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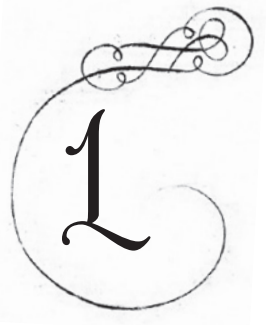


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Cut

LITTLE GIDDING'S FEMINIST PRINTING

ONE WINTER'S DAY IN 1934, Bernard George Hall of Knutsford, Cheshire, sat opening a package. It was a book he had loaned, and it had been returned to him wrapped in sheets torn out of an old bookseller's catalogue. The paper was, in that moment, simply a bit of waste: some outdated ephemera that Hall's friend had recycled to protect the book's cover as it journeyed through the mail. Still, ever interested in old texts, Hall pored over the inventory anyway; and in turning this trash back to its original function as a catalogue, his curiosity led him to a description of an odd volume pasted with cut-up fragments of other printed texts and images. The bookseller clearly did not know what to make of this particular "Binding," as the book was advertised. "The back is broken but the sides are in good condition," the catalogue reports, concluding that the front and back boards "would make an excellent blotting pad."¹ Hall, though, recognized what it was. He was in the process of putting together a new edition of George Herbert's poems, and as part of his research he had come across Little Gidding, a religious household founded in 1625 by Herbert's friend Nicholas Ferrar and his mother Mary Ferrar. Nestled in the drained fenlands west of Cambridge, the household aimed to be "a

pattern for an adge [*sic*] that needs patterns,” as Nicholas put it, practicing a rigorous schedule of collective devotion.² As part of their daily work, Nicholas’s niece Mary Collet, her sister Anna, and their female relatives would cut apart printed Bibles and engravings and glue the pieces into elaborate concordances, or “harmonies” as they are known today. Together with Little Gidding’s other publications, these books make up perhaps the largest extant collection of early modern English women’s bookwork. Hall suspected this “blotting pad” was one of these rare volumes and sent for it.

As he learned, not only was the book made at Little Gidding, but in fact it was the long-lost early harmony that had been borrowed and annotated by King Charles I.

Before he could share his remarkable discovery or even finish his edition of Herbert, Hall died, and the book was sold to Harvard Library for £650. En route to Harvard’s special collections vault, though, it made one last stop: the British Pavilion of the 1939 New York World’s Fair, the first explicitly future-themed World’s Fair. Built around the iconic Trylon and Perisphere, featuring a utopian diorama of the future metropolis “Democracity,” the Fair transported attendees to the “World of Tomorrow,” where corporate innovation in transportation and communication technologies promised to transform every aspect of modern life. As the official guidebook described the theme: “The eyes of the Fair are on the future—not in the sense of peering into the unknown and predicting the shape of things a century hence—but in the sense of presenting a new and clearer view of today in preparation for tomorrow.”³ Folded into that vision was a racist, stadialist narrative of history as littered with colonialism’s treasures, spoils, and masterpieces, antiquarian objects that bear witness to the achievements of ostensibly great civilizations even as they bring into relief the technological marvels to come. Fairgoers could try out the new television sets before touring “Masterpieces of Art” borrowed from across Europe or gawk at Elektro the smoking robot before visiting a full-sized replica of an eighteenth-century Manchurian temple filled with nude women. And, after exploring the Town of Tomorrow with its ready-made homes composed of modern materials, visitors could cross the old Flushing River to visit the Royal Room of the British Pavilion, where they would find rare and beautiful books on display, including a copy of the Magna Carta, a 1550

Greek New Testament lavishly bound for Queen Elizabeth, and Hall's discovery: this curious book made from the fragments of other books, propped open to a page annotated by the king.

The story of the earliest harmony's modern discovery and rapid absorption into the rarified world of special collections is the story of so much of women's work. Lost to the past and miscategorized by a thoughtless present, it enters history obliquely, if at all, via the weedy side paths and waste that wash into our view en route along well-trod paths, traveling to more traditional destinations. Or, to put a finer point on it, it comes to us in spite of the patriarchal institutions and thinking that continually seek to obscure it. Thus Hall could see the hands of Little Gidding's women at work in an odd advertisement because he was preparing an edition of Herbert's poems, a task performed in obeisance to Herbert's singular literary genius. Had he not recognized this book, Collet's delicate binding might well have become a beautiful "blotting pad," used to absorb the ink of others' ephemera. At the World's Fair, too, the harmony was displayed not as a testament to early modern women's creativity but as a curious vehicle for the writings of a king. In one newspaper notice about the exhibit, the women are incorrectly named as the "Little Gidding Nuns"; another, subtitled "Notes by Charles I," corrects the error but describes the book as made "under the direction of Nicholas Ferrar," treating the harmonies as the product of his ingenuity and his nieces Mary and Anna Collet as the unskilled assistants who mechanically cut and pasted as he directed them.⁴ This misogynist line is repeated verbatim in the auction catalogue, where the bookseller William H. Robinson presents the volume as a testament to the religious practices of Little Gidding's canonized leader Nicholas Ferrar, who is given a long biography, and as the once "prized possession of Charles I."⁵ Importantly, these assumptions emerged directly from scholarship on the harmonies, which had long emphasized Ferrar's leadership at the expense of recognizing the contributions of other members of the household. This lionization of Ferrar—and academic sexism—ran so deep that, even though Mary, Anna, and their kin continued to cut and paste books after Ferrar's untimely death in 1637, A. L. Maycock went so far as to insist that "the mastermind" of the later volumes must have been the younger Nicholas Ferrar, the elder's nephew, since "no other [that

is, the women] would have been capable of what was to be accomplished.”⁶ An accidental encounter with waste paper may help rescue women’s work from becoming waste itself, but gendered patterns of thought still blot out their intellectual labor and creative agency.

In stark contrast to these nineteenth- and twentieth-century assumptions, the household was known as a place of women’s pious labor in its own day, indeed the Ferrars exploited this reputation when promoting their bookwork to potential patrons. For instance, in a letter to Isaac Basire, chaplain to King Charles, John Ferrar asks “if his lordship or they might desire to have any of these [harmonies] made for their uses, . . . if not for their own use, yet it may be for some library, as rarities in their kinds and the handy-work of women (for their manufacture, I mean, and labour of putting together, by way of pasting, &c.).”⁷ In his later memoirs, Ferrar would go even further in describing the harmonies’ intricate “manufacture” (literally “made by hand”) as a “new kind of printing”:

And so artificially they [the women of the household] performed this new-found-out way, as it were a new kind of printing, for all that saw the books when they were done took them to be printed the ordinary way, so finely were the verses joined together and with great presses for that purpose pressed down upon the white sheets of paper.⁸

Thus the technical ingenuity of the women of the Little Gidding, their careful *artifice*, as indicated by his use of the word “artificially,” produced craftwork collages that convincingly *seemed* printed. Nicholas Ferrar similarly emphasizes the artful “handy-work of women” when discussing a harmony with the Duke of York. When the prince asks “who bound the book so finely, and made it so neatly and stately, and had laid on all the pictures so curiously,” suggesting that he too may have thought the book was “printed in the ordinary way,” Ferrar answers “that it was done by the art and hands of his kinswomen at Gidding.”⁹ That the Ferrar men would continually underscore the creative compositions of their daughters and nieces suggests that the later division between the presumably intellectual work of designing the harmonies and the material labor of cutting and pasting texts and prints was not so neat at Little Gidding, and certainly was not so hierarchically conceived as it would be by later scholars.

Patrons in turn praised the Ferrar and Collet women's exemplary workmanship. Presented with the harmony he commissioned, King Charles reportedly cried: "How happy a prince were I if there were many such virgins in my kingdom that would employ themselves as these do at Gidding."¹⁰ Herbert, too, lauded the women's use of scissors and paste after receiving a harmony as a gift. In a letter of thanks to the household, paraphrased by John Ferrar in his memoirs, Herbert praised the book as "a rich jewel worthy to be worn in the heart of all Christians" and, according to Ferrar:

He most humbly blessed God that he had lived now to see women's scissors brought to so rare a use as to serve at God's altar and encouraged them to proceed in the like works as the most happy employment of their times and to keep that book always, without book, in their hearts as well as they had it in their head, memories, and tongues.¹¹

For those who received a harmony, then, it was precisely the fact that Mary Collet, Anna Collet, and their sisters made the books with their feminized tools and female hands that set them apart as "rarities in their kind," worthy of being collected in the most important libraries of the day.

Behind this praise for the harmonies is a broader semantic web linking pious women's reading and writing to their virtuous domestic labor with needles and scissors in the period. We see this in Thomas Fuller's *History of the Worthies of England* (1662), a large volume recounting the local fame of each English county in which he vividly recalls the household as a notorious matriarchy full of women's "learned and pious work":

VVe must not forget the House and Chappel in litle Godding [*sic*] (the inheritance of Master Ferrer) which lately made a great Noise all over England. Here three numerous female families (all from one Grand-Mother) lived together in a strict discipline of devotion. They rise at midnight to Prayers, and other people most complained thereof, whose heads I dare say never ak't for want of sleep. Shere I am, strangers by them were entertained, poore people were relieved, their Children instructed to read, whilst their own Needles were employed in learned and pious work to binde Bibles: Whereof one most exactly done was presented to King Charles.¹²

Fuller probably never visited the community and no doubt exaggerates here: this image of Little Gidding as entirely governed by women is not historically

accurate. Yet the fact that he so forcefully emphasizes the sovereignty of the Ferrar and Collet women and their good works suggests the extent to which the household had tethered its fame to the figure of the chaste, devout woman, a figure that, as Kimberly Anne Coles and Femke Molekamp have shown, bore discursive power in post-Reformation England.¹³ Fuller's description also points to the period's strong association between this "religious woman" and textile work, which Susan Frye and Natasha Korda have argued opened a path for women to participate in literary or popular culture.¹⁴ This was especially true at Little Gidding, where the same "women's scissors" used to cut printed Bibles and engravings might also be used to make Little Gidding's religious furnishings: the Sunday coverings and cushions of blue silk, gold thread, and silver lace that John Ferrar describes adorning the chapel, for instance, or the weekday "furniture of tapestry carpets and green cloth."¹⁵ Likewise, the same needles used to sew clothing or bedding may also have been "employed in learned and pious work to bind Bibles," as Fuller mentions.



A master bookbinder's daughter from Cambridge reportedly came to Little Gidding to teach the women of the household this skill, which they used not only to bind the harmonies but perhaps as a means of financial support, especially in the 1640s after Nicholas Ferrar's death.¹⁶ For instance, among the extant books bound at Little Gidding, some seem to be commissions obtained through the household's connections to Cambridge; these include a much-discussed 1641 Cambridge edition of Herbert's *The Temple* bound in Little Gidding's signature gold-tooled leather style, now at the Folger Shakespeare Library, and a folio sammelband of three religious books now at the University of Louisville: a Book of Common Prayer bound together with a King James Bible and Sternhold and Hopkins psalter, all neatly ruled in red and printed at Cambridge.¹⁷ None of these bindings were embroidered—a common mistake in library catalogues, where one still finds the odd needlework psalter listed as a "Little Gidding binding"—but were velvet or more commonly leather stamped in gold with a regular pattern.¹⁸ That sewing and stamping these bindings, even when done for profit, was appreciated as a form of women's devotional labor is vividly apparent in an inscription found in a 1649 edition of the *Eikon Basilike* at the British Library:

This book was bound
at litle Giding in
Huntingtonshire by y^e
much celebrated Mrs
Mary Colet, y^e beloued
Neece of y^e famous
Mr Nicolas Farar, who
honour'd her wth y^e title
of y^e Chief of his most
pious Society.
I Leauē y^e Book as a
valuable jewel to my
Son, who in his childhood
was very deare to y^e
S^t who presented me
y^s book, & who bound it
with her own hands
Anne Grigg March 1678¹⁹

Written in language that echoes Herbert's praise for the harmony as a "rich jewel," Grigg's note emphasizes that it is not the binding alone that makes the book "a valuable jewel," but the fact that a celebrated woman made it "with her own hands." Cutting paper, sewing headbands, designing and transferring patterns: these tasks involve the same actions, spaces, and technologies as other forms of feminized domestic handicraft.²⁰ When contemporaries praised Little Gidding's unique bookwork, then, they did so from within a culture that assimilated their cut-and-paste methods of publishing through the prism of gender and gendered practices. Contrary to later patriarchal scholarship, it was precisely the household's matriarchal reputation that enabled Little Gidding to accrue cultural agency and political visibility in the seventeenth century.

Unpacking the ways in which Little Gidding recognizes and capitalizes upon these gendered assumptions is one of the tasks of this chapter. As I argue, by applying feminized skills and technologies to the process of composing, imposing, and binding a printed book, Collet and her sisters "hack" (cut, chop) the printed codex. That is, they transform its prismatic sequence

of folds and juxtapositions into a protofeminist technology capable of synthesizing religious dissonance and resolving interpersonal conflict. Inventing this new technology, this “new kind of printing,” created a space for the women of the household to negotiate multiple cultural tensions inherent to the period’s media environment and hierarchical, binary conception of gender. For instance, by presenting their publishing as a form of collaborative textile production, the Collet and Ferrar women could maintain an image of chastity, obedience, and silence, as women were enjoined to do, even as they audaciously entered into dialogue with King Charles about his church. Moreover, through the cut-and-paste method of composition, they could reproduce multiple copies of the same *text* while designing each *material book*, using visual layout to draw out semantic resonances differently according to the desires or status of particular patrons. Today, this situated, context-attentive approach to editing would be considered feminist. It also anticipates the potentials of digital publishing by four hundred years, and in a medium often considered too static for creative craftwork beyond limited-run or one-off artists’ books. Thus the women of Little Gidding’s “new kind of printing” allowed them to both bypass the gendered stigma of print publication *and* trade on its cachet as a medium for broadcasting texts, images, and ideas beyond a small coterie, to recognize the cohesive, singular vision of God’s word *and* present scripture as polyphonic and variable; and the books made using this method sit somewhere between print and manuscript, between the gift economy and for-profit production. Here, in Little Gidding’s radical bookwork, religious or social differences were not cause for strife. Rather, they became the necessary condition for the emergence of a more capacious Christian communalism, one in which individual disagreements are made to concord materially and conceptually through a collective—and feminized—process of devotion.

If this chapter reconceives of scissors and paste as protofeminist printing technologies, it also asks us to reimagine the Concordance Room where the women of the household gathered to use them. Over the last century of bibliographic research, we have learned much about printing houses, which were family businesses operated out of often cramped, cold rooms adjacent to living quarters.²¹ More recent feminist and queer recovery projects have brought to light how interior spaces like bedchambers and closets sustained early modern

habits of reading, writing, and devotion, especially among literate women.²² However, the Concordance Room was something different. Set somewhere between the commercial space of a printshop and the private corners of a closet, it might best be imagined as an early modern *makerspace*: a creative lab, like those developing in libraries, museums, and engineering departments today, where the Collet and Ferrar women repurposed, remixed, and remade media technologies collaboratively. One envisions fragmented texts piled on tables, pots of paste and ink nearby, with scissors, knives, brushes, and quill pens strewn about. Little Gidding used heavy, high-quality paper for its books and must have had a large, clean surface available so that the Collets could work without marring each sheet with sticky or inky fingers. A rolling press or two may have occupied one corner of the room, where the glued pages would be flattened in order to smooth out the edges of the pasted fragments, giving them the appearance of printed texts. Another corner must have had a binding press next to needles and spools of thread, large pieces of leather and velvet, marbled sheets for the endpapers, and gold leaf to stamp with their set of binding tools. The household probably also owned pieces of movable type and some way to impress them on paper, since the printed tables of contents found in many Gospel harmonies appear to be unique to the books made at Little Gidding.

Using tactical anachronism to envision this media-rich room as a makerspace allows us to draw from the rich vein of recent work in digital humanities and library studies to better appreciate the protofeminist interventions and technical innovations of Little Gidding's bookwork. For instance, while "hacker culture" today has, as Jentery Sayers points out, been coded as "white, cisgender, straight, male, and able-bodied," a new crop of artists and scholars working between disciplines are building more inclusive and politically radical makerspaces.²³ Melissa Rogers writes of her experience running a series of Interactive Textiles workshops at the Women's Studies Multimedia Studio in 2014:

Rather than producing 'things,' the activities in [this lab] produce *space* for modes of thought that put pressure on what matters in digital humanities scholarship and teaching. Theorizing how making practices shape, and are shaped by, complex identities and forms of power enables us to use digital humanities

methods toward transformative ends, reverse engineering and hacking the hierarchies that structure our thinking about technology and culture.²⁴

Replace phrases like “digital humanities” with “religious print culture,” and these sentences might have been written not about the Women’s Studies Multimedia Studio in 2014, but the Concordance Room in 1635. It is easy to take such echoes too far, as Little Gidding was an essentially conservative household operating under assumptions about gender very different from those of feminists today, but sensitive and speculative comparison helps us piece together a mental image of a place and processes of making that exist today only through the Concordance Room’s scattered products. This image in turn helps expand our understanding of the marginal spaces, beyond the center of London, where books were made in early modern England, especially as they intersect with gendered printing and publishing practices.

In returning the young women of the Ferrar and Collet families to their rightful place in Little Gidding’s legacy, this chapter joins recent recuperative work by Patricia Badir, Paul Dyck, Michael Gaudio, Paul Parrish, Joyce Ransome, Debora Shuger, and Adam Smyth.²⁵ It does so by using digital editing and close reading to reclaim the harmonies that these women authored with scissors, paste, and a rolling press as the most robust and impactful expressions of the community’s devotional practices. As Smyth writes of this recovery work more generally:

Such a process of assessment can help to overturn the centuries-long trivialization of the labor of Anna and Mary Collet at Little Gidding—artists hitherto seen as little more than mute enactors of their uncle’s great vision—and, more broadly, to bring to critical prominence a culture of cutting that seems to have been part of the reading and writing experience of early modern England.²⁶

Gaudio, too, emphasizes that the harmonies are “deposits of an extraordinary material intelligence,” and that “there is every reason to believe that the [daughters of Susanna Collet] made their own critical choices about how to cut and arrange images and text.”²⁷ Margaret Ezell has laid the groundwork for such claims by repeatedly calling on early modern scholars to focus more on the materiality of women’s writing, as has Helen Smith in her foundational work on women’s involvement in the book trade.²⁸

But I also aim to expand and extend these insights by considering the women of Little Gidding's bookwork more broadly—that is, how they used the codex to model new forms of relations between dispersed individuals and design a speculative future for devotional thinking. With this in mind, this chapter adds to the recent recuperation of the harmonies, first, an analysis of two bespoke manuscripts published at Little Gidding for circulation within the family: the Story Books that record the conversations of the Little Academy, which were made for distant family members, and a commonplace book made by Susanna Collet as a gift for her daughter Joyce in 1635, which includes to my knowledge the only extant poems written by a woman at Little Gidding. The latter, which has not attracted notice in scholarship on the household, is accompanied by a digital edition designed and edited by me and my collaborator Zoe Braccia, which includes a digital facsimile, transcription, links between Collet's excerpts and their sources (with variants marked), and a digital reconstruction of her library. The edition also tracks how Collet altered these source texts as she copied them, revealing for the first time a nuanced picture of women's reading at Little Gidding.

Beyond restoring Little Gidding's radical, creative bookwork to the canon of early modern literature and art, though, this chapter, second, aims to situate it within the long, uneven histories of women's protofeminist publishing. Specifically, I foreground the household's underappreciated influence on later bookbinders, editors, writers, and compilers who, drawn to Little Gidding's devotional labors, turned to the cut-and-paste method as a means of assembling fragments of historical knowledge always under threat of scattering. Thus the end of this chapter turns to two later experiments with Little Gidding's "new kind of printing." The first is a nineteenth-century pamphlet composed of fragments cut from a biography of Nicholas Ferrar and tied to the front board of a Little Gidding harmony once owned by the Bowdler family, famous for Harriet and Thomas Bowdler's expurgated or "bowdlerized" editions of Shakespeare. The second is a scrapbook about the Ferrars and Little Gidding made by an American musician, Fanny Reed Hammond, in the 1930s and 40s. As these archival objects show, Little Gidding's "new kind of printing" and new kind of makerspace served as creative engines long past the dissolution of the household during the civil wars. Indeed, they continue

to today, inspiring the collaborative, feminist design of the digital resources folded into this chapter.

Cutting and Pasting for a King

In 1633, on his progress northward, King Charles spent the night in rural Huntingdonshire. There, his host told him about the nearby religious household of Little Gidding, where the extended Ferrar family had devised an ingenious method of “harmonizing” the four Gospels. Cutting apart printed copies of the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, they pasted the pieces back together into a single chronology divided into 150 discrete episodes. In effect, they were “translating” into English an earlier Latin harmony, Cornelius Jansen’s *Concordia evangelica* (1549), using scissors, knives, and paste. An accompanying digital edition built in collaboration with Zoe Braccia and Penny Bee uses color-coded overlays to show how each chapter of this early harmony, which we call the Houghton Harmony, is pieced together from a hodgepodge of passages and sometimes individual words, as the composers repurposed nearly every bit of the four Gospels. Having the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John remixed into a single linear narrative enabled the family to read aloud the story of Christ’s life in its entirety each month, roughly five episodes per day, from birth to resurrection. Intrigued by this curious practice, King Charles sent a servant to Little Gidding to borrow the book.

Although at first reluctant, the Ferrars obeyed and handed over their carefully constructed volume. The king kept it for months, taking “such delight in it as there passed not a day but he read once a day in the book in private.”²⁹ So taken was he with the volume that, when the harmony was finally returned, it came with the king’s own annotations, marks that “testified . . . to the king’s diligent perusal of it,” as John Ferrar would later write.³⁰ One annotation in particular caught the family’s eye (plate 1). In the margins next to the Beatitudes, the king had written:

Heere ye should not breake of but put all the Sermon in together as
St Mathew hath it.

At some point after writing this marginal note, the king went back and crossed out these words, though he left them legible, and added below:

I confess that I was too hastie
for it is verrie well, but two
littell omissions that I have marked

That a king and head of the Church of England would acknowledge that he was mistaken in his reading of the harmony's design seemed, to the astonished members of Little Gidding, an extraordinary and laudable display of royal modesty. Reflecting on the incident many years later, John Ferrar would write in his memoirs:

And in one place, which is not to be forgotten, to the eternal memory of his majesty's superlative humility (no small virtue in a king), having written something in one place, he puts it out again very neatly with his pen. But that, it seems, not contenting him, he vouchsafes to underwrite: "I confess my error; it was well before." (An example to all his subjects.) "I was mistaken."³¹

Here, Ferrar thematizes not only the confessional content of the king's annotations but also the mechanics of his self-revisionary reading: how he neatly crosses out his earlier note, not entirely obliterating the error but simply striking it through; how he sets his corrected annotation below the first, in a place of abasement. For the king to "underwrite" his own marginalia witnesses his "superlative humility," a turn of prefix—*under* to *super*—that relocates the higher in the lower, supreme majesty in the corrective mark. The king's willingness to revise his own reading of scripture and confess his errors on the page thus makes him a worthy "example to all his subjects."

Ferrar's reading participates in a broader seventeenth-century move to renegotiate the relation between individual readers of scripture and the common, authorized practices of the Church of England. By the time the Stuarts ascended the throne in 1603, the careful sutures tenuously holding together Elizabethan religious compromises were strained and spontaneous preaching and prayer were on the rise. These unmediated interpretations of God's word challenged the authority of the Book of Common Prayer, thus threatening the cohesion of the church as a state-run institution.³² King James saw the need for a new theory of religious reading to guide his subjects and, toward that end, oversaw the production of a revised English translation of the Bible. First published in 1611, this new Bible both incorporated and tempered radical Puritan influences, bringing them into the fold of the church; at the same time,

James swept the margins clear of divisive commentary, replacing the Geneva Bible's sometimes hectoring notes with Hebrew translations to enable study and contemplation.³³ To redirect focus on the collective church, James also penned and published several commentaries on Scripture, including *A meditation upon the Lord's Prayer* (1619, Short Title Catalogue [STC] 14384³⁴), in which he argues for the value of liturgical commands over individual judgment. As he writes, the inclusive pronoun "our" in the Lord's Prayer shows that "every one of us is a member of a body of a Church, that is compacted of many members" and that, by praying together, these members "shew and expresse our harmonie and holy zeale to praise God, joyntly with the rest of the members."³⁵ Praying together did not remove individual worshippers' obligation to study scripture on their own, searching out its truths and applying them to their own lives. Rather, it provided a regulated framework for reading, relating to, and marking up one's Bible. Here, in the emergent media imaginary of the Stuart church, private acts must always plug into a public, communal assemblage, just as Charles's individual revision seems to Ferrar emblematic of a public mode of majesty and religious being.

The premier poet of this evolving hermeneutic was the Ferrars' friend Herbert, he in whom "majesty and humility" were "reconciled," as his first biographer, Izaak Walton, put it.³⁶ Herbert shared a close relationship with the community and its textual labors. Upon his deathbed, he sent the manuscript of *The Temple* to the community, where Nicholas Ferrar and his niece Mary were its first editors, assuming responsibility for publishing it posthumously with the Cambridge press in 1633. As part of this process, someone at Little Gidding, possibly Mary, copied out the text in what is one of the earliest manuscript witnesses of Herbert's verse, MS Tanner 307, now at the Bodleian Library. In his poem "Judgement," Herbert links the Anglican process of coordinated, collective self-revision to the book-of-life trope, asking God how individuals should present the singular or "peculiar book" of their life on Judgment Day. Some "will turn thee [God] to some leaves therein / So void of sin / That they in merit shall excel," presenting themselves as having lived a morally spotless life.³⁷ But "I resolve," he concludes,

when thou [God] shalt call for mine,
that to decline,

And thrust a Testament into thy hand:
 Let that be scanned.
 There thou shalt find my faults are thine.³⁸

Thus the “peculiar book” of the speaker’s life turns out to be none other than the common word of the Bible, the shared language of its New Testament encompassing the personal testament of the individual sinner.

Folding Herbert’s poem back onto Ferrar’s interpretation above, we see more clearly how confessing error and revising one’s own reading do more than constitute the king’s “superlative humility”; these acts correspond to a much deeper design to replace individual interpretation with the collective authority of Scripture—to trade in a page where the king dictates interpretation from the margins for one where he has deferred his reading to that of a collectively harmonized testament. Ferrar then interprets this private moment of self-correction, tucked between the pages of a book, as a public model for kingship: Charles becomes “an example to all his subjects,” who are similarly invited to exchange their peculiarly spotless books for a Book of Common Prayer that is marked with the use of many hands. The emendation itself matters less than the revisionary, interventionary process that its correction concretizes. Like so much of Herbert’s carefully wrought verse, “Judgement” models this self-“scann[ing]” in its restless scheme and structure: first the speaker questions God’s expectations of man, then he questions man’s expectations of himself, and finally he chooses to adopt God’s testament as his own “peculiar book.” In this way, the discord between the individual’s fragmented desires and God’s demands resolves into the communal word through a reading of the poem. This common language is not perfect, just as King Charles’s political authority does not render him morally spotless; but at least within a harmonized collective, the faults are shared.

This act, the book’s passage from community to king and back, stitched Little Gidding’s cloistered religious culture to the worldly politics of Charles’s court, initiating a patronage relationship that radically transformed the household’s publishing. Instead of compiling concordances purely for their own daily rituals, the Ferrar family now had a powerful and public audience.³⁹ Spurred on by this support, they reinvested their energies in developing their cut-and-paste method of composition as “a *new* kind of printing,”

a mechanical method of reproducing multimodal machines for prayer and study. These new harmonies, many of them Gospel harmonies made around 1635 and later, incorporate more images and more intricate collages, “making every opening of the book a devotional database and sensory theatre,” in the words of Dyck.⁴⁰ The most significant innovation was a new format for reading each episode, named the “Collection.” Within the “Collection,” a linear, narrative account (the “Context”) is pasted in one typeface, usually roman letter. Any superfluity or variance among evangelists is included as a “Supplement” that is pasted in a different typeface below, usually black letter and indented as is evident in the linked digital edition. Handwritten annotations at the end of some fragments tell the reader where in the harmony they might pick up reading the same Gospel chapter, and therefore serve as hyperlinks connecting the cut-up pieces of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. As an advertisement in one harmony explains:

If you would reade the Evangelistes Severally then you must keepe still from Section to Section in the same letter wth w^{ch} you beginn reading booth Context and Suppelment that is the Romaine letter and the Englishs Letter annexed: And when ever it happens as it often doth that that w^{ch} followeth next in the Evangelists doth not follow Immediately in the order of the Concordance then you shall find in written Hand in the End of the Section the first words of the Evangelists and a direction of the Chapter and parte of the Concordance to w^{ch} you are to goe.⁴¹

Thus, the “Collection” depicts the New Testament Gospels simultaneously as both a compelling story, told chronologically, and a complex, even at times contradictory, set of material documents.

In addition to using the “Collection” method to remix each episode, the harmony made for Charles himself at his request, which I will refer to as the King’s Harmony, includes two further ways of reading many of its 150 chapters. First, there is a section labeled the “Composition”: a simple, typographically uniform paragraph that narrates each episode chronologically, following roughly the same structure as the earliest harmony that was annotated by Charles. As in that earlier harmony, the streamlined typography of this format facilitates oral reading. Next, the reader can move horizontally across the parallel-text layout of a section called the “Comparison.” These two different

structures stand in tension with each other, a visual reminder that scripture is both a linear narrative *and* a nonlinear assemblage of different accounts. As the women of Little Gidding emphasize in the advertisement in the King's Harmony, "these [three reading strategies] are not to infringe y^e Liberty of any others judgement; but to be Directions & Helps for them, who cannot intend the doing it themselves."⁴² In other words, these new navigational tools do not dictate interpretation or clamp down on individual exploration, as the controversial marginal commentary of the Geneva Bible was arguably intended to do, but rather transform scripture into a multidimensional labyrinth for active reading and rereading, a procedural machine for comparative scanning.

An assembled emblem of these new reading strategies is evident on the first page opening of the King's Harmony, after the preliminaries. On the verso, an engraving of the evangelist Luke by the Dutch printmaker François van den Hoeye occupies nearly the entire page. It is a big, bold print: unlike other evangelists in the same series by van den Hoeye, Luke looks up to meet the eyes of the viewer with a studied stare, his brow furrowed in concentration. He is in the act of painting the Madonna and Child, considered in some traditions the first icon of Christianity, though his gaze makes it seem as if he is painting us, his audience. Within the print's negative space, the composers have pasted a bit of printed text cut from the preface to Luke's Gospel. In it, Luke, addressing Theophilus ("lover of God"), sets down his purpose for compiling and comparing eyewitness accounts of Christ's life and teachings:

Forasmuch as many haue taken in hand
to set forth in order a declaration of those
things which are most surely beleueed a=
mong vs,
2 Euen as they deliuered them vnto
vs, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and
ministers of the word:
3 It seemed good to mee also, hauing had perfect
vnderstanding of things from the very first, to write
vnto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,
4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those
things wherein thou hast been instructed.⁴³

The pasting of these words onto the print makes it seem as if the engraved Luke is staring not at a general audience, but at this “most excellent Theophilus,” the subject of the text’s direct address, and in the context of the King’s Harmony, this “Theophilus” would be King Charles specifically, the book’s intended recipient. Above the pasted text is painted in red title letters, “THE / EVANGELICALL / HISTORIE / THE PREFACE”; on the margin below, in Little Gidding’s standard italic hand, is written: “This Preface agrees to all the Evangelical Historie as well as to St Lukes Gospel.” Together, the title and note have the effect of generalizing Luke’s words and applying them to the entirety of the harmonized evangelical narrative, a move which, furthermore, roots Little Gidding’s cut-and-paste labor in a deep history of divine composing. A second handwritten footnote at the very bottom of the page clarifies the repeated use of the term “order” in the preface: “Hee meanes not y^e order of time y^t things were done in; but y^t he began not to write till he had first made diligent search of all things.” The use of “diligent” anticipates John Ferrar’s description of the king’s earlier marginalia, as Ferrar would recall them in his memoirs: the revised marks “testified . . . to the king’s *diligent perusal*” of the borrowed harmony (emphasis added). Thus, through their own marginal annotation, the women of Little Gidding connect Charles’s earlier “diligent perusal,” as manifest in *his* annotations, to the evangelist Luke’s “diligent search of all things,” as manifest in his Gospel. Of course, the Gospel is itself now harmonized with other texts and images through the cut-and-paste composers’ own diligent searching. In this way, meaning does not reside in any single fragment but instead accumulates in the relations between them: the pasted text clarifies the purpose of the found engraving, and the handwritten annotations recontextualize this printed collage.

Opposite this print of Luke, on the recto of the page opening, is a companion engraving of the evangelist John writing his own Gospel, taken from the same series of prints. On first glance, the evangelists appear very similar. Both figures twist their bodies toward the center of the book and away from its edges, and both are fixated on the task at hand. However, whereas Luke makes eye contact with the reader as he paints, John glances down at his writing, his left elbow resting contemplatively on a pile of books. He is turned inward, caught in the process of penning the first lines of his own Gospel in



FIGURE 2. Images of the evangelists Luke (verso) and John (recto) in the King's Harmony produced by the Little Gidding household (ca. 1635), C.23.e.4, cols. 7–8, British Library. Copyright British Library Board.

an open notebook that sits opposite Luke's pasted preface. Thus if Luke's portrait draws the harmony's reader into the process of searching for higher meaning within the story of Christ's life, John's portrait illustrates the downward-gazing, readerly contemplation that the harmony should inspire. Put another way: on the verso, readers find a mechanism for engaging directly with the book as a pasted-together account of Christ's life; on the recto, they find a mediated illustration, once removed, of what a "diligent searching" of this account for spiritual wisdom might look like. Taken together, as the structure of the codex asks readers to do, these two portraits introduce the harmony as a powerful new engine for perusing, scanning, and processing fragments of scripture and religious images relationally.

While the King's Harmony offers the most complex collage of these two prints, appropriate to the status of its recipient, the composers at Little Gidding were fond of using the same print series, often to various effect. For instance, another harmony made around 1637 for William Cecil, Lord Salisbury (still held in the archives at his home, Hatfield House), has the same print of Luke pasted on a recto just after the table of contents (Figure 3). Glued on top of the print is an ornate decorative frame with its center removed, such that it perfectly encloses Luke's body in an oval wreath of flowers, fruits, and foliage. The paper frame turns the engraving of Luke into an authorial portrait after the baroque style that was becoming common, as we will see in the next chapter with Edward Benlowes's own lavishly encased image. As in the King's Harmony, the composers have pasted the printed preface to Luke in the print's negative space; however, here it has been attached to Luke's Gospel specifically: it is titled as "The Preface Of / S. LUKE," and a red letter *C* next to the verses indicate their origins in Luke. Finally, below, in the cartouche of the pasted frame, the composers have written a small poem in Luke's voice explaining the print's imagery:

By mee the Church did aunchiently devise
 An Oxe should stand, as fit for Sacrifice
 With which, and Zachrias entring in
 The Temple, Luke his storie doth beginne⁴⁴

These changes in the engraving's layout and the marginal annotations that surround it transform the function of the image. Whereas, in the King's Harmony, Luke works together with John to model a process of reading, in the harmony at Hatfield House, this print operates more as visual metadata tagging the origins and author of the text pasted on top of it.



To continue to track this print series' recycling across the harmonies, the reader may wish to jump off to the accompanying digital network, made in collaboration with Zoe Braccia and Penny Bee (with help from Emilie Friedman). There, four harmonies can be navigated as digital editions: two full Gospel harmonies, showing the development of Little Gidding's "new kind of printing" from the Houghton Harmony (1630) to one of the later volumes, now at the Cotsen Children's Library (1635); a slim volume at the British Library

containing illustrated versions of the *Acta Apostolorum* and *The Revelation of S Iohn the Divine* (ca. 1637); and some pages from a Pentateuch concordance now at the Royal Library, originally made for Prince Charles (1642). Each cut fragment is attached to a facsimile of its source if known or is color-coded to indicate from which book of the Bible it was cut. More, each harmony can be decomposed into its constituent sources. Thus, readers can explore a much-mediated reconstruction of the Concordance Room, where the women of the household produced their harmonies. Finally, prints that are recycled within and across different harmonies are linked at each point of contact, such that readers might jump between episodes or even volumes to compare how fragments are continually being de- and re-contextualized. As a whole, this digital network offers a much fuller portrait of Little Gidding's book than this narrative prose or close reading alone could.

For instance, jumping off to the website, the reader might continue with the example of the van den Hoeve print series of the Four Evangelists. The same diptych of Luke (verso) and John (recto) appears in the Cotsen Harmony, as we call it in our edition. Somewhat later in the same text are van den Hoeve's prints of Matthew and Mark. Each evangelist is pasted at that point in the text where the first cutting from his Gospel appears, suggesting that, while the layout of the Luke and John prints is similar to the King's Harmony, the print series functions much more as it did in the harmony at Hatfield House by visually marking a fragment's origins. A more radical use of van den Hoeve's John appears *again* in *The Revelation of S Iohn the Divine* (ca. 1637). The last page of this book, which is also in the digital network, contains an ornate collage of text and image, including a disembodied hand writing in an open notebook (plate 2).⁴⁵ It is the hand of John, cut from the same portrait used in the Gospel harmonies; except whereas the first words of the Book of John flow from his pen there, here they have been replaced with printed fragments cut from a Latin translation of Revelation. In other words, his pen writes in movable type. Gaudio convincingly argues that this composite image sits "in an uncertain, rattle-headed space" between "the Word and the material text," but, widening our frame of interpretation to include the entire network of fragments repurposed across all harmonies, we might also read it as a multifaceted diffraction of this print's use elsewhere.⁴⁶ The

engraving is an authorial portrait, visual metadata, an illustration of devout reading; the hands are simultaneously those of John, who wrote Revelation, and the women of Little Gidding, who paste together John's book from pieces of printed text. While differing uses of the same engraving point to divergence in the design and purpose of these books as a whole, they also suggest a certain harmonic accord across the entire edition of Gospel harmonies being produced at Little Gidding, as the composers reformatted each volume according to their evolving library of prints and the book's imagined future owner. Through intentional resonances within and between the harmonies, the composers of Little Gidding foster reading strategies in which a variety of opinions and approaches does not weaken but strengthens the collective.

The first twelve chapters of the Gospel harmonies track what Little Gidding sometimes labels as "The History of Christs Priuate Life," before his public preaching, from John the Baptist's birth and his prophecy to Christ's birth and early life.⁴⁷ In most extant books, these chapters are pasted entirely in a single typeface and can be read linearly, deploying none of the composers' more complex textual structures. At the end of these chapters is a pivot point often signaled by more figurative prints. These emblems indicate to the reader that the text is entering the public phase of Christ's ministry, teaching, and preaching. For instance, in the King's Harmony, after the first twelve chapters, the composers have embedded a visual pause: a full page opening pasted with twenty-one small vignettes from Christ's early life under the manuscript annotation "A summary Recapitulation of all the Former STORIES of our Lord and Saviour IESVS Christ."⁴⁸ On the recto, carefully cut out and pasted in the center, is a larger engraving of a single *mater dolorosa*, an icon of the Seven Sorrows of Mary that shows her slumped on the ground, a sword piercing her heart (Figure 4). As can be seen in the accompanying digital network, an emblem of the Seven Sorrows of Mary is also pasted at this point in the Cotsen harmony's text. The seven sorrows track both events that have already happened in the text and those that are to come, like Christ's crucifixion, and Mary's placement here suggests the reader should begin engaging with the text proleptically across multiple temporal registers.

In the Hatfield harmony, the composers also use emblematic imagery at this point in the text but employ a different kind of print: a late sixteenth-century



FIGURE 3. Print of Luke the evangelist pasted with a decorative frame in a Gospel harmony (341, cols. 1–2, Cecil Papers, Hatfield House), produced by the Little Gidding household (ca. 1635). Reproduced with permission of the Marquess of Salisbury, Hatfield House.



FIGURE 4. A page spread from the King's Harmony (C.23.e.4, cols. 33–36, British Library), made by the household at Little Gidding (ca. 1635), showing the pivot point between Christ's private and public ministries. Copyright British Library Board.

Dutch engraving of the allegories of faith.⁴⁹ At the center is Christ dressed as a farmer casting out the seven deadly sins, represented by different animals, while he retains in a basket the virtues, including a lamb of patience, a dove of simplicity, and an infant of good intentions. In the background, Christ is represented again pouring a fountain of his blood onto a man while faith, personified as a woman, helps the man bathe. Other small scenes and text surrounding the emblem depict moments in Christ's ministry. By including these emblems at a turning point, the composers distill what had been until then a straightforward chronological narrative—represented with a single typeface—into its higher spiritual meaning and thus signal for the reader the beginning of a new multidimensional relationship to text's time and narration.

After this, the “first year of Christs Publique Ministry” begins, and most of the later Gospel harmonies introduce here for the first time the “Collection” structure into the text, where two different typefaces are combined to facilitate different modes of reading. Although the abutment of roman and black letter in Little Gidding's bookwork can jar modern readers, readers at the time had a model for it in catechistic literature, religious primers, and other popular forms of devotional prints. For instance, Robert Horne's *Points of Instruction for the Ignorant* (1617) deploys the same juxtaposition of roman type (for the questions) and black letter (for the answers). Horne also uses a pun on “points,” referring to the threads used to secure garments but also obliquely to the *pointing* fingers in the margins of texts or the *points* of a melody, thus reinforcing the semantic network linking the process of religious learning to the stitching together of different pieces of cloth or lines of music into a harmonious whole.

Another contemporaneous “godly ballad” uses a catechistic design to juxtapose the Lord's Prayer in widely spaced black letter with a religious lyric in smaller roman type. Titled “A diuine descant full of consolation / Fitting a soule plung'd in desolation,” the broadside's poem is composed of verse lining the left of the sheet, with rhymed phrases from the Lord's Prayer completing every other line on the right. As Tessa Watt points out, this broadside “comes from the world of song,” specifically the descant, a contrapuntal melody written above the notes in musical notation. This secondary melody is thus aurally and visually set apart from the main melody, just as the Lord's Prayer

is typographically distinct from the verses on the left of “A diuine descant.”⁵⁰ The reader must literally give the poem form and structure by knitting fast two disparate texts. This combinatorial labor enacts the speaker’s spiritual completion, showing that the individual soul can be made whole, its verse rectified, only by suturing its grief-stricken cries to the communal consolation of scripture, much as we saw in Herbert’s poem “Judgement.”

Yet another religious broadside, “Christus natus est” (1631), combines the typographic diversity of the descant with typology and emblems to produce a contemplative design as richly multimedia as any page of the King’s Harmony. “Christus natus est” squeezes a variety of information onto one sheet: bits of rhymed verse, a narrative of Christ’s life in black letter, hymnal verse in roman letter, a rhymed epitaph in italic, and an emblematic image showing Christ in his manger, surrounded by various tools, symbols, and text. An accompanying “Explanation of this Picture” reveals the meanings of the animals in the images through three different typefaces: for instance, “The cock croweth, / *Christus natus est.* / *Christ is borne.*”⁵¹ The author has also structured the broadside’s information such that each section mirrors and remediates all others, producing the birth of Christ as an event reproduced in image and text, in scripture and poetry, in both a liturgical hymn and a sound as mundane as a rooster crowing. Thus the visual diversity of a page packed tight with different typefaces, font sizes, images, and border decorations serves to underscore the message that all things point to God. When placed within the context of these ephemeral prints, Little Gidding’s use of typographical heterogeneity and emblematic imagery seems less jarring in its juxtapositions and more as if it is intended to participate in the material conventions and “visual epistemology,” to borrow a generative term from Johanna Drucker, of religious print culture, both popular and pedagogical.⁵²

In the “Collection” section of the harmonies, used to narrate Christ’s public ministry, the Collets and Ferrars thus invigorate and renew the potential of the visual rhetoric of catechisms and religious broadsides to direct the reader’s attention toward sites of variance and agreement across the Gospels, spurring her to engage with scripture *actively*. In this way, the reader learns spiritual lessons not by reading the writer’s commentary directly, but by interacting with an arrangement of material fragments—text and image—across the space

of the page. To see how these pieces come together, consider chapter 13 of the King's Harmony, "JOHNS Baptisme, Preaching, Foode, & Rayment," set on the page opening immediately after the *mater dolorosa* described above (plate 3).⁵³ All three reading methods are, for the first time in the book, present here: the parallel text "Comparison," the "Composition" for reading aloud, and the "Collection." The sources for different fragments are iconically "tagged" with colored initials and small images of the evangelists—Mark with his lion, Luke with his ox, and Matthew with his man; these serve as a pre-digital form of descriptive markup to help the reader locate the original place of the fragment in her own Bible. At the bottom of each page, a pair of images appears to illustrate the content of the chapter. On the verso, a man shares his clothing, following John's exhortation in this chapter for any man with two cloaks to give to him who has none, and on the recto, a woman divides her food likewise. Yet these engravings were not originally depictions of John's preaching, but have been sliced from prints in a Flemish series on the Seven Acts of Mercy instructed by Christ, published by Gerard de Jode after a design by Maarten de Vos. In other words, they depict not John instructing followers to share clothing and food, but Christ. Uncut instances of these prints appear later in the King's Harmony at the chapter on Christ's Judgment.⁵⁴ Thus the composers of Little Gidding construct a parallelism between John's preaching and that of Christ by embedding a section of this print within John's text. Through a material form of prolepsis, the King's Harmony thereby retains temporal and figural distinctions while drawing out textual echoes and resonances that evince scripture's global concordance. As with "A diuine descant" or "Christus natus est," it is the reader's active navigation of these fractured clues, noticing repetitions and erasures, that enables this otherwise straightforward illustration to expand into an interlocking series of relationships between source materials.

If the images at the bottom of the page appear as illustrations of the chapter's lesson, a more oddly emblematic image is pasted on the top right of the recto near the text of the "Collection." It depicts the Virgin Mary receiving the tongues of fire from heaven framed within an elaborate architecture of putti, flowers, drapery, and smoking urns. This engraving comes from *Salus generis humani*, a series of thirteen scenes from Christ's life published in 1590

by Gilles Sadeler, a member of a powerful Flemish family of engravers, and like the prints below, it has been sliced from a larger context. The original image sits above three stanzas from two different devotional lyrics by mid-sixteenth century German poet Georg Fabricius, known for his sacred hymns. They read:

Beate patris Spiritus,	Deus precum preces pias
De luce lux altissima:	Esse efficaces perface,
Piis rogamus ignibus	Cum patre te cum filio
Incende nostra pectora.	Omni canamus seculo.
Ad te confugimus patris natique potestas	
Spiritus aethereo qui datus orbe venis	
Corporibusque, animisque amissum redde vigorem	
Te duce quod cruciat vincitur omne malum	
Blessed spirit of our Father,	Make, God of our prayers,
Highest light of lights:	Our prayers to be efficacious
We beseech you with holy flames	With you, Father and Son,
To enflame our breasts.	We sing through all the ages.
We appeal to you, the power of the Father and the Son,	
Heavenly Spirit given to come to the world.	
Return the strength departed from our bodies and souls:	
All evil is vanquished because you, the crucified, reign.	

The verses on either side are the first and last stanza from a single hymn; the middle verse comes from a separate lyric by Fabricius. Thus the engraving depicts a remixed version of three stanzas from two poems, which are inscribed onto the base of an altar containing an image of the Pentecost. The Little Gidding composers have cut the lyric away from the print and pasted the image, still within its frame, on the recto of this spread, in a spot that mirrors the illustration of a young John the Baptist on the verso. Written in manuscript along the bottom of the image is the phrase “He shall baptize y^e wth the Holy Ghost and with Fire,” thereby loosely linking this scene of tongues descending upon Mary and the Apostles (a scene that comes much later in the narrative of the New Testament) to John’s baptism of the Pharisees and Sadducees, educed in this chapter. As with the decontextualized image slices depicting the Seven Acts of Mercy, then, this print proleptically links

later events in time to John's acts and prophecy, rearranging the chronological progression of the Gospels into a multilinear spatial configuration, with the deeper significance of each event radiating outward toward all other events. The layout of this page spread, in which an illustration of John the Baptist echoes an emblem of the Pentecost across the gutter of the book, itself incites Little Gidding's proleptic and typological reading practice.

In Herbert's *The Temple*, the pair of sonnets labeled as "The H. Scriptures" appear to respond directly to the gift of a harmony, and thus offer insight into the complex mode of devotional reading that these books demand of their audiences, as Stanley Stewart pointed out in a reading that has since been elaborated by Dyck.⁵⁵ The first sonnet begins with a direct address to the Bible and perhaps to the harmony itself—"Oh Book, infinite sweetnesse!"—which the speaker encourages the owner to read actively, "suck[ing] ev'ry letter" for honey.⁵⁶ Exactly halfway through the verse, though, Herbert introduces a new direct address to a gendered readership, the only such address to women in *The Temple*:

Ladies, look here; this is the thankfull glasse,
That mends the lookers eyes: this is the well
That washes what it shows. Who can indeare
Thy praise too much? thou art heav'ns Lidger here,
Working against the states of death and hell.⁵⁷

Glass, well, ledger: the accretion of emblematic images here as metaphors for scripture echoes the harmonies' own kaleidoscopic method of visual presentation, where one figure proleptically slips into constellated patterns with others. The switch in address paired with the pile-on of figures has the effect of conflating the "Book" hailed in the poem's first half with the "Ladies" of the second half, introducing an ambiguity of address: for exactly *whose* praise can be endeared too much? Who is heaven's ledger, "working against the states of death and hell": the harmonies or the women who made them with their own scissors and hands? This metonymic exchange between the process and product of women's devotion emphasizes that the harmonies are valuable not, or perhaps not *only*, as concordances of scripture, but as material objects that crystallize a model of feminized religious collectivity. "This verse marks

that,” writes Herbert in this poem’s companion sonnet, “and both do make a motion unto a third, that ten leaves off doth lie.”⁵⁸

It is to this procedure of discontinuous marking that the King’s Harmony and other Gospel harmonies made in the wake of Charles’s annotation continually draw and redraw the reader’s attention, as her eye shifts paratactically from image to image, page to page. Exploiting the form and function of differing typographies, colored inks, and the layout and structure of the codex itself, the women of Little Gidding construct multiple reading paths through the story of Christ’s life, acknowledging textual variance in each book’s material design while nonetheless harmonizing these differences. These innovations respond directly both to the household’s reading of Charles’s annotations and to the schismatic milieu of the mid-1630s, and they do so through the mediation of Herbert’s vision of reading and writing as interventionary self-revision—a vision that, as these sonnets attest, Herbert and the women of Little Gidding developed in conversation with each other. This response develops dialogically across spaces both public and private: Charles annotates a harmony made for the household’s semiprivate use; Ferrar reads this annotation as a public model of Christian kingship, a model derived in part from the “private ejaculations” in Herbert’s *The Temple*, which then becomes the conceptual framework for the King’s Harmony, a document published for the private devotions of that most public individual, the King, supreme head of the Church of England. In this way, a local reading of a single annotation unfolds kaleidoscopically into a technology for synthesizing Anglican collectivity. By distributing variance across the entire assemblage of parts, up to and including the human reader who activates the system, the Gospel harmonies of the mid-to-late 1630s counterintuitively generate a method for speaking together *through* conflict. Thus they become, as Nicholas Ferrar described the household, a “patternne for the adge” precisely by remaining “peculiar books” made for a king.

Harmonizing the Household

Even as the cloistered household at Little Gidding began to pivot outward toward the court, the family continued to cultivate its own local practices

of devotional reading and writing. They did so by spinning from the fragmented texts of the Church of England a web of daily study and prayer, their own Little Gidding liturgy. They recited from the Bible at appointed hours throughout the day, dividing it such that they read the entire Psalter every month and the books of the four evangelists three times a year. They compiled a hymnal and sang together in the morning and evening, clustered around an organ installed in their home for this purpose.⁵⁹ Nicholas Ferrar also gathered histories and excerpts from books like John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* for the children to read aloud during meals; in this way, they practiced their elocution while edifying the family and avoiding the potential messiness of free-form conversation.⁶⁰ Psalms were especially important at Little Gidding, and the family supplied neighboring children in the parish with a Psalter, offering a penny to each "psalm-child," as they were called, who could recite passages from memory on Sunday mornings.⁶¹

This singing and reading took place in a house that had been turned into a living commonplace book, much as Herbert prescribed of the parson's house, where "even the walls are not idle; but something is written or painted there, which may excite the reader to a thought of piety."⁶² On the front door, serving as a physical epigraph, was nailed a brass tablet with the injunction to "Flee from evil and do good and dwell for evermore."⁶³ Once inside, members of the household and its occasional visitors were greeted with another tablet devised by the matriarch Mary Ferrar that served as a preface or advertisement welcoming anyone who "seeks to make us better" and repelling all who come to judge, disturb, or otherwise "violate the bands both of friendship and Christianity."⁶⁴ On the green walls of the Concordance Room, serving as the book's pages, "each person of the family, and some other good friends of their kindred" painted snippets and paraphrases from the Bible promoting the virtue of labor.⁶⁵ "Prosper Thou, O Lord, the work of our hands. / O prosper Thou our handyworks," read one wall, paraphrasing Psalm 90; "Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty. / Open thine eyes and thou shalt be satisfied with bread," read another based on Proverbs 20:13.⁶⁶ As John Ferrar later recalled, a "sentence of scripture that their uncle, of blessed memory, did frequently use" was most visible upon entering, serving not only as a precept for daily living but as a textual trigger that might recall for its reader

Nicholas Ferrar's voice.⁶⁷ If the household's multifaceted harmonies literally bound together disparate shards of religious culture for powerful patrons, these daily practices and material texts exploded them across the compound's walls, across the lived experiences and voices of its inhabitants, turning Little Gidding itself into a living harmony. There, each day, the Ferrars and Collets gathered anew the relations between themselves, their neighbors, and the texts that imbued their lives with meaning.

At least that was the household's goal. The lived reality of Little Gidding was far more discordant. The second wife of John Ferrar, Bathsheba Ferrar, born and bred a Londoner, was one of the members who chafed at the constraints of rural, religious retirement. She especially resented the family's unquestioning veneration of her husband's younger brother Nicholas, whose patriarchal bearing and beliefs foiled her own bids for more freedom. "For saith Nicholas," she writes bitterly in a letter of 1636 to her brother Henry Owen, "may not a man doe wth his owne what he listeth wthout asking his wifes good will for what power hath the wife of any thinge whilest her husband doth Liue not the Cote of my Backe is not myne owne but my husbands he Saith."⁶⁸ The letter was intercepted by her husband John, who (no doubt much to her frustration) dutifully sent it to his brother Nicholas, appended with a long, angry note chastising her caricature as "soe most Mallitiously faulse and vntrew as the Divell him selfe would haue binn ashamed to haue uttered them much more to haue written Such abominable lyes and Slanders."⁶⁹

While these glimpses of Bathsheba round out our portrait of a family that otherwise strictly controlled its own self-image to neighbors and for posterity, they also gesture to the real fears and restraints faced by the household's women, and it is difficult not to feel for her. In an earlier letter to his brother, John dismisses the complaints of his pregnant wife, despite the fact that she had possibly already lost one child in infancy and was probably understandably frightened of giving birth in rural Huntingdonshire. "Heer is noe want of meanes for her," he adds in frustration to the bottom of his letter, "heer are Ladys and other Gentlewomen that doe well in these Cases good Midwives to be had."⁷⁰ In another letter dated about a year later, John describes to Nicholas behavior that, although he finds it confounding, might be the product of postpartum depression:

Comming in at 7 a Cloke last night to See if the Child was going to beed I Found the Bed made in that Chamber and there in a gentell manner I demanded what it meant My Wife in greate passion and Violent words burst out that She would not lye noe more there in the other Chamber because it was Soe vndecent that Fellowes and Wenches Came at Such howers in as they did That it was alsoe to Coold for her and that she was almost lamed; I prayed her to lett me know what was the Causes and what greived her in any kind and according to the promise I had Soe often in writing made her I would by gods grace give her all Content but of this thing I never heard the least dislike before but praid her to haue more patience and thies things should noe more trouble her For I would Instantly make it warmer wth Curtaynes as I did and there should noe body Come hereafter to Call mee a Morning. And what Ever yeat there was that troubled her in this or in any other thing lett her give me notice of it in writing and I would to the vttermost of my power Seeke her Content as my promise hath binne and my mind Still is; And So I Carried the Childs Bed in a gaine and went downe and I came in at 8 a Cloke and Found the Child in his owne Bede the Candell out and She vpon her Beed by him but while I was going to bed she Rose vp as she is wounte to doe a nights and goe a littell a gaine in to the Inward Chamber soe I went in to bed Expecting when she would returne [as] she was wount but she Came noe more all night; the Child I thanke god waked but at 11 Cloke and then I tooke him as she is wount to doe in to our Bedd and he hath Slept now till Six and Soe is a Slepe Still⁷¹

Even through the filter of John's words, Bathsheba's restlessness and frustration are evident. Forced communal living must have seemed stifling at times, especially when it was done according to the convictions of one's formidable mother-in-law and the obsessively pious Nicholas Ferrar.

Some of the younger girls, too, seem to have dreamed of life outside the confines of Little Gidding, with its strict schedule and limited society. This becomes visible in the Story Books that document the conversations of the Little Academy, organized through the "joynt Covenant" of the young women of the community, including the Collet sisters Mary, Anna, Hester, Margaret, Elizabeth, Joyce, and Judith, as well as their mother Susanna Collet (Nicholas's sister), father John Collet, and grandmother Mary Ferrar, among others.⁷² Operating somewhere between a collaborative oral reading, an informal conversation, and the private performance of a closet drama, the Little Academy met semiregularly in the Great Chamber to relate and discuss

“diverse religious exercizes,” as the young women called them, the purpose being to “intermingle the study of wisdom, searching and enquiring diligently into the knowledge of those things that appertain to their Condition and Sex.”⁷³ Each of the younger participants assumed an allegorical title in the dialogues—the Affectionate, the Patient, the Cheerful, and so on—with their names ironically signaling that trait in which their bearers most needed improvement.⁷⁴ Because the dialogues encourage different readings, opinions, and reactions to be aired in relation to neutral historical or scriptural events, they offer a glimpse into the processes by which the community managed and mediated discord, processes that Debora Shuger has read as feminist.⁷⁵

They also, of course, reveal the household’s seams. For example, toward the end of an extended monologue on Charles V’s decision to retire from public life, Mary Collet launches into a digression on the evils of ostentation. Men keep fancy coaches and a large retinue of servants, she rails, just to make themselves seem more important; to pursue such vanities for one’s own glory takes away from the honor that is properly due to God. As she speaks, her voice rises “with more than Vsual Vehemency both in Speech & Gesture” until she notices “the Eys of the whole Company” turned upon her and begins to blush.⁷⁶ To calm Mary’s nerves, her sister Anna, “the Patient,” kisses her and praises her speech before their mother, “the Moderator,” pipes in to commend them both for offering such good counsel, which she says portentously the entire company should follow. And now the underlying reason for Mary’s tirade emerges: her younger sister “the Submissee” (probably Joyce, or possibly Judith) wants to leave Little Gidding and become a lady-in-waiting to a noble family. At this point, the girl’s mother (“the Moderator”), father (“the Resolved”), and uncle (“the Guardian”) pile on with complaints about the Submissee’s ironic unwillingness to submit: she refuses to wear the humble habit that her sisters wear, nor will she relinquish her social ambitions.⁷⁷ As the parents and uncle begin debating amongst themselves about her conduct in front of the rest of the company, the modern reader feels a certain sympathy for the rebellious teenager, whose reactions go unrecorded. Eventually the conversation broadens into a more general discussion about the merits or disadvantages of service to another family in general, especially when it is neither required by that household nor necessary for the survival

of the attendant, who has other means at her disposal; and in the broadening of the discussion to a universal moral question, the local circumstances that initiated the exchange evaporate. Such is the move that must be made continually for the extended family at Little Gidding to live in harmony: the individual wills of its parts must dissipate under the pressures imposed by the ecumenical whole.

Just as the household used its cut-and-paste harmonies to synthesize religious differences for patrons, so too did the members of Little Gidding design manuscripts as a means of resolving discord amongst themselves. However, whereas the harmonies were compiled from fragments of printed materials with an eye toward their broader circulation amongst elite patrons, these manuscripts function more as semiprivate publications made by and for members of the same dispersed family to repair and cement interpersonal relationships. Two examples that hold especial significance for the women of the household are the Story Books just discussed, with their mediated record of the conversations of the Little Academy, and a commonplace book made by Susanna Collet for her daughter Joyce. The former exist in six folio volumes, the first having been completed around 1631 and presented as a gift to the grandmother Mary Ferrar, followed by three more volumes, to make a set of four; two more are copies of portions of this original set, probably made as a gift for another relative.⁷⁸ Designed to look something like a large manuscript playbook, with each person's allegorical name written before her dialogue, the text is neatly copied on thick, high-quality paper in Nicholas Ferrar's formal handwriting (although not necessarily entirely by him, since his distinctive penmanship was imitated by younger members of the community), and then bound in black leather with simple gilt edges, most likely by Mary Collet. Each page is double-ruled with a red line and headed with a small "IHS," a Christogram with Jesuit origins that Little Gidding used throughout its bookwork as a tag or trademark, copying the letters with serifs to make them appear engraved or printed.

The latter of the two, Susanna Collet's commonplace book, is a small, single-volume octavo, and like its larger cousins, it is not a messy working notebook, but a fair copy of a previously arranged text, published with an eye to posterity. It was written in one hand from another source while still

in sheets, as line-skip and ruling indicate, then gathered, sewn, and bound in the household's typical gold-stamped leather design. A small "I C" on the cover, as well as the two ownership marks on the flyleaves reading "Joyce Collet" (one of which has been crossed out), suggests the book was owned by Joyce; however, ownership does not imply authorship, especially with early modern women's manuscripts. Instead, internal textual evidence and paleographical comparison point unequivocally to her mother Susanna as its primary scribe and compiler.⁷⁹ Susanna probably made the commonplace book for her once-rebellious daughter Joyce, possibly as a wedding gift. If so, it would serve a similar function to the Story Books that Mary and Anna Collet sent to their married sister Susanna Mapletoft: namely, to remind the twenty-one-year-old Joyce of where she came from and the principles that her family instilled in her as she left Little Gidding to join her husband Edward Wallis at Sawtry, where he was a reverend.⁸⁰ It may also have served as a kind of tool kit to aid Joyce as she transitioned into the role of wife and mother, revealing something of what Leah Knight and Micheline White have articulated as early modern women's "bookscapes" more generally.⁸¹ Exchanged within the cloistered sphere of the household, these gift books survived for generations, as the Ferrars and Collets, scattered across England and eventually colonizing America, continually returned to the notorious experiment at Little Gidding as the font of their own devotion.

That the family imagined the Story Books as a form of glue binding together its dispersed and different members is evident in a series of letters neatly copied in the same hand at the beginning of the first volume, now at the British Library.⁸² In the first letter, Mary and Anna Collet write to their grandmother, Mary Ferrar, to present her with the book. Because the grandmother was already present during the dialogues of the Little Academy, the gift inheres not in the text—the content of which would already be familiar to her—so much as in its material embodiment, specifically the virtuous manual labor and bookwork required to transform a rough transcription of a conversation into an impressively large and elegant scribal publication. In a second letter, copied after the first, the grandmother accepts this monument to female education but urges the young women to send it on to their sister Susanna Mapletoft, who is married and lives away from Little Gidding. A third letter

from Mary and Anna to their sister Susanna follows, offering the book to her, and is accompanied by a fourth and final letter from Nicholas Ferrar to Susanna. In it, he emphasizes that any fruits of the household will also be hers to enjoy, even though she no longer lives with the family. More than a record of provenance or literal transactions, this entire exchange is performative. That is, through the spectacle of devout giving, these dedicatory epistles blazon for a distant family member the tangled web of love, obedience, and devotion that defined community at Little Gidding, and do so in a way that attempts to draw her back into that web. In this respect, it is telling that their authors do not sign their names but their position in the family: they are “Your Most Bounden Daughters,” “Your Mother,” “Sisters,” and “Yo[u]r Unkle,” words that remind Susanna of her bonds. It is also indicative that the letters are not pasted or tucked in, as if to accompany a gift, but are copied after several blank leaves at the beginning of the volume in the same hand as the dialogues themselves, probably Nicholas Ferrar’s or an imitation of it. This design decision has the effect of making the sisters, their grandmother, and their uncle visually speak on the page with one “voice,” as do all members of the Little Academy in their dialogues. Thus the materiality of this self-published manuscript, in its mediated display of relationality, models its function in the household as an engine for synthesizing differences between members.

The Story Books did not stay with Susanna Mapletoft, but changed hands across the wider Collet clan before eventually passing to subsequent generations of Mapletofts. We know this because records of their later ownership have accreted around the original dedicatory letters in the first volume, evincing the long afterlife of these books as monuments to the family’s virtuous labor. Pasted to the front board, for example, is the engraved bookplate of John Collet, the son of Mary and Anna’s brother Thomas Collet. Thomas was grown by the time the family moved to Little Gidding and so, like Susanna Mapletoft, he and his family (including his son John, born in 1633) did not live full-time at Little Gidding. It seems possible Susanna or someone in her family passed the book to her nephew for the same reason they were originally gifted to her: to keep him and his family connected to the household. Next, the book found its way into the hands of John’s cousin, Elizabeth Kestian, the daughter of Hester Collet, sister to Susanna Mapletoft, Mary Collet,

and Anna Collet. Kestian recorded that she next gave it to her cousin John Mapletoft, son of Susanna, the book's original recipient, by writing in shaky handwriting below Collet's bookplate:

Elizabeth Kestian geuen me
by my dear cosen John Collet
I desier it to be giuen to my
dear cosen Dr. John Mapletoft

Much later, when he was eighty-four years old and giving the books to his own son, John Mapletoft annotated the letters themselves with biographical notes. After the signature "Sisters," he added their full names and appended their second letter with a note:

Mary & Anne Collet.
Who both dyed Virgins, Resolving so to live
when they were Young by the Grace of God.
My much Honoured Aunt Mary who took ^care of
me & my Brother Peter & Sister Mary after
the death of our Reverend & Pious Father
Mr Josuah Mapletoft dyed in y^e 80th year of
her age. John Mapletoft. Jan. 22. 1715⁸³

After "Yo[u]r Unkle," he writes "Nicholas Ferrar," and another note:

This Book was presented by my Great Grandmother, my
Honored Mothers two Sisters (the daughters of John & Susanna
Collet,) & their Unkle Nicholas Farrar, who was my Godfather,
to my Ever Honoured Mother Susanna Mapletoft the same year
in which I was Born. And I desire my son to whom I do
give it, with the Great Concordance & other Story Books, that
they may be preserved in the Family as long as may be⁸⁴

Originally, the book's designers presented their gift in terms of their relation to the intended recipient, Susanna; only later, as memory of the household began receding, did her son take it upon himself to make visible again his family's long, largely matriarchal history of community and caretaking. His annotations are also, of course, a way of controlling Little Gidding's image for posterity, which he does by elevating the pious "Virgins" Mary and Anna. As we will see, it was this wholesome image of Little Gidding, rather than the

grievances of Bathsheba, that survived and thrived when the community was rediscovered in the nineteenth century. Long after Little Gidding had ceased to host an experiment in intentional living, its bookwork continued to bind together the family, gathering in one place the memories and self-image that were always under threat of scattering.

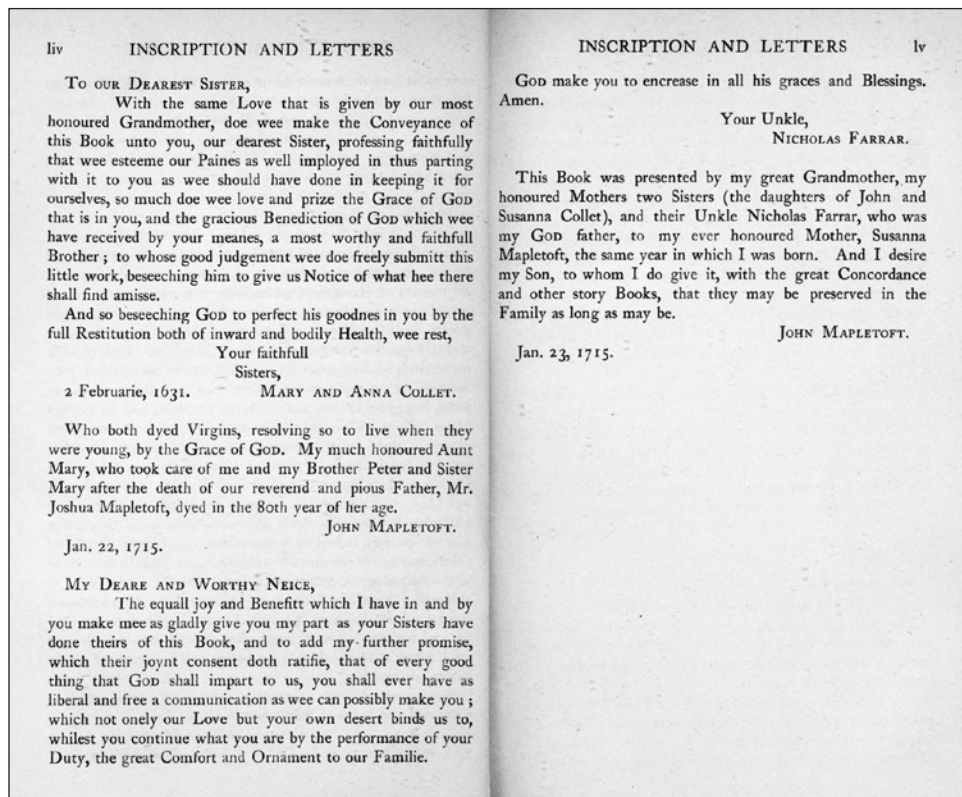


FIGURE 5. Letters of dedication in the story books of the Little Academy (Add MS 34657, fols. 5r–7v, British Library), made by the Little Gidding household (ca. 1630s), as reproduced in E. Cruwys Sharland, ed., *The Story Books of Little Gidding* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1899), 2. Visual differences between layers of annotations have been smoothed away.

Importantly, the work that these books do becomes visible only when we examine the material artifacts themselves, rather than their later mediations in print scholarship. There exist three printed editions of portions of the Story Books: Emily Cruwys Sharland's *The Story Books of Little Gidding* (1899); A. M. Williams's *Conversations at Little Gidding* (1979), which covers several dialogues not transcribed by Sharland and corrects the timeline of the Little Academy's meetings; and a dialogue, "The Winding Sheet," in *The Ferrar Papers* (1938), a collection of primary sources on Little Gidding edited by Bernard Blackstone. Of these, Williams and Blackstone, while their editions are carefully researched, present the texts as if they are transcriptions of an oral dialogue, when in fact, as we have seen, they are thoroughly mediated through a heavily orchestrated publishing event. Only Sharland attends to the materiality of the Story Books, and even then, her own edition's typography and the relative difficulty of reproducing photographs in print in 1899 ironically hinder her few attempts to transmit a sense of their weight, feel, and history. This is especially evident in her transcription of the dedicatory epistles. For instance, whereas there is a clear visual distinction in the first volume itself between the four original letters and the records of transmission that encrust them, Sharland's edition prints the original letters and the later additions in the same typeface and size.⁸⁵ This material razing of difference matters, because it prevents the reader from appreciating the intentionally designed effect of the dedicatory letters, all copied in the same hand as the rest of the book, or distinguishing later additions from those elements that were part of Little Gidding's original composition. Even the bookplate is transcribed as if it were continuous with the letters, with no indication that it was pasted to the front board much later. The print edition also makes it seem as if Mary, Anna, and Nicholas originally signed their names after their letters, when in fact, as we have seen, the letters are signed only with the writer's role in the family ("Sisters," "Yo[u]r Unkle"). By flattening the layered striations of these few prefatory pages into a single, homogenous stream of text, the print edition transmits the *content* of the book but not its *work*, not the way in which it mediates the desires of the Ferrars and Collets to present themselves as united, honorable, and virtuous.

It is precisely the inadequacy of print to convey Little Gidding's bookwork



that has led me and my collaborator Zoe Braccia to build a digital edition of the second example, Susanna Collet's commonplace book.⁸⁶ Like the Story Books, this manuscript was internally circulated as a means of drawing dispersed family members together under common commitments. It does so, first, by condensing a library of contemporary philosophy, romance, theology, and scripture into a succinct, unified vision of devout living, neatly organized according to attributes that the pious reader should wish either to cultivate ("Wisdom") or repel ("Pride & Boasting"). This commonplacing, which takes up most of the manuscript, is subdivided into two halves. The first half collects "Some Short Sentences, out of the holy Scriptures," each tagged with a citation to a book, chapter, and verse of the Bible, although Collet occasionally misattributes, mislabels, or skips one. The second half contains excerpts from "Divers Humain Authors" without any form of attribution. Both halves are organized under roughly the same headings in the same order. Written at the top of each page, these topics run from positive traits (wisdom, prudence, justice, temperance, fortitude, and so on) to negative emotions like shame, wrath, anger, and envy, ending finally with death. In the accompanying digital edition, readers can scan an index of these headings and, under each, compare a transcription of the scriptural and secular excerpts side-by-side. Readers may also juxtapose scriptural excerpts from different topics or open several source texts alongside a transcription of Collet's extracts. Thus, like the "Comparison" and "Collection" sections of the King's Harmony, the digital edition decomposes Collet's commonplace book into its constituent parts, then allows the reader to reorder and rework the various sections into new constellations, finding new nodes of connection across the codex.

At the same time, similar to the "Composition" section of the King's Harmony, readers wishing to experience the manuscript as Collet designed it can access a full transcription linked to a high-resolution facsimile of the book, on which relevant material features have been annotated. Across all transcriptions, variants between an excerpt and its source have been marked with highlights that may be toggled on or off. These alterations show that Collet often omits phrases or manipulates the grammar of a text to render its advice more general, although few entries, if any, radically alter the meaning of the original text. As the design of our digital edition argues, Collet's commonplace book

gathers learned extracts and—like the Story Books or the *sententiae* inscribed on the walls of the Concordance Room—absorbs these disparate fragments into a well-ordered compendium that reflects Little Gidding's aspirations, its "pattern" of living. In so doing, it leaves for future readers a controlled, virtuous image of the Collet women and their devout habits.

Drilling down further into the data, we can gain a fuller picture of not just how Collet organizes her commonplace book, but how she represents herself as a reader.⁸⁷ In the first section, the most excerpted book of the Bible is the apocryphal Ecclesiasticus (known in some traditions as Sirach), making up 162 of the 424 fragments, or 38.2 percent of the total, followed by Proverbs, with 156, or about 36.8 percent. The remaining quarter of the extracts are divided between other Old Testament and New Testament books, with an additional nine coming also from apocryphal books. The preponderance of sayings from Proverbs is not surprising; as a book of wise teachings, it served as the foundation of much moral literature in the period and beyond. Nor is the relative absence of extracts from the New Testament, which focuses less on general advice for godly living and more on conveying the gospel of Christ.

However, the number of fragments from Ecclesiasticus might give us pause. Long contested in theological debates stretching back to Jerome, the status of certain biblical books remained uncertain in Caroline religious

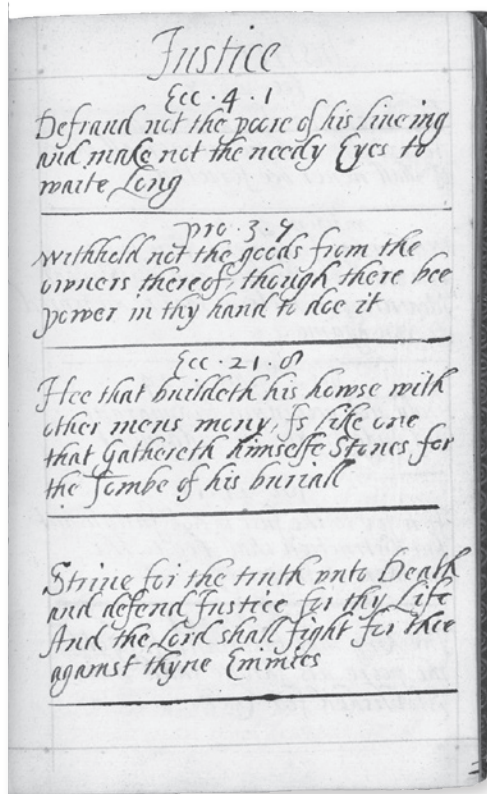


FIGURE 6. Page from Susanna Collet's 1635 commonplace book (PML 128838, fol. 2-1r), The Morgan Library & Museum, New York. Bequest of Miss Julia P. Wightman, 1994.

culture. Some reformed English traditions, following the precedent set by the Catholic Church, considered them useful to read but not properly scripture; others saw them as popish incursions that were infecting English Protestantism, especially the Book of Common Prayer, which draws heavily from these books. In most printed English-language editions of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, as the stage on which these debates played out, the books of the Apocrypha were included as an appendix to the Old Testament, right before the New Testament, and prefaced with a note instructing the reader not to take their teachings as doctrine. Some of the more puritanical stationers, though, objected to their inclusion, and in December 1608, some bookbinders refused to stitch them in.⁸⁸ In late 1615, the revolt seems to have become so widespread that Archbishop George Abbott sent word to the Court of the Stationers' Company that "no more bibles be bounde vp and sold wthout the Apocrypha in them vpon paine of one whole yeares Imprisonment."⁸⁹ By the time Charles had become King and William Laud his controversial Archbishop, some commentators were more combatively describing the Apocrypha's positioning between the Old and New Testaments as akin to having *Unholsome Henbane between two Fragrant Roses*, as the title of one tract put it, or "a Blakamore placed between two pure unspotted Virgins," in Henry Burton's racist words, a prime example of the ways that seventeenth-century print is part of the broader colonial history of early modern writers mapping racial binaries onto moral hierarchies to elevate whiteness and dehumanize those with darker skin.⁹⁰ That Susanna Collet thus willingly incorporated so many excerpts from Ecclesiasticus and other apocryphal books into a section of her commonplace book claiming to be copied "out of the holy Scriptures" suggests the family not only was not offended by the inclusion of the Apocrypha in printed Bibles, but may not have seen a strong distinction between it and the Testaments.

Even more telling, Collet was copying from multiple versions of the Bible. This becomes evident at those moments in the text when the excerpt deviates significantly from the King James Version, which would have been most common in 1635 and which was used in the harmonies. For instance, under the topic "Counsel," she quotes Ecclesiasticus 8:17 at the bottom of one page, followed at the top of the next page by a fragment she labels as the next verse

<i>Collet's commonplace book (1635)</i>	<i>King James Bible</i>	<i>Geneva Bible</i>
Ecc. 8. 17 Consult not with a foole, for hee Cannot keepe Counsell	Ecclesiasticus 8:17 Consult not with a foole; for hee cannot keepe counsell.	Ecclesiasticus 8:17 Take no counsell at a foole: for hee cannot keepe a thing close.
Ecc. 8. 18 Take no Counsell of fooles, for they loue nothing, but the things which pleaseth themselues	Ecclesiasticus 8:18 Doe no secret thing before a stranger, for thou knowest not what hee will bring forth.	Ecclesiasticus 8:18 Do no secret thing before a stranger: for thou canst not tell what he goeth about.

FIGURE 7. A comparison between biblical passages copied in Susanna Collet's commonplace book (128838, fol. 3-2v-3-3r, The Morgan Library & Museum), printed in the King James Bible, and printed in the Geneva Bible.



<i>Collet's commonplace book (1635)</i>	<i>Douay-Rheims Bible</i>
Ecc. 8. 18 Take no Counsell of fooles, for they loue nothing, but the things which pleaseth themselues	Ecclesiasticus 8:20 Conferre no counsel with fooles, for they can not loue but such things as please them.

FIGURE 8. A comparison between biblical passages copied in Susanna Collet's commonplace book (128838, fol. 3-3r, The Morgan Library & Museum) and printed in the Douay-Rheims Bible.



<i>Collet's commonplace book (1635)</i>	<i>Geneva Bible</i>	<i>King James Bible</i>
[Ecclesiasticus 6:15] A faithfull friend ought not to bee Changed for any thing; Gold & Silver are not to bee Compared to y ^e Goodnes of his faith	Ecclesiasticus 6:15 A faithfull friend ought not to bee changed for any thing, and the weight of gold and siluer is not to be compared to the Goodness of his faith.	Ecclesiasticus 6:15 Nothing doth counteruayle a faythfull friend, and his excellency is vnualueable.

FIGURE 9. A comparison between biblical passages copied in Susanna Collet's commonplace book (128838, fol. 3-4r, The Morgan Library & Museum), printed in the Geneva Bible, and printed in the King James Bible.

(8:18). The former quotes the King James version exactly, but the latter appears to be mislabeled, as we can see through comparison (figure 7). What is marked as verse 8:18 here is actually 8:20 in other versions of the Bible circulating at the time, such as the Douay-Rheims Bible, an English translation made for the Catholic Church by English Catholics in exile (figure 8). From these comparisons alone, it would seem that Collet combined the first part of the Geneva version of Ecclesiasticus 8:17 with the Douay-Rheims version of Ecclesiasticus 8:20 (a verse not present in King James or Geneva) to make what she mislabels as Ecclesiasticus 8:18. While it would certainly be interesting to know that the household at Little Gidding was reading a Catholic translation, more likely these variants are bringing to light Collet's more general intermingling of biblical translations of Ecclesiasticus that stem from the Greek Septuagint, like the Geneva and King James Bibles, and versions that stem from the Latin Vulgate, like the Douay-Rheims Bible. Collet may also have been excerpting from memory or even translating herself from the Latin Vulgate, since languages were clearly taught and valued in the household. Other variants also show Collet working from multiple translations, as in her quote of Ecclesiasticus 6:15 from the Geneva rather than King James version (figure 9). Centuries of commentators have tried to squeeze Little Gidding into a narrow doctrine or denomination. Yet a careful examination of the Collet women's bookwork absorbing fragments of religious print culture and processing their differences shows the household to be interested less in adhering to a strict theology than in mining any available materials for literal and conceptual fodder. As Collet's commonplacing in particular shows, texts both canonical and deuterocanonical, in all available translations, could be clipped, remixed, and remade into Little Gidding's variegated patterns of devout living.

Examining the sources from the secular section of the commonplace book also yields some surprises. As mentioned above, Collet did not cite her sources in this part of the manuscript; however, through careful searches of databases of early modern texts, like that provided by the Early English Books Online Text Creation Partnership (EEBO-TCP), my collaborator Braccia has discovered the origins of around 85 percent of the fragments, or 233 of the 276 total. These data show that by far the most copied secular writer is bishop,

satirist, and religious controversialist Joseph Hall, whose excerpts number 117, or 42.4 percent of this section. Although little read today, the extraordinarily prolific Hall wrote some of the most popular commentaries, sermons, poetry, and devotional works of the century, and it is not unexpected that Collet might draw on this religious leader for wisdom and advice. The next most cited source, with thirty-four excerpts, is the courtier Robert Dallington's *Aphorismes Civill and Militarie* (1613, STC 6197; 1629, STC 6198), a translation of the Italian Renaissance historian Francesco Guicciardini's aphorisms. Like Nicholas Ferrar and, as we will see in the next chapter, Edward Benlowes, Dallington traveled the continent and, also like them, helped popularize baroque art and style among the Stuart elites.⁹¹ His translation—which appends to each aphorism passages from Guicciardini's histories and quotes from other authors, making it a compendium of various sources.⁹² The third most cited book is Francis Bacon's *Essays*, with twenty-nine excerpts, followed by Sir Philip Sidney pastoral romance *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, first printed in 1593, with seventeen excerpts.

Sidney's *Arcadia* is exactly the sort of secular book that Nicholas Ferrar, on his deathbed in 1637, would famously ask his brother to burn, erasing all evidence that he ever read or owned them.⁹³ That Collet quotes it so frequently reveals that Little Gidding was more worldly and connected to literary trends than its cloistered self-presentation of religious retirement, so carefully engineered by Ferrar, would suggest. It also points to the ways in which early modern reading practices disintegrated Sidney's text into pithy fragments more easily diffused through commonplace books and manuscript miscellanies, as Fred Schurink has shown.⁹⁴ At the same time, Collet does not otherwise excerpt from romances, poetry, or drama, hewing closer to histories and religious commentaries like John Hayward's histories of England. On the whole then, gleaning the secular sources helps piece together a partial image of a library that is devout and learned but not puritanical or dogmatic. In this, it is similar to the 1647 booklist of Lady Margaret Heath, as can be seen in the accompanying dataset, edited by Mark Empey for *Private Libraries of Renaissance England*. A contemporary of Collet's, equal in status and education, Heath also owned Hall's *Works*, Bibles, devotional literature, sermons,

and books by Bacon, Hayward, and Speed, as well as Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, declarations by Charles I, and Herbert's poetry, which we can infer were also owned at Little Gidding, and in fact we might cautiously read her booklist, filtered through the view given us from Collet's commonplace book, as a proxy for the library at Little Gidding.⁹⁵

Even as Braccia and I have attempted to identify the version of the Bible that Collet was using, as well as the sources of her uncited secular excerpts, it is worth noting the difficulty, indeed impossibility, of determining the exact edition of any of the books she may have owned or read. While digital databases such as the EEBO-TCP that allow full-text, fuzzy searching of transcribed early modern texts have made it possible to dredge up quotes from the available corpus, a sense of certainty from these search results is unwarranted, as many critics have noted.⁹⁶ Several hits turned out to be false positives: books that did indeed contain the phrase we sought but which were not its origins, being instead a printed anthology, miscellany, or collection of extracts. Usually some other metadata would alert us to the error, like a publication date later than 1635 or some indication that the author was compiling texts. For instance, a fragment filed under "Justice" appeared in an EEBO-TCP search only as part of John Ufflet's *VVits fancies*, a collection of "choice observations and essayes" not published until 1659 (Wing U20). Another under the topic "Courtesy, Gentleness, Meekness" returns Richard Hearne's *Ros cæli*, a "miscellany of ejaculations, divine, morall, &c." published in 1640 (STC 13219). Further investigation revealed that both quotes were actually written by Joseph Hall, whom Collet certainly read.

While it is important to be vigilant against misattributions when using digital methods and databases, the fact that her excerpt matched one in another compilation also obliquely exposes, in ways that other methods might not, something essential about the circuitous, complex media ecology in which Collet was working. Copying and pasting was endemic across all text technologies. Certain printed books like Sidney's *Arcadia* or Bacon's essays were so frequently excerpted, without citation, that readers might be more familiar with them as fragments than as stories or arguments, much as a reader might know certain proverbs or bits of scriptural wisdom by heart, and the modern researcher should be wary of assuming that quoting a text indicates that an

early modern reader actually consumed it whole as we might now. Given that some of the fragments Collet cites were clearly circulating widely, it is possible she encountered them through other compilations or a manuscript miscellany currently unknown to us. The best we might do today is a version of what Ryan Cordell, in his own digital book-historical work on reprinting in nineteenth-century American newspapers, dubs “speculative bibliography”: “a complementary, experimental approach to the digitized archive, in which textual associations are constituted propositionally, iteratively, and (sometimes) temporarily, as the result of probabilistic computational models.”⁹⁷ In the accompanying digital edition of Collet’s commonplace book, Braccia and I have constellated some of the speculative textual associations that our searches of her sources have brought forward.

The second, shorter part of the manuscript, included after the end of the commonplace book, traces an alternative genealogy of the household’s piety, one that looks back not through the Ferrar line to the Protestant martyr Robert Ferrar, as was often recited, but through Susanna’s husband John Collet’s line to Dean John Colet, a Reformation theologian, preacher, and humanist scholar. With his father’s wealth and his friend Erasmus’s guidance, Colet re-founded St. Paul’s School in 1512, installing William Lilye as its first master. While the precise link between Colet and the Collets of Little Gidding is unknown, the family clearly took pleasure in claiming “the famous Docter Collet Some tymes Deane of Paules” as an ancestor, and both branches use the same coat of arms. This pride is evident in the manuscript’s concluding section, where Collet appends the entire text of Colet’s *A ryght fruitfull monicion concernynge the order of a good Christen mannes lyfe* (1534, STC 5547.2), “Coppied out of a Booke w[hi]ch was printed Long agou.” It is prefaced with a poem written by Susanna to her children, which reads in full:

This following treatis printed
Long agou:
Came to my vew but I Could get
But One:
for tyme it semed had quight
Worne out the prese:

Yet I Conceived it Could deserue
 Noe Less:
 Then Coppiong out for many to
 Mee Deare:
 That each might see and practic
 what hee heare:
 Commends to all that Christians
 are profests:
Commends
 That they their liues might frame
 to these Behests:
 Now that it may the more Impres=
 sion make:
 Into your mynds these Cogitations
 Take
 your father beares y^e Authors Nam
 A Branch from y^e same Root he Cam
 Not this to Boast of his Degree
 Imitat you his Piety
 His Calling was Religious
 His Pious works so Glorious
 That still Hee liues wth greater faim
 Then lordships left to Sonns
 Can Gaine⁹⁸

In this deceptively simple poem, Collet deftly situates her manuscript copy of a printed book within the household's bookwork, specifically its "new kind of printing." She begins by describing the marketplace for older printed works as marred by loss, the press "worne out" by time and its technologies in a state of almost ruin. Only one copy of Dean Colet's book remains. Yet, recognizing the value buried in this single remnant, she feels compelled to copy it out in writing "for many to / Mee Deare: That each might see and practic / what hee heare: / Commends." Copied in and bound with this commonplace book, the treatise—otherwise nearly lost in print—"may," she writes, with a pun on the impression left by movable type on a blank sheet of paper, "the more Impres= / sion make" on its readers. Thus the manuscript copy of an orphaned work becomes itself a technology of reproduction, a brand new kind of press imprinting each of its readers with valuable lessons. In the final lines, Collet maps this

process of spiritual replication onto filial reproduction: “your father beares y^e Authors Nam / A Branch from y^e same Root he Cam.” By imitating the piety of their famous ancestor, distilled in the book copied for them, Collet’s children might in turn serve as living copies of his “Little Treatise,” spreading his and their own good works in the world, a message that may have been especially pertinent to Susanna’s daughter Joyce as she prepared for marriage.

After Colet’s treatise, following a blank leaf, is a second short poem by Collet written as a mother’s advice to her children. It begins with two prefatory stanzas that lay claim to her maternal authority and right to offer counsel as equal to a father’s ability to gift his children goods or lands. They read:

Senc God himselfe hath Joynd togeher
Th’authority of father and Mother
then they w^{ch} doe in Honour Shair
haue reason to doe so in Caire,

Mothors give Seldom Goods or Lands
nor daire I give thes as Comands
but Call them Counsels least if broke
my Charg may proue a heavi yoake
Yet this I dayre & still shall pray
that all of them obserue you may
and doing so assur to you
Not myn but even Gods blessing to⁹⁹

If a mother cannot give goods and lands as readily as a father, in her written counsel, she can at least, Collet seems to suggest, offer wisdom on how to make the best use of the property given in alignment with God’s law. Thus the father grants material wealth and the mother the spiritual wisdom to dispense with it, both equally necessary to proper living. Squeezed onto a single page opposite these lines, her counsels follow. They read in full:

These Counsels by a Mother Given
Vnto her Children, they twise Seven

1

Good Jakob for your pattern Take
his Vow doe you your practiz make
of all that God Shall gue to You

Giue him the tenth and say tis due

2

On vs'ry Mony Never Lend
Neither to Stranger nor to friend
Nor take vp so for any Gaine
Let Need be Great doth that Constrain

3

If Surty for thy freind then Come
See Reason how hee Cane Repay
or never doe Exceed the Sum
w^{ch} thou thy selfe Canst well defray

4

If God shall please t'increas thy store
and thou desier to purchase Lands
Let them be such as heartofore
were nere in Church nor Churchmans hands

The keeping thes may some sem Lees
breaking y^e Gaine will proue but dres¹⁰⁰

The mother's advice book or mother's legacy was common at the time, made popular in part by Dorothy Leigh's *The Mothers Blessing*, forty-five chapters of counsel written upon her deathbed to her sons, covering everything from appropriate names for one's children to the different types of prayer.¹⁰¹ First published in 1616, *The Mothers Blessing* remained in print continuously throughout the seventeenth century, going through twenty-eight editions between 1616 and 1729; it seems certain Susanna would have known of it. Others in print include Elizabeth Grymeston's *Miscelanea, Meditations, Memoratives* (1604, 1606, 1608) and Elizabeth Jocelin's *The Mothers Legacie to Her Unborn Childe* (1624, 1625, 1632, 1635), and examples can also be found in women's manuscript miscellanies, like that of Katherine Thomas.¹⁰² Yet Collet's own short poem of counsel differs considerably from these in that she focuses entirely on the proper use of wealth. Moreover, two of the four stanzas concern retaining one's property by *not* lending money to strangers or even friends. A far cry from the idyllic image of neighborly aid so often painted of Little Gidding, Collet's advice to her fourteen or more children, sons *and* daughters, points to the family's deep anxiety about preserving what

they had built together, and for themselves, in their rural household. Positioned as a footnote to Dean Colet's treatise, in a commonplace book where she has gathered wisdom from her reading for her own daughter, including her reading of her ancestor Colet, the poem also suggests that the household's bookwork was as much about the accumulation of a material legacy as it was about women spending their time wisely.

After a blank page, a final bit of poetry has been copied in Collet's commonplace book horizontally and in different ink. It comes from a meditation in the long poem *Hadassa; or the History of Queene Ester* by Francis Quarles (1621; STC 20546), and it claims that each person owns only a part of oneself, the rest being given over to country and parents:

The man that Liues vnto himselfe alone
Subsists an breathes, but liues not, Never One
Deserued the moiety of himselfe for hee
Thats borne Can Challing but on parte of three
Triparted thus his Cuntry Clames the best
The next his parents and himselfe the Least

There is perhaps no better epitaph for life at Little Gidding. In all ways, the individual was subsumed by the collective, just as the fragments of text and discrete voices were absorbed into grander schemes in Little Gidding's books. That these lines have been copied from a long poem on the history of a celebrated biblical queen accentuates the fact that it is not just devotion, but *women's work* that sits at the center of the household's efforts to mediate difference. Whether drawing from the language of domestic labor to authorize their publishing practices or using books to bind their family together, the women of Little Gidding—Mary Collet, her mother Susanna, even the occasionally recalcitrant daughter Joyce—form the glue holding tight the household's legacy and public image.

Social Networks of Little Gidding

The advent of the English civil war effectively ended Little Gidding's bookwork. In 1645 one of the Ferrars' patrons, Archbishop William Laud, was beheaded, brought under suspicion for, among other things, owning "Popish

Books” illustrated with Dutch engravings that idolatrously depict Christ’s life.¹⁰³ The special cut-up concordance of the Laws of Moses that the women of Little Gidding had designed for him (perhaps one of those “Popish Books”) went with the rest of his collection to the library at St. John’s College, Oxford, where it remains today. Four years later, King Charles, too, lost his head, and it no longer seemed safe for a household once pilloried in the title of a scurrilous pamphlet as an “Arminian Nunnery” to be producing lavishly illustrated, velvet-bound Bibles for royalty. In the mid-1640s, Mary Collet, the primary designer of most harmonies and called “Mother” of the household since before her uncle Nicholas’s passing in 1637, fled to the continent, probably with her friend the poet Richard Crashaw, and the activities of Little Gidding ground nearly to a halt.¹⁰⁴ The family continued to be involved in bibliographic projects, including a scheme to bind copies of the martyred King’s famous spiritual autobiography *Eikon Basilike* and sell them in America; however, as David Ransome has recently shown, the project seems to have failed, leaving the community with a pile of unused books.¹⁰⁵ The moment of Little Gidding’s cultural saliency had passed, and the household faded into relative obscurity in the eighteenth century.

Even as Little Gidding’s “patterns” of life unraveled, the harmonies that had bound the household together remained as loose threads knit into the fabric of English book culture, a physical testament to the family’s devotional labor. Some volumes, like Laud’s and the King’s, ended up in protected libraries and collections, where these increasingly obscure objects were secured against the very kinds of book destruction that the women of Little Gidding had practiced. Ironically, these unused harmonies tend to be in the worst condition, since, without an active readership to ensure the fragments stayed in place, the glue holding them together slowly desiccated. Entire pages of Laud’s harmony at St. John’s College in Oxford are blank but for rubrication, their pasted bits of text having fallen off for want of a concerned reader. Other books made at Little Gidding were lost for centuries, like the early harmony borrowed and annotated by King Charles. As we have seen, this book, so integral to our present knowledge of Little Gidding, surfaced again only in 1934, when Hall rediscovered it advertised as a potential “blotting pad” and the pages marked by the King were dramatically brought to

public attention at the 1939 World's Fair.¹⁰⁶ Even without human intervention, time does work on books. Still other remnants of Little Gidding were more quietly sustained in private collections, as is the case with Susanna Collet's commonplace book. It came to the Morgan Library in 1994 through the gift of Julia Parker Wightman, a prominent twentieth-century bibliographer, collector, and bookbinder, as well as one of the first women admitted to the notoriously misogynistic Grolier Club.¹⁰⁷ Like the women of Little Gidding, Wightman learned to bind from another woman, Edith Diehl, who literally wrote the manual on bookbinding, and her collections reflect her interest in the history and art of the craft. It seems likely Wightman was attracted to Collet's commonplace book as an exemplar of the women of Little Gidding's bookwork. To my knowledge, the research in this chapter is the first published on this book, which, like so much of women's work, has been hiding in plain sight for at least a century.

And then there are the books made in the wake of Little Gidding and the household's novel methods of publishing with knives and paste. Composed, like the harmonies, from fragments of prints and texts, these bespoke objects reflect the long afterlife of the household's "new kind of printing" and, in doing so, speak to the myriad ways that a vast social network of readers, especially women, continued to be inspired by Mary Collet and her sisters' interventions into print culture. In this last section, I take up two in particular. First, I examine a small booklet attached by a ribbon to the Little Gidding harmony now held at Princeton University's Cotsen Children's Library. Although at first this booklet looks like nothing much, simply a few pages torn from an 1869 abridged biography of Nicholas Ferrar, on closer inspection it becomes clear that, like the harmony it is tethered to, it is composed of fragments and clippings. Here, an anonymous nineteenth-century reader has abridged an abridgment with scissors, then attached this cut-up book to its seventeenth-century predecessor, annotating the latter with the former. The second is a set of scrapbooks made by the American composer and musician Fanny Reed Hammond in the 1930s and 40s. Originally compiled with an eye to writing something on Little Gidding, perhaps a children's book about the Ferrars, they stand now on their own as a witness to one American's attraction to their experiment in communal living. If King Charles's annotation

provoked the Ferrars to invent a new kind of reading machine, then in these two echoes of Little Gidding we find their bookwork provoking later readers to new modes of composition.

Although the Cotsen Harmony's early history is obscure, the women of Little Gidding seem to have made it for the Cotton family of nearby Conington. Robert Bruce Cotton and his son Thomas were renowned book collectors in the seventeenth century, and many leading intellectuals of the day consulted their extensive library of printed books and medieval manuscripts. It is possible the family made them a harmony as a commission or with hopes of gaining patronage from their bibliophilic neighbors. Certainly the Cottons seem to have treasured the harmony as a family heirloom, since it escaped the transfer of their library to the nation around 1702 and what would become the British Museum. In fact the book stayed in Conington until at least 1742, when John Cotton's daughter Elizabeth married Thomas Bowdler and the couple moved to Bath, effectively transferring ownership of this valued volume to the Bowdler line.

Like the Cottons (and Ferrars), the Bowdlers were a remarkably literary family that treasured books and learning, especially the women. Elizabeth Bowdler née Cotton wrote a commentary on Bishop Thomas Percy's *Song of Solomon Paraphrased* and penned a book, *Practical Observations of the Revelation of St John* (1775), advocating the expurgation of biblical texts for children's reading. Elizabeth's son John wrote the political treatise *Reform or Ruin!* (1797) on reforming the Church of England and assembled an anthology of poems "divine and moral," which he, like his mother before him, expurgated to fit his family's sense of propriety. No Bowdlers, though, were as prolific as Elizabeth's daughter Henrietta Maria, known as Harriet Bowdler. The trajectory of her life is strikingly similar to that of Little Gidding's Mary Collet. Both women remained unmarried, devoting themselves to writing, editing, and religious devotion. Both enjoyed unusually close bonds with one of their male relatives, with whom they collaborated. And both formed the moral and intellectual center of a group of extended family members and friends, Collet at Little Gidding in the early seventeenth century and Bowdler in the early nineteenth century at Bath, where she hosted a well-known salon. Bowdler and Collet also both occupy a place on the margins of Anglicanism's history

as intellectual leaders whose contributions have been overwritten by their male relatives.

Bowdler's most famous work was the anonymously published *Sermons on the Doctrines and Duties of Christianity* (1801), a book of middle-class piety that mirrors Little Gidding's habits in its emphasis on duty, daily devotion, and the Anglican *via media*. The book was so widely admired that Beilby Porteus, the bishop of London, is said to have offered the anonymous author a benefice, assuming her to be a man and a member of the clergy.¹⁰⁸ Bowdler is also the author of at least one novel, *Pen Tamar; or, The History of an Old Maid* (1830), as well as a posthumous conduct book, *Essay on the Proper Employment of Time, Talents, Fortune, &c.* (1836). She is believed to be the anonymous author of *Creation* (1818), a book of religious verse, too. And she was a practiced editor. Through Bowdler's labor, the works of two late-eighteenth-century women have survived in print for posterity: those of her sister Jane Bowdler and of her friend Elizabeth Smith.

If the name Bowdler is known today, it is because of one project: *The Family Shakespeare*. Notorious in the history of literary censorship, this expurgated edition prints many of Shakespeare's plays "unsullied by any scene, by any speech, or, if possible, by any word that can give pain to the most chaste, or offence to the most religious of his readers," as the preface to the 1818 edition puts it.¹⁰⁹ Thomas Bowdler is often credited as sole editor, and in fact most catalogue entries, including of the HathiTrust digital facsimiles linked as resources in this project, still report that the books were expurgated by him alone. Yet the first edition of 1807 lists no editor on its title page, and it is now widely known that Thomas's sister Harriet Bowdler was responsible for originally devising and implementing the project.¹¹⁰

The idea came from a childhood memory of her father reading Shakespeare aloud to his children when they were young. As he read, he would alter scenes and words to suit their age and experience.¹¹¹ With the expurgated edition, Harriet Bowdler hoped to make this edifying practice available to all families, writing: "My object is to offer these Plays to the public in such a state, that they may be read with pleasure in all companies, and placed without danger in the hands of every person who is capable of understanding them."¹¹² She emphasizes that, in doing so, she did not aim to change the



meaning of the text, but merely to remove the “vulgar” and “indelicate” bits, which, in any case, Shakespeare included only “in compliance with the taste of the age in which he lived.”¹¹³ Justifying this judgment is a quote from Elizabeth Montagu’s 1769 essay defending Shakespeare against the attacks of Voltaire, thereby rooting *The Family Shakespeare* in a tradition of women’s literary criticism. Bowdler also emphasizes that “not a single line is added” to the plays.¹¹⁴ Thus her editorial practice negotiates between a strong adherence to textual fidelity (she insists that she is merely cutting and arranging, not altering) and a willingness to conceive of this fidelity as contingent on an edition’s purpose and intended audience. In these principles, there is something of the protofeminist sensibilities of Mary Collet and the women of Little Gidding, who also saw texts as containing multiple possible readings and understood their editions as always situated in relation to particular readers and reading habits. Indeed, it is tempting to imagine that the family’s ownership of a cut-and-paste harmony from Little Gidding influenced Bowdler’s use of scissors as an editorial technology.

With the second edition of 1818, Harriet’s labors were erased from history. Enlarged with her brother’s expurgated readings and some changes to her own edits, the new edition silently absorbed the plays that she edited, reassigning both them and her conceptual labor to Thomas, whose name was announced on the title page as the book’s only editor. Subsequent versions would reset the numbering of editions with the one of 1818 as the first, effectively expunging Harriet’s 1807 edition from the bibliographic record. A new preface, too—essentially an expansion of Harriet’s original text—was added and signed by Thomas. It adopts first-person pronouns that, since we are to take the text as written only by Thomas, make it appear as if the idea for expurgating Shakespeare’s plays was his alone. Take, for instance, this note on his preface, added when it was reprinted as the “Preface to the First Edition” in the 1825 edition:

My first idea of the Family Shakspeare arose from the recollection of my father’s custom of reading in this manner to his family. Shakspeare (with whom no person was better acquainted) was a frequent subject of the evening’s entertainment. In the perfection of reading few men were equal to my father; and such was his good taste, his delicacy, and his prompt discretion, that his family listened with delight to Lear, Hamlet, and Othello, without knowing

that those matchless tragedies contained words and expressions improper to be pronounced; and without having reason to suspect that any parts of the plays had been omitted by the circumspect and judicious reader.

It afterwards occurred to me, that what my father did so readily and successfully for his family, my inferior abilities might, with the assistance of time and mature consideration, be able to accomplish for the benefit of the public. I say, therefore, that if “The Family Shakspeare” is entitled to any merit, it originates with my father.¹¹⁵

It is not clear who is the “I” in this footnote, whether Harriet or Thomas. It is possible that Harriet, collaborating with her brother as they developed the project together, decided to add this annotation to clarify the original intent of the book, especially since it had been criticized in the press as nothing but a “piece of prudery in pasteboard.”¹¹⁶ If so, it joins a long history of women’s words and labors being relegated to the literal margins of a man’s text. Or Thomas may have written the note, in which case he takes credit for the idea away from his sister and emphatically reassigns it to the family’s patriarch, much as scholars would reassign the Collet sisters’ work on the harmonies to Nicholas Ferrar: “I say, therefore,” he writes, “that if ‘The Family Shakspeare’ is entitled to any merit, it originates with my father.” Either way, this footnote epitomizes the broader erasure of women’s contributions to the history of editing and editorial theory, as well as the difficulties, sometimes impossibility, of recovering this work from metadata and the bibliographic record alone. Without Harriet’s name on the title page, the Bowdler’s joint edition of *The Family Shakspeare* became an enormous success by nineteenth-century standards, selling over fifteen thousand copies by the century’s end. It made the Bowdler name synonymous with “castrat[ing]” texts, as the *Oxford English Dictionary* piquantly defines the verb *bowdlerize*.¹¹⁷

In their expurgating hands, the Bowdler family’s Gospel harmony cemented ties to other nineteenth-century Anglican families, many of whom, caught up in the Oxford movement and the related Tractarian tumult, were beginning to look back admiringly to religious households like Little Gidding.¹¹⁸ Indeed, what had seemed like the Caroline era’s obscure and fusty ritualism during the eighteenth century was, by the 1830s, coming to be seen as the apotheosis of Anglicanism by many High Church adherents. Herbert’s *The Temple*, entirely out of print between 1709 and 1799, enjoyed a minor

renaissance during this time, as readers of the new Pickering edition (1835–1836) rediscovered the “beauty of holiness,” as the oft-repeated Laudian motto put it. And interest in Herbert’s friend and literary executor, Nicholas Ferrar, began to grow in earnest with the publication of *Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Nicholas Ferrar* (1790), edited by Peter Peckard. In this heavily modified biography written by Nicholas’s brother John at Little Gidding and rediscovered by Peckard in a pile of his family’s manuscripts, Tractarians and High Church men and women more generally found a model for the kind of liturgical life that they advocated. This work and the many editions, abridgments, and new biographies that followed raised Nicholas Ferrar and the household that he helped to found from relative obscurity to fame. It even inspired some fictional representations, most notably John Henry Shorthouse’s theological novel *John Inglesant: A Romance* (1881). In it, a young Roman Catholic musician studying at Oxford visits his friend’s home, where he comes across a library of dusty old tomes, including the by-then ancient story of John Inglesant, a seventeenth-century courtier educated by Jesuits. Intrigued, the musician decides to spend his school holiday penning Inglesant’s biography, since it has much to teach nineteenth-century readers about the development of the Anglican religion. At one point in the story, Inglesant visits Little Gidding, where he spies a pious Mary Collet engaged with her sisters “in making those curious books of Scripture Harmonies,” and of course he falls hopelessly in love with the devout maiden. An Austen-esque love triangle with a rival Puritan suitor ensues, only to be ended when Mary declines both marriage proposals to commit herself to God’s greater purpose for her and the household. It would seem that the Bowdler family’s harmony had, during the course of the century, gained a new cultural cachet within their circle of friends and English religious thought more generally.

It was in this context that Thomas Bowdler’s nephew, the Reverend Thomas Bowdler the Younger, passed the harmony on to Arthur H. D. Acland Troyte of Huntsham in Devon. He did so after a visit to the family in 1855 “as an Remembrance of his [presumably Bowdler’s] pleasure at finding the daughter of the family encouraged in the good works” of the women of Little Gidding, as a contemporaneous provenance note on the flyleaf of the harmony records. The exchange of this precious gift points to the close

friendship between these two devout, literary families, as well as to their shared interest in the Ferrars and Collets at Little Gidding. Arthur Acland Troyte published multiple books designed to aid the reader's devotion, including *The Hours* (1840), a "useful Manual of Prayer" offering short offices for three canonical hours during each day, and *Daily Steps toward Heaven* (1850), a spiritual calendar pairing each day of the year with a verse of scripture and a short meditation.¹¹⁹ One imagines that the members of Little Gidding, with their rigorous schedule of daily devotion and prayer, would have approved. And, as the Ferrars did after purchasing the estate at Little Gidding, Acland Troyte restored the church at his Huntsham manor house according to the High Church principles of beauty. During renovations, he became particularly interested in change ringing, a method for playing church bells in harmony that originated in the seventeenth century. All three of his sons shared his passion for change ringing; one, Charles Arthur Williams Troyte, would go on to write the definitive history on the subject, as well as an army manual on Morse code. Another, John Acland, wrote a spiritual biography of his father titled *A Layman's Life in the Days of the Tractarian Movement* (1904), which ends with an explicit and extended comparison between his father's last days and those of Nicholas Ferrar as described in Peckard's biography, a comparison that opens outward to encompass the entirety of the two men's lives:

Having thus introduced the personality of the saintly Ferrar, and shewn the resemblance of his dying actions to those of Dr. Troyte, it is hardly possible to leave the subject without remarking the peculiar similarity between the life and character of Ferrar and that of Arthur Acland, both before and after he went to Huntsham. It was indeed, a common sentiment of those who knew him well that he might justly be styled a modern Ferrar. Many of the expressions used in books dealing with Ferrar's character can be applied to Arthur Acland, as if they were written on him.¹²⁰

Of course, John Acland penned these words about his father while in possession of a Little Gidding harmony, one that he had, just two decades earlier, taken pains to learn more about. In 1888 he wrote some of the earliest scholarship on what he describes as the "mechanical means" used to produce the harmony by cutting and pasting.¹²¹

It is around this time that our unusual pamphlet enters history. Tied to the

front board of the Acland Trottye family's harmony with a broad, black ribbon is a small booklet. This quire, or set of nested leaves, comes from an 1869 edition of the biography of Nicholas Ferrar edited by Peckard. The edition is an abridgment produced by the Tractarian printer and publisher Joseph Masters; aspects of Peckard's original pertaining to Ferrar's life as a member of parliament and his involvement in court intrigues before retiring to Little Gidding have been removed, making him appear more monastic and ethereally spiritual than he was.¹²² The Masters edition's sanctification of Ferrar is part of a longer trend that, as Smyth has pointed out, still influences scholarship today.¹²³ As can be seen in the accompanying digital network of several harmonies, the reader has then further abridged the book by extracting just eight leaves, cut from the place in the narrative where Peckard begins describing the harmonies.¹²⁴ On some pages the text is left wholly intact; on others it is pasted over with paper fragments cut from other parts of the biography. Like the women who produced the harmony, the anonymous designer of this pamphlet adheres to grammar and sense, producing not a chopped-up jumble of fragments, but rather a readable text. This "new" abridged abridgment condenses the narrative of Ferrar's life into: one short cut-and-paste page; a second page of fragments on the founding of Little Gidding that emphasizes the role of Nicholas Ferrar's mother, Mary Ferrar; several uncut pages on the making of the harmonies and their court patrons, extracted from pages 110–19 in the original; and a final cut-up page that shows the wall hanging that Mary Ferrar erected at Little Gidding and that briefly recounts her death, in 1635, followed by Nicholas's in 1637. Taken as a whole, these revisions reorient the patriarchal perspective of the original by drawing out and underscoring contributions by the women of Little Gidding to the household and its bookwork, especially the matriarch Mary Ferrar. In other words, rather than a digression at the center of a hagiography, the cut-and-paste harmonies are, in this pamphlet, literally front and center, in form and in content. It would seem that some reader, perhaps John Acland or the anonymous daughter "encouraged in the good works" of Little Gidding, has used the women of Little Gidding's "new kind of printing" to materially "bowdlerize" this biography.

Even as there is a clear correspondence between the nineteenth-century pamphlet and the seventeenth-century harmony, their literal juxtaposition

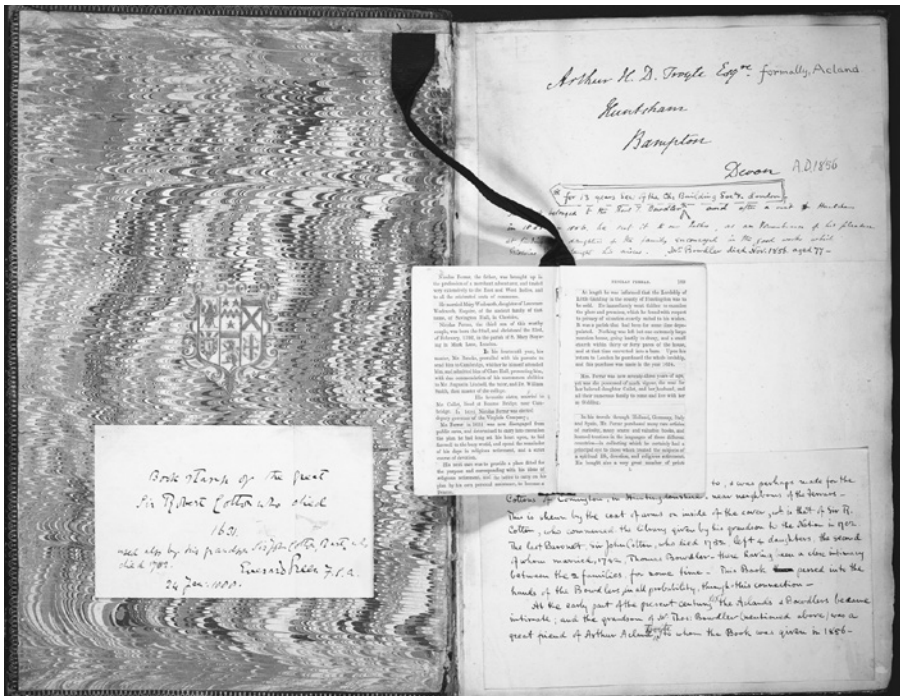


FIGURE 10. A nineteenth-century cut-and-paste pamphlet, recounting the life of Nicholas Ferrar, attached to the front board of a Gospel harmony (CA 1735, Cotsen Children's Library of Princeton University), produced by the Little Gidding household (ca. 1635). Reproduced with the permission of the Cotsen Children's Library, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

also reveals clefts in the long history of reading. As the case studies in this project show, early modern readers often treated their books as containers to hold and store the fragmented remnants of an intensive reading process. We see this not only in the harmonies but also in Susanna Collet's commonplace book, and the practice of commonplacing more generally; in the sammelbands and extra-illustrated books we will encounter in the next chapter; and in John Bagford's historically ordered scraps of medieval manuscripts. In all of these examples, the codex serves to absorb and hold the pieces of textual culture

that stick to English readers. Later, as predominant metaphors of reading as a kind of “gathering” or “plucking” give way to metaphors of consumption, and likewise as books begin to be sold bound in edition bindings, the burden of bringing together and naming relationships between texts is lifted off the codex form and given over to third-party metadata storage systems, like catalogues. Readers and their institutions begin treating the book as a discrete unit whose dimensions are coterminous, more or less, with a single text. The black ribbon tying the nineteenth-century pamphlet to its host harmony might be read as a literal manifestation of this shift from organizing scraps of texts *within* a book to organizing them through associational links *between* books.

Yet, even as these two moments of mediated reading gesture toward tectonic shifts in the deep history of textual consumption, they also, like many “used books,” resist easy absorption into a grand narrative of change. The composer of the nineteenth-century pamphlet is responsively diffracting the compositional methods of a seventeenth-century religious household, and doing so, it seems, with the full awareness of that act’s irony and implications. If the booklet is to be read as participating in, or in some way gesturing toward, a more modern and extensive reading or publishing practice, then that practice remains inevitably bound to the earlier cut-up method developed at Little Gidding, a method that itself looked to an even earlier moment of monastic literary production. Thus the past sticks to this booklet, just as the booklet is stuck almost literally in the past: each provides the literal context, or better, the marginal beside-text that frames any future readers’ encounters with the other.

The Acland-Troytes were not the only family inspired by the cut-and-paste method of the harmonies. In the wake of nineteenth-century scholarship, a young woman in America grew curious about Little Gidding around the turn of the century. Her name was Fanny Reed Hammond, and she lived in Holyoke, Massachusetts, with her husband William Churchill Hammond and their two sons. The Hammonds were, like the Acland-Troytes, a profoundly musical and religious family. William was a renowned organist, professor of music at Mount Holyoke College, and founder of the American Guild of Organists; Fanny was a pianist and composer. They had first met when William, at the age of twenty-five, was hired as the organist and choir director for Holyoke’s Second Congregational Church, where Fanny’s father, Dr. Edward

Allen Reed, was minister, and together they were deeply embedded in Western Massachusetts's rich scene of musicians, writers, scholars, and collectors. For instance, Fanny Reed Hammond served as an expert on local philanthropist and businesswoman Belle Skinner's impressive collection of historical instruments, held in a music hall that Skinner had built off the family estate of Wisteriahurst in Holyoke.¹²⁵ Hammond gave tours to visitors and eventually helped the curator, Nils Ericsson, produce a catalogue of the instruments, published in 1933. The title page states that the catalogue was "compiled under the direction of" Skinner's brother William, language that copies how the harmonies are described as being made "under the direction of Nicholas Ferrar," but the forward makes clear that "these notes have been compiled by Fanny Reed Hammond and by the curator, Nils J. Ericsson."¹²⁶ She also wrote piano accompaniments to carols and other tunes that were distributed by C. W. Thompson, a publisher of popular sheet music in the 1910s and 20s, although she is not listed as the composer, as was common at the time.¹²⁷ Thus, like Harriet Bowdler, the anonymous Acland Troyte daughter, or indeed so many women before her, Hammond spent her time in creative pursuits for which she was scarcely credited and was even occluded by the men around her.

It was perhaps this affiliation with the obfuscated creative labors of the women of Little Gidding—along with her apparent religious sensibility—that stoked Hammond's interest in the household. She began gathering pieces about Little Gidding and writing to their authors. She sent inquiries to a bookseller in Oxford requesting any materials on the household. She typed out passages from a wide range of sources on the Ferrars, from Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* to a 1910 *Encyclopedia Britannica*, and penned letters to descendants of the Ferrars and Collets. At least two families entered a longer correspondence with her: the Ketchums in Port Hope, Ontario, who had recently had a baby boy whom they named Nicholas, after his illustrious ancestor, and John D. Collet, a banker in Indianapolis who had done extensive research on his family. The latter sent her several photographs of the portraits and graves at Little Gidding with descriptions typed on the back, now kept in a small red leather booklet. She paid dues to become a "friend of Little Gidding" and clipped local newspaper articles on the celebrations and pilgrimages to the church on the tercentenary of Nicholas Ferrar's death in 1937. And she

saved ephemera related to the household's bookwork, like notices of volumes for sale that were thought to be made at Little Gidding. These include an advertisement for the earliest Little Gidding harmony discovered by Hall in 1934 and put up for sale by the book dealer William H. Robinson after Hall's death. Two newspaper notices about the book's American debut at the 1939 World's Fair show her tracking this harmony's progress across the Atlantic, and it is possible she might have traveled to see it in person in New York. All of these loose fragments and notes are cut, pasted, and occasionally typed onto blank sheets in three binders that together form the Fanny Reed Hammond scrapbooks, now at the Beinecke Library.¹²⁸

Hammond compiled these materials with the idea of writing something herself on Little Gidding. However, her efforts seem to have been met with little encouragement. In response to a draft essay she sent him, her brother Edward Reed, an English professor at Yale, wrote that "it is a good, straight-forward statement—but not a magazine article." He continued:

Read an article in the Yale Review or the Atlantic, and see the difference. Your article is merely factual—you have no literary flavour to it, no implications in it, little to provoke thought or comment. Magazines do not publish straight biography, and that is what your piece is. Never think you can get your first article accepted in a magazine; there is a certain knack of expression which comes only with long practice. Again, Ferrer is not a subject that will appear; specialists like him, but magazines are not edited for specialists.¹²⁹

Undeterred, Hammond seems to have edited her article into a short review of Bernard Blackstone's *The Ferrar Papers*. It was published in the November 6, 1938, edition of *The New York Times Book Review* under the misleading title "Portrait of an Elizabethan Family."¹³⁰ Its publication marks one outcome of a long correspondence between Hammond and Blackstone, then an excitable recent DLitt still in his twenties. Blackstone kept her apprised of news regarding his book's publication, requested she send American stamps for his collection, and even, in one of his exclamation-mark-strewn letters, asked her to help him find a lecturing post at an American university. "I *do* think I have been getting rather stale here," he wrote, "and a breath of the New World would blow away a lot of cobwebs!"¹³¹ He also put Hammond in touch with Alan Maycock, Nicholas Ferrar's biographer, who gratefully mined her for information to use

in his own research. In a later correspondence with Elsie Binns, Hammond suggested she wanted instead to write a children's book on the Ferrar family, an idea which Binns supported.¹³² Nothing came of the proposal, though, and Hammond's greatest contribution to Little Gidding scholarship remains her scrapbooks. A snapshot of the Anglophone mediascape in the 1930s and 40s, this assembled archive of clippings, photographic reproductions, typewritten notes, and correspondence captures both Little Gidding's resonance in popular culture around the time of World War II and a transatlantic network of researchers interested in the family and its seventeenth-century experiment.

Like the harmonies or Bagford's visual essays (discussed in chapter 3 of the present volume), Hammond's scrapbooks tell us more about Little Gidding in their assembled state than her more staid review essay. Reading them as their own cut-and-paste publication, following the juxtapositions and collisions of fragments, reveals another trace of the household's afterlife, as the community's creative devotion continued to resonate with readers. This is visible, for instance, in the exchange that accumulates around a clipping of Virginia Huntington's article "Nicholas Ferrar and Little Gidding," published in October 1942 in *The Living Church*. Inspired by the article, Hammond wrote Huntington, who responded by sending Hammond some letters she had received from a Reverend Joseph Harvey in Roswell, New Mexico. Harvey's letters contained some new genealogical information on the Ferrars that Huntington thought would interest Hammond, along with a note recommending Sharland's edition of the Story Books of the Little Academy. Harvey offered to let Huntington borrow Sharland's book, and she must have asked to, for his next letter included with the correspondence discourses on the importance of returning texts to their owners. It is packaged with this charming anecdote, written in messy typescript, on the value that concentrates in one's own library through material acts of reading:

I let a professor, at Auburn, Ala., have my copy of Dibble's "Grammar of Belief",—with all of the foot-note references to other books, diagrams pasted in on blank pages, &c.—days of work, preparing same for high school age students— and after eight years it still remains "lost"; letters to tract it,—no answer. The book cost \$1; I got another for 50¢, but my notes!!! So, in all books I pasted "Kind friend to whom this book is lent", &c. (The book spoken of must have been a good Episcopal book; it has "kept lent" so long!)¹³³

Ironically, Harvey's letters are pasted into Hammond's scrapbooks now because she never returned them to Huntington, as originally requested. A later letter indicates Hammond wrote to Huntington asking permission to keep them, despite the fact that Huntington was quite explicit about having them returned and even included a self-addressed envelope with her first letter.

In a postscript to the same letter quoted above, Harvey describes a little church "nestled in the hills (up 5,700 ft. above sea level) 60 miles west of Roswell" that looks much like the chapel at Little Gidding. The font is, he reports, made of an old metate stone "formerly used by natives in which to grind corn for bread" and now "used to hold the water used in Baptism." Thus drawing a web between Huntington's article, her letters to Hammond, and Harvey's letters to Huntington, Hammond's active reading and dedicated correspondence both highlights new genealogical information and links a seventeenth-century chapel in the countryside of England to another built by colonizing white settlers of indigenous Puebloan materials. As Harvey writes in his letter, "my proudest boast is that I am a member of the Church which God hath planted in this our land; and that I am an American." Emerging from this social network, then, is a new way of conceiving the family's long involvement in colonial projects that enabled the genocide of indigenous Americans and the repurposing of their material culture, from Nicholas Ferrar's active role in the Virginia Company, to young Virginia Ferrar's scheme to cultivate silkworms in Virginia, to this chapel in New Mexico—a topic demanding much more attention than it has received in the scholarship.¹³⁴ By bringing together bits of information that otherwise would be scattered throughout personal archives or entirely lost as waste, Hammond's scrapbook offers a picture of Little Gidding's afterlife in the twentieth century, one more capacious than the typical narrative of Nicholas Ferrar's canonization or T. S. Eliot's more famous pilgrimage and poem.

In addition to leading Hammond to Harvey, Huntington's article also piqued the interest of Binns, who wrote a letter to the editor that was published in a later issue of *The Living Church*. Hammond clipped the letter for her scrapbook and wrote Binns, and as we have already seen, they ended up corresponding on and off about Little Gidding. In her letters, Binns continually underscores the labors of the household's women and thereby draws out an alternative history of the Ferrar family as governed not by Nicholas Ferrar,

but by strong, religious nieces, mothers, and daughters. As she wrote in one letter, encouraging Hammond to go ahead with a plan for a children's book on Little Gidding:

All these little girls + their story. Telling "bees", the dove-cote turned into a school house. Virginia + her silk-worms,—I think you could make a fascinating book,—do go ahead with it!

I have not read Dr. Maycock's book but I will try to get it. There is a book called "The Devout Lady" by Mary J. H. Skrine which has a chapter called "The Church in Mary Ferrar's House". Perhaps you know it—I often lend it to friends to whom I want to introduce Mary Ferrar! I think my mother, a later "Mary Ferrar" must have resembled the lady of Little Gidding.¹³⁵

Brushing aside Maycock's now standard scholarly biography of Ferrar, Binns recommended instead a more popular (and now effectively forgotten) book on religious women, authored by a woman, before connecting Mary Ferrar to the women in her own family. This accords with the more general inclusion of popular articles authored by women in Hammond's scrapbook, all of which are now largely uncited and often impossible to find even in seemingly comprehensive digital databases. In another letter, Binns shares with Hammond that she gave her two adopted daughters "Ferrar" as a middle name, "as something to be proud of." Thus, like the bowdlerized hagiography of Ferrar, the messy collisions of casual correspondence and semiephemeral publications in Hammond's scrapbook stage an alternative history of Little Gidding as a place of women's labor, emphasizing aspects of the household's life and bookwork glossed over in the published scholarship; and they do so not in direct opposition to this scholarship, but by using it as the raw materials from which to remake the present's connection with the past.

The marginal pamphlet and Hammond's scrapbooks point in two different directions in the history of reading: the one chiseling a singular pathway through a text to extract an alternative interpretation, the other gathering and assembling multiple texts into new constellations of meaning. Both responsively diffract the cut-and-paste method of Little Gidding, and thus bear witness to the legacy of Little Gidding's "new kind of printing" across a long history of bookwork. Attending to the life and afterlife of this protofeminist technology of reproduction, a new history of women's reading, writing, and making comes into relief.