sophistical approaches such as those espoused by Comenius.

The brothers Goffe

John Davenport had strong connections to our third 'odd couple' – Stephen and William Goffe. Both were sons of the Reverend Stephen Goffe, a Church of England clergyman, who may have been sympathetic to the further reform of the church. The elder son, also named Stephen, was educated at Merton College, ordained by William Laud, and appointed chaplain to Sir Horace Vere, commander of an English regiment in the Netherlands. When the English Privy Council ordered the chaplains serving English regiments to use the forms of worship set out in the Book of Common Prayer, Goffe was one of the few – perhaps the only – chaplain to comply, thus alienating many of his peers. Consistent with this, in the early 1630s, he served as an agent of Laud and Sir William Boswell, the English ambassador at The Hague, in trying to limit the influence of English Puritans in the Low Countries. Goffe's hostility to Puritanism may have been a factor in eventually moving him towards Rome. John Davenport was a particular target of his attention. In his attacks on that clergyman, he indicated that he had been familiar with Davenport's career in Oxford and had heard him preach at St. Stephen's. He played a large role in mobilising the forces that denied Davenport a permanent position in the English church in Amsterdam.

Upon his return to England in 1636, Stephen Goffe was appointed one of Charles I's chaplains. He had studied for his DD at the University of Leiden, but received it in England subsequent to his appointment as a royal chaplain. He supported the king on the outbreak of the conflict with Parliament and helped the queen negotiate with foreign powers to aid the royalist cause. At this time, he encountered Father Sancta Clara at the queen's court, but is likely to have known him even earlier. *The Lord Digby's Cabinet and Dr. Goff's Negotiations* was a work published by parliament in 1646 that used captured correspondence to attack Goffe's activities. In 1649, while accompanying the queen to Paris on a mission to rally support for the royalists, he converted to Roman Catholicism. He later attributed this to the experience of attending a series of lectures on the early church. After some discussion by the Catholic authorities as to whether his ordination was valid, he was ordained again, becoming a priest in 1654. From 1655 to 1661 he was in charge of a seminary for fourteen young Englishmen outside Paris.[27]

William Goffe was Stephen's younger brother. He was apprenticed as a youth to a London grocer and became a freeman of the Grocer's Company in 1642. William fought for Parliament in the Civil Wars and as a captain was a prominent voice in the army debates at Putney in 1647, his contributions demonstrating religious zeal and political radicalism. Early in the proceedings, when tempers were running high, Goffe proposed a prayer session 'to draw us up to a serious consideration of the weightiness of the work that lies before us, and seriously to set ourselves to seek the Lord'.[28] He was a member of the court that tried Charles I and, in 1655, was one of the first Major Generals appointed by Cromwell to maintain order and promote reform in the counties. Excluded from the Act of Indemnity at the Restoration, Goffe and his father-in-law General Edward Whalley fled to New England.

The two men were well received in Boston, where Governor John Endecott welcomed them as individuals who had fought the Lord's fights in the previous decades. One contemporary reported that 'they preached and prayed, and gained universal applause and admiration, and were looked upon as men dropped down from heaven'.[29] Forced to flee Massachusetts when warrants for their arrest reached the colonies, they were sheltered for a time by John Davenport in New Haven while being pursued by agents determined to bring them back to England and justice. John Davenport eventually arranged a safe haven for them in the frontier town of Hadley along the Connecticut River, where they spent the remainder of their lives.[30]

As in the cases of John Winthrop and William Alabaster and of the Davenports, there is no evidence that the Goffes had any contacts with each other or anything to say about one another in public, though their prominence would have made it impossible for the brothers not to know of each other's careers. I must add, however, that in all of these cases nothing was to be gained save embarrassment by acknowledging a kinsman on the opposite side of the religious divide.

Civil Wars in other families

Such examples of families divided by religion were not extraordinary, as can be illustrated by a few more examples. I have previously alluded to John Gennings, who had espoused Protestant views until his brother became a Catholic martyr. A few further references can be made to other divided families that had connections to the three I have described. William Alabaster was fascinated by the story of the Reynolds brothers, who were said to have converted each other: John becoming a puritan

theologian and president of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and his younger brother William, converting to Catholicism in 1575, following which he held the chairs of Divinity and Hebrew at the English College at Rheims. Alabaster wrote extensively about them in his conversion narrative, and composed a poem about them, entitled 'Brethren civil war'.[31]

Other brethren involved in civil war were Edward and Walter Montagu. Edward Montagu, Viscount Mandeville, was the eldest son of Henry Montagu, the first earl of Manchester. Though his father was a prominent government minister, Edward moved in the circles of Puritan peers such as the Earl of Warwick and Lord Saye and Sele in the 1620s. In the early 1630s, he kept a notebook in which he recorded sermons by Sidrach Simpson, Philip Nye, Richard Sibbes, and particularly, John Davenport. In 1642, he sided with the Parliamentary opposition to Charles I and, having succeeded his father as earl of Manchester, became an army commander. It was as commander of the army that he commissioned William Dowsing to purge the churches of East Anglia of popish remnants. Following the Self-Denying Ordinance and the formation of the New Model Army he left military service. He remained convinced of the justice of the cause, but disagreed with the trial of the king. By contrast, Edward's brother, Walter Montagu, the second son of the first earl, helped negotiate the marriage of prince Charles Stuart to the French Catholic princess Henrietta Maria in 1625. Further diplomatic missions expanded his contact with Catholicism, and he is known to have had contacts at the time with Franciscus Sancta Clara at Somerset House. In 1635, at a time when his elder brother was a strong supporter of Puritan clergy, Walter Montagu converted to Catholicism. Walter supported the royalist cause in the 1640s and was banished from England by the Commons in 1649. On the continent, he was created abbot of a Benedictine monastery in the diocese of Metz and was entrusted, in 1654, with the care of Henrietta Maria's son Henry, duke of Gloucester. In 1660, he did return to England briefly to visit his brother, Edward. Sancta Clara dedicated a 1665 treatise on the Immaculate Conception to Walter Montagu. So while one of the Montagus drew inspiration from the Puritan preacher, John Davenport, his brother was aided in a conversion to Catholicism by Christopher Davenport.[32]

Families and faith

What evidentiary value can be found in exercises in prosopography such as those contained in the previous pages? On the one hand, of

course, these accounts cast doubt on any theory that religious affiliation can be attributed solely to family upbringing. It is also clear that the choices exercised by these individuals were not calculated family efforts to ensure that some members of the clan ended up on the right side of England's religious disputes.[33] And no one at this time would have chosen the path of either Puritanism or Rome in the hope of economic, social, or political advantage. These accounts offer a useful reminder of the motivating power of religious convictions.

Some insight is provided by William Alabaster's explanation of his initial religious transformation. Alabaster identified three reasons for why a person might be a Protestant. First was the attraction of new ideas. Secondly was a tendency in some raised as Catholics to have 'itching ears', as explained by St. Paul. But the third was by birth and education prior to reaching the age of reason. And Alabaster's elaboration of this situation – which, of course, was his own situation – is worth quoting. For, he considered, the

> influence of tutors and parents, the habits of judgment received daily from them, the authority of the time and present condition of the realm … do commonly sway so strongly with a youth brought up in protestancy [that] when he reaches the age of reason … it is only with the greatest difficulty that he can be induced to set it aside or consider properly on so great a matter. And especially since there are so many ties upon him, of wife, children, men's esteem, ambition, dignity, office, authority in the realm, which have more influence on him, so that if any dispute or doubt were to arise from the light of reason or God's truth, about religion, when he sees from afar off the rays of light, he will not dare examine it, since the perverse mind cannot bear to see the light of truth, by which he must change his religion and lose the benefits bound up with it.[34]

Having explained why those raised Protestants might continue to follow that path, Alabaster narrated his own conversion in a fashion that smacks more of the dramatic transformation characteristic of some (though not all) Puritan conversion narratives. As noted before, while visiting the court to obtain further preferment in 1597, Alabaster stayed with Gabriel Goodman, the dean of Westminster, and there encountered the Catholic priest, Thomas Wright. But it was not conversations with Wright that Alabaster pointed to as having altered the course of his life, but rather reading a book by William Reynolds that Wright lent him. In reading it, he later recalled, he was '[en]lightened upon the sudden, feeling myself

so wonderfully and sensibly changed both in judgment and affection as I remained astonished…I found my mind wholly and perfectly Catholic in an instant'. His new conviction as to the truth of Catholic claims came, he wrote, 'with such inward light of evidence as I could not contradict, and with such force of affection as I could not resist'.[35] It was only after this experience that he dedicated himself to the scholarly examination of the issues that led him to be able to defend his new faith against others. Unfortunately, we don't know if similar epiphanies contributed to his later religious history. Nor do we know the specific nature of the religious decisions made by the other individuals whose stories I have reviewed. Yet Alabaster's account of the infusion of grace that transformed him should caution us about over-intellectualising the decisions made by those who chose the path of Rome or of Puritan opposition at this time.

Of course, it is also worth noting that the subjects of these accounts all came from families that were not traditionalists in matters of religion. All were raised in a milieu in which it was deemed appropriate to question established religious authority and to explore the scriptures and other sources for guidance as to what it was that God demanded of men in terms of belief and practice. Those who chose the cause of further reform allied themselves with forces that would lead to revolutionary change in England and its colonies. At least two of those who did choose the cause of Rome – William Alabaster and Christopher Davenport – were never fully comfortable in accepting papal authority and as Catholics were at times in trouble with church authorities for their writings. It is also significant that William Alabaster and John Winthrop, John Davenport and Franciscus Sancta Clara were all aware of the fact that the search for religious truth was an ongoing one. All four were irenic, willing to allow some diversity of belief and practice while seeking to find common ground with those who differed from them as long as such agreement did not require a violation of fundamental truths.

Addressing his fellow emigrants in 1630, John Winthrop explained that if they followed a godly course in New England, then 'we shall see much more of his wisdom, power, goodness and truth than formerly we have been acquainted with'.[36] While he clearly believed that there were limits to what ideas and practice would be acceptable in the city on a hill, he sought to erect a perimeter fence within which equally humble believers could, with the help of the Spirit, join in discussion of unresolved matters of faith. This moderation was often criticised by some of the more close-minded colonists, including when he was willing to welcome and discuss cooperation with one of the Catholic claimants to the colony of French Acadia. John Davenport never openly extended an