

# “Thanksgiving after Twice Miscarrying’: Divine Will, Women, and Miscarriage in Early Modern England”

Sara Read

University of Loughborough

The centrality of religion in the lives of early modern people cannot be overstated. From the mid-sixteenth-century Protestantism was the authorised State religion in England. Religious observance and the constant self-reflection and self-examination required of the new Protestant faith caused many to scrutinise all life events for signs of God’s favour or otherwise towards them. As Alec Ryrie put it, drawing on Owen Watkins, ‘at the heart of the Protestant experience was this “sense of contact with something other”. They spoke of engaging with – or wrestling with, in one of their favourite metaphors – a presence quite distinct from themselves’.<sup>1</sup> The term used to describe this sense of God as all around them, overseeing all aspects of their daily life was ‘Providence’.<sup>2</sup> As Alexandra Walsham has explained, ‘Providentialism was not a marginal feature of the religious culture of early modern England, but part of the mainstream, a cluster of presuppositions which enjoyed near universal acceptance’.<sup>3</sup> But even for people who were less ardent in their personal practice, the Bible was the main cultural referent document and allusions and biblical metaphors populated everyday discourse at all levels. Nowhere does this become more apparent than in the ways that women interpreted their reproductive bodies. While it might seem self-evident in this context that women should have sought to rationalise their life experiences through their faith using these self-reflexive practices, in fact what women’s writing on miscarriages shows repeatedly is the way in which women used their faith to help them manage their grief, as we might expect, but also to learn from the experience and to develop spiritually. The way in which childbirth was subject to religious beliefs is well documented by scholars but the place of the miscarriage in this is less well studied.<sup>4</sup> This article will explore some of the ways that women used miscarriages to aid their spiritual growth. It will also show some of the ways in which miscarriage was used as a metaphor for broader spiritual concerns, often because of the way that the multiple meanings of the term miscarriage could be applied to faith or spirituality. Further the article will briefly discuss the ways

that medics tried to treat suspected miscarriages and the ways that this discourse too was founded upon a Christian framework.

This idea of the reproductive female body displaying religious meanings is the reason that even studious medical treatises such as a mid-seventeenth-century translation of Jan Baptiste van Helmont's treatise, which appeared in English as *Van Helmont's Works Containing his Most Excellent Philosophy* (1664), would use religious doctrine to explain physiological symptoms such as labour pains. This text explained that the reasons that women had to suffer pain and danger in childbirth was that:

*Eve did by the Member through which she became subject unto many Miseries, testifie among posterity, a successive fault of her fall, and bloody defilement in Nature: For the part wherein the Image of God ought to be conceived by the holy Spirit, became a sink of filths, and testifies the abuse, and fault of an unobliterable sin, and therefore also suffers: Because, In sorrow shalt thou bring forth thy Sons ...: For so that Curse hath entred into Nature, and shall there remain. And by the same Law also, a necessity of Menstrues: For before sin, the Young going forth the Womb being shut, had not caused pain.*<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, because of the temptation of Eve to sin, all women were cursed with labour pains and menstruation. This was, however, thought by some to be a gift for women. Patricia Crawford cites preacher Richard Sibbes who argued that this frequent suffering forced women into 'a deeper communion with God' than they would otherwise have achieved.<sup>6</sup> A genre of prayers existed for the use of pregnant women to aid the spiritual growth which pregnancy afforded them, as well as to appeal to God for a positive outcome.<sup>7</sup>

Women were thus taught to expect a degree of suffering in reproduction, from the healthiest delivery to a failed pregnancy. In early modernity, of course, as now, not every conception became a full term pregnancy and miscarriages were a common event. Even nowadays with improved antenatal care the risk of miscarriage amongst women who know they are pregnant is one in seven.<sup>8</sup> Because of the prevalence of miscarriage, Christian instructional books such as prolific devotional author John Kettlewood's book which included specific childbirth prayers also contained,

'A Prayer for a breeding Woman, and against Miscarriage, to be used at any time before Travel [Labour]'. The prayer covers the pregnancy from conception to delivery and asked:

O! Almighty Lord, who in thy Mercy hast given me an hopeful Conception, carry it on I humbly intreat thee, to an happy Deliverance in thy due time.

Oh! let not my Child fare the worse for mine Offences, nor deal with it according to my Deserts, but according to thy own tender Mercies. Give it its due shapes, and full growth: and preserve me from all Frights, or evil Accidents which may cause me to miscarry, and in great Love and Pity both to it and me, bring it into the World at its full Maturity.<sup>9</sup>

Frights and accidents were thought to be the most common cause of miscarriages at this time.<sup>10</sup> The prayer went on to ask for an easy delivery in due course, should that be God's will. Kettlewood's prayer specifically asks God not to punish the foetus for the mother's sins. The sentiment is taken from Psalm 28.4, which states 'Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert', which was commonly used to rationalise life events such as recurrent illnesses as a punishment from God. Miscarriage in particular could be seen as a just punishment for a sinful woman. Indeed, in the Old Testament book of Hosea 9.14, the prophet calls upon God to give the people of Ephraim 'a miscarrying womb and dry breasts' in order that the sins of the parents are not passed on to the next generation.

So while the above prayer was designed to cover pregnancies generally, even more specifically, one Christian conduct book opined, 'Oh, how many doth *Sin strangle* in the Womb! Oh, how many *Abortives* and *Miscarriages* doth *Sin* make!'<sup>11</sup> It is against this background that Lady Mary Carey used her faith to rationalise a miscarriage she experienced. Lady Mary's last and most famous poem, 'Upon the Sight of my abortive Birth the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 1657', was an occasion piece written to work through her feelings after suffering a miscarriage. At this time, the terms miscarriage and abortion were used interchangeably with abortion or aborsement being used for a spontaneous abortion or miscarriage in medical texts especially, with the term being used at any

stage of an unsuccessful pregnancy. As Thomas Raynalde's 1545 guide to reproduction *The Birth of Mankind* explained:

Aborsement, or untimely birth, is when the woman is delivered before due season, and before the fruit is ripe (as in the third, fourth, or fifth month), before the birth have life; and sometimes, after it hath life, it is delivered before it stir, being by some chance dead in the mother's womb.<sup>12</sup>

Lady Mary used both terms herself: she referred to the birth as abortive and later asked God to ensure that her 'heart' unlike her womb, a comment she added parenthetically, does not miscarry.<sup>13</sup>

The poem was written eleven days after the miscarriage and the specificity of the title is telling: these events were not taken lightly. In her poem Carey questioned what had happened: 'What Birth is this? a poore despisèd Creature? / A little Embrio? void of Life, & Feature?' (1 – 2). The use of the term embryo does not on its own make an implication about the gestation of the pregnancy since it was the name for a child in the womb before birth (not just in the time before the third month of pregnancy, as is the modern sense). However, in this case, the embryo aborted before it was fully formed (it was void of features – the 'due shapes' referred to in Kettlewood's verse). Carey discussed how she was happy to submit to God's will in ending this pregnancy, and indeed took comfort in the idea that God had gathered her baby to be with him. She did, however, seek answers as to what she had done wrong to attract the punishment:

I only now desire of my sweet God,  
The Reason why he tooke in hand his Rod?  
What he doth spy? what is ye thing amisse?  
I faine would learne? (lines 34 – 37)

There are conventions in this type of poetry and Pamela Hammons discussing women's elegies for their dead children has argued that there are broadly speaking three themes: '(1) the need for the parents to resign themselves to God's will; (2) the child as lost property; and (3)

parental sin as the ultimate cause of the child's death'.<sup>14</sup> Following this taxonomy it is clear that Carey felt that she did not resign herself to God's will as much as glory in it saying 'His Will's more deare to me; then any Child' (15). Alec Ryrie has explained that this sort of sentiment is to be expected in that it was not enough to show repentance but instead one was expected to yearn for it.<sup>15</sup> However, that said it is clear that Carey viewed her living children as God's property, saying that the happy two she has were there because 'God yet lends [them] to Maria' (29), and similarly she certainly saw her sin as the cause of the miscarriage. In the poem she had God's voice admonish her that:

Thou often dost present me wth dead Fruit;  
Why should not my Returns, thy Present sute:  
Dead Duties, Prayers, Praises thou dost bring,  
Affections dead, dead Heart in every thing;  
In Hearing, Reading, Conference, Meditation;  
In acting Graces, & in Conversation; (lines 40 – 45)

Put simply, Carey considered that her spiritual-self produced dead fruit or insincere worship was justly rewarded with her own dead fruit or miscarriage. Theologian Antony Burgess made a similar argument for the ways that people might fail being righteous in the ways that Carey feared her prayers to have been inadequate too. Burgess's ideas map onto medical causes of failed births. He suggested that miscarriage could happen '*Through Defect, when there is want of due matter; and thus in Grace men grow monstrous through defect*'.<sup>16</sup> In medical terms this was thought to happen when the womb lacked the seed and the blood to support the life of an embryo, but in Christian terms this was when a man was outwardly performing his religion (praying, attending church) but doing so without absorbing this inwardly, or worse when '*there are some inward Affections and Workings of God upon the heart, but they come to no Perfection*', and both of these are spiritual failings of which Carey was quite sure she was being accused. The third type of spiritual miscarriage for Burgess was 'Want of Perseverance' which is when people stopped trying and reverted to ungodly ways making them monstrous in the sight of God.<sup>17</sup> In medical terms

this could relate the idea that a woman did not take sufficient measures to protect herself and her pregnancy. The list of personal management actions required in pregnancy in medical treatises was extensive, but was based around avoiding upset, eating and drinking in moderation, and taking moderate exercise. In religious terms, however, as Rachel Adcock has argued, 'Carey's miscarriage was understood by her as a necessary chastisement [from] God in a framework where such affliction was considered necessary to make herself spiritually healthy'.<sup>18</sup> The lesson she hoped to take from her experience would be beneficial to her religious and spiritual development. The pain of miscarriage and grief is all too evident in Carey's poem, but spiritually there was a sense that pain was good, theologically 'pain is better than numbness, and broken-heartedness better than stony-heartedness'; pain could show that God was fulfilling His promise as told to Ezekiel (11.9) that he would give his people hearts of flesh instead of hearts of stone'.<sup>19</sup> Or in other words that God cared enough to send these trials to you.

Carey's poem on miscarriage then can be seen to fit within certain of the conventions as identified by Pamela Hammons, but it is important to remember that Carey's verse on her miscarriage was not designed for publication but was for her own spiritual growth in dialogue with both God and her husband who also wrote poems on the deaths of their children. This suggests that, written as it was, within days of the event, it was intended to allow her to work through the complicated feelings a miscarriage could arouse made even more complex for a Calvinist by the association that its author had fallen from God's favour by some unknown action. As Carey said repeatedly, she accepted and indeed rejoiced in God's will but 'does only now desire of my sweet God, / The Reason why he tooke in hand his Rod?' (34 – 35). In other words she was desperate to know for what specifically she had been punished. It was especially important for Carey as there was no obvious external explanation for the miscarriage. In this culture dancing, a trip, or even an argument could explain a miscarriage but here any such material event was missing. If a fall or event could be pinpointed as having started the miscarriage this could then be analysed as to the circumstances of it and what lessons God wished the couple to infer from it, but it also provided a rational explanation. Calvinists and other Protestants continuously examined their lives for signs for evidence of God's will, such as by anagramising their names, for example, and a miscarriage was

a material event which was productive to reflect upon in this context. Where there was no discernible physical event to precipitate the miscarriage, then women were likely to look inwards for the answer.

Poetry was not the only form for this reflection could take and some women wrote short meditations on their miscarriages. Eighteen years after her 1656 marriage, Elizabeth, Viscountess of Mordaunt used what was probably a series of miscarriages, but could refer to the loss of twins, to reflect on God's lesson to her. Entitled, 'A thanksgeving after twic miscaring, and a fever. March ye 18: 1674', the meditation is as specifically dated as Carey's poem.<sup>20</sup> However, unlike Carey, Mordaunt used her miscarriage as the occasion of her piece but did not refer to it directly in the text. Instead, she described her period of illness and how, 'It is of the Lords mercy that I was not consumed, but preserved thoro all thes illes, and wekenes'. While she did not list her sins in the prayer, it is clear that here Mordaunt was practising what was known as 'aggravation'. That is a process of confronting your sins 'in their full horror', because as Rylie explained, 'it was far safer to exaggerate them than to understate them – even if it strained the truth'.<sup>21</sup> It is likely that her daily transgressions were not so extreme, but by presenting them in prayer in the worse possible light, she could show her God that she took them seriously. Mordaunt did view the miscarriage as reasonable a punishment 'for my oft repeted transgretions'. The key thing for Mordaunt, like Carey, was to keep the faith and to strive to be a better Christian. Mordaunt alluded to the book of Revelations (8.1) in her rationalisation of this event as a learning opportunity, when she wrote 'remember mine affliction and my miseries, the wormwood and the gall'. Here the allusion was to how easy it was for the ungodly to become embittered by the trials of life, whereas Mordaunt thanked God for giving her hope. She told the story of the men who died of drinking wormwood infused waters because they were made bitter by their sufferings whereas she inferred that by caring enough to send her these afflictions it meant she has cause to hope 'thus I recall to mind the afflickions, and the mercies, I have resev'd from thy Almighty hand, and therefor have I hope; O Lord thou hast pleased the causes of my Soul, thou hast redeemed my Life'. What was taken from the experience, then, was not a sense that God had reclaimed his own property, but precisely like with Carey's poem, that instead He had inflicted suffering as an opportunity for Mordaunt to

develop spiritually: that is to say that the suffering was proof that she was one of God's chosen people.

Even in the more secular medium of letter writing, the convention that God was the common factor in deliverance from a miscarriage is normally seen. For example, writing to her husband's cousin from The Hague, Anna, Lady Meautys told Jane, Lady Cornwallis Bacon that she had recently miscarried:

I was gone with child three months, at the end of which time I did miscarry and was in that extremity that those that were about me did not think I should have escaped, and for one particular I had no hope for this life. I found myself so weak a creature, but God, Who is all powerful has vouchsafed to raise me up again, and I hope to His honour, and the good of my poor children.<sup>22</sup>

Here it was not the lost child who had been redeemed but the existing children who had their mother back. Perhaps the implication here is similar to Carey's when she considered whether the miscarriage would serve to remind her of the blessings she already had in Berthia (b. 1653/4) and Nathaniel (b. 1654/5).

While Lady Meautys' letter might sound melodramatic, miscarriages could take a heavy toll on a woman's health, which was acknowledged by medical practitioners too. Stratford-upon-Avon physician John Hall recorded treating twenty-eight year old Joyce Boughton in 1621 when she miscarried at around twenty weeks. Boughton was suffering from a heavy bleeding 'after-fluxes', a fever, vomiting and fainting and was 'in danger of death'. Hall treated her primarily with burnt hartshorn to sweat out the fever, along with flavoured sugar water. Hall tended to be conservative in his treatments and erred on the side of caution. In his case notes he gave the medicines the credit for saving Boughton, but thanked God for her recovery: 'by these Medicines alone she was cured beyond all expectation, praise be God'.<sup>23</sup> Miscarriage was thought more dangerous for women than a normal birth and often more painful too: Medical author Nicholas Fonteyn commented 'This is far more dangerous, then a lawfull and naturall birth, in regard of the perturbations and violence which is offered to nature'.<sup>24</sup> This sentiment appears in François



Mauriceau's influential midwifery guide too where he wrote that 'The Woman that miscarries hath more pain than a Woman at her full time'.<sup>25</sup> In his instructional text on piety, Richard Allestree described how the pain of a miscarriage could be on a par with a labour, and how women who had had a miscarriage were the more likely, because of the effects of it on her body, to suffer from further miscarriages:

As in an Abortion the unhappy Mother, besides the frustration of her hopes, and child-birth pains sustain'd, acquires an aptitude to miscarry for the future, and never to be able to bring forth a vital birth: And thus God knows multitudes of *Embryon* purposes perish, and the misery of it is, they are our best that do so.<sup>26</sup>

This sentiment chimes with Mary Carey's assertion that now God had called her miscarried embryo to Him, she could rejoice that 'God hath gained one more / To praise him in the Heav'ns, then was before' (32 – 33). Her lost child would have been spiritually pure and therefore was called to God's presence.

Brilliana, Lady Harley wrote a letter to her son in 1639 about a debilitating miscarriage she had recently experienced which described the effects on her health. Harley wrote:

for the Lord hath been pleased to show His strength in my weakness, to enable me to undergo such a fit of weakness which hath made stronger bodies that mine to stoop. This day seven night it pleased God I did miscarry, which I did desire to have prevented; but the Lord which brought His own work to pass, and I desired to submit to it ... I thank God I am pretty well, and I hope that as the Lord hath strengthened me to bear my weaknesses in my bed, so I trust He will enable me to rise out of my bed.<sup>27</sup>

By suggesting that she was strong enough to endure this trial, Harley was invoking II Corinthians (12.9) 'for when I am weak I am strong': the more bodily suffering Harley endured the more spiritually developed she would become. In fact, despite the fact that this was another reasonably early miscarriage, like Lady Meautys's and indeed Mary Carey's, Harley was only barely able to sit up out of bed for a short time a couple of weeks later; indeed Harley reflected that she had become so weak that this experience compared to the laying in period following a full-term pregnancy.

Harley referred to God directly five times in this short extract alone. As a devout Puritan Protestant her faith and trust in divine will were unwavering.

Significantly though, despite her utter certainty in God's will, Lady Harley accepted medical intervention in her desire to prevent the miscarriage. Medicine and religion could work hand in glove, and Harley told her son how 'Your father out of his tender care over me sent for Doctor Diodati, who gave me some directions, and is now gone'.<sup>28</sup> As Alec Ryrie has explained, 'Every respectable Protestant accepted that the sick should make use of physicians. Medicine was God's provision for the sick just as food was for the healthy'.<sup>29</sup> Cures to try and prevent miscarriages ranged from the more invasive treatments such as bloodletting of medical practitioners to the so-called kitchen physic of manuscript recipe books such as Lady Ayscough's, which lists an 'excellent plaister to prevent miscarriage'.<sup>30</sup> This is similar to the one seen in *The Country-mans Physician*, which advised that

As soon as [a woman] perceives the least suspicion of miscarrying, apply to her navil a hot loaf new out of the oven cut in the middle, dipt in Malaga wine, sprinked with powder of Cloves and Nutmegs, and bind it close on.<sup>31</sup>

Elizabeth Okeover advised an even gentler method: 'drinke a good drought of faire water & lie downe in a bed warme' followed after half an hour by some medicine made from silk threads, roses and eggs.<sup>32</sup> Lying still in bed was the method employed by Jane Hooke in 1631 when she had pains, following the shock she felt at an attempted burglary, which made her worry she might be about to miscarry: 'I was fane to keepe my bed two dayes together and had those pains upon me as made me afraid I should be delivered incontenently'.<sup>33</sup> The more conventional medical practices of midwives such as Jane Sharp advised using things to 'contract and fasten' to help to close the body and prevent it from losing the baby.<sup>34</sup> John Hall treated Elizabeth Sheldon for repeated miscarriages at about two months pregnant. Sheldon was overweight, which was a known cause of miscarriage, cited in texts going back to Hippocratic times.<sup>35</sup> Sharp listed the most common causes of miscarriage as happening in women whose womb is 'too weak, corrupted by phlegmatick, slippery, slimy, or watry humours, so that it cannot retain the child', adding that 'fat women have

slippery wombs'.<sup>36</sup> However, Hall's prescription of both a purge and medicine to strengthen her womb, and a plaister smeared on a piece of leather and applied to her 'Loins, *Os Sacrum*, and the bottom of the Belly' was successful. Hall claimed she used this treatment all the time and had 'a lusty, hearty Son, and after than more'.<sup>37</sup>

All the personal examples of miscarriage discussed here automatically involved a consideration of the writer's relationship with God. God was assumed to micro-manage people's daily lives, and regularly 'stepped in to discipline sinners and bestow blessings on the righteous and good'.<sup>38</sup> So he could save a pregnancy after the unfortunate event or not as he deemed appropriate, and rationalising a miscarriage in these terms was the way early modern women came to terms with and sought comfort from what had happened to them. As has been shown, this is not to say that physical steps and preventative measures to stop a miscarriage were against God's will. In fact it was thought incumbent upon women to behave carefully in pregnancy and to take whatever steps she could to achieve a successful birth, it was just that these medicines and other interventions too were subject to divine will.

For early modern women, life on earth was often seen as a trial to endure in order to proceed to heaven. This thinking is evidenced when in 1629 Lady Elizabeth Masham wrote that all earthly upsets were essentially a 'means of the curing the great distemper of our souls, and may make us long for that home where all sorrows have an end and we shall triumph in joy and glory forever more'.<sup>39</sup> In this paradigm an early death could be viewed as a blessing. This is seen in William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* when Feste asks Olivia why she is mourning her brother and if that means she thinks his soul is in hell. When she responds of course not, he replies: 'the more fool, Madonna, to mourn for your brother's soul being in heaven', and of course in the comedies it is often the clown who is given the truths to speak.<sup>40</sup> This speech is almost identically replicated in an entry in Alice Thornton's autobiography when her four year old daughter Naly asked her "my deare mother, why doe you morne and weepe soe much for my brother Willy? Doe you not think is he gon to heaven?" I said "yess, deare heart, I believe he is gon to heaven, but your father is soe afflicted for his losse, and being a son he takes it more heavily, because I have not a sone to live".<sup>41</sup> By this answer, Thornton could account for her grief in terms of the disappointment her husband felt in the loss of his only heir without diluting her faith. The logic that being in heaven was

a blessing is the reason why Mary Carey could seek comfort in the fact that her baby was now 'forever blest' (19), and why Elizabeth Mordaunt could end her meditation on this sad topic by resolving: 'O let me lift up my hart with my hands, unto my God, in the heavens, to prase and to glorephy him'.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation England* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013), 14.

<sup>2</sup> Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999), 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Patricia Crawford, *Women and Religion, 1500-1720* (London, Routledge, 1993) and *Blood, Bodies and Families in Early Modern England* (London, Routledge, 2004); David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997); Erica Longfellow, *Women and Religious Writing in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004); Mary E. Fissell, 'The politics of reproduction in the English Reformation', *Representations*, 87 (2004), 43-81; William P. Stoneman, "'These griping greefes and pinching pangs": Attitudes to childbirth in Thomas Bentley's *The Monument of Matrones* (1582)', *Sixteenth-Century Journal*, 21/2 (1990), 193-203.

<sup>5</sup> Jan Baptiste van Helmont, *Van Helmont's Works Containing his Most Excellent Philosophy, Physick, Chirurgery, Anatomy*, trans by John Chandler (London, Lodowick Lloyd, 1664), 743.

<sup>6</sup> Crawford, *Women and Religion, 1500-1720*, 73.

<sup>7</sup> Delores LaPratt, 'Childbirth Prayers in Medieval and Early Modern England: "For drede of perle that may be-falle."', *Symposia*, 2 (2010), [<http://symposia.library.utoronto.ca> last accessed May 2015].

<sup>8</sup> The actual figure will be higher as many miscarriages occur before a woman is aware of her pregnancy, [<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/miscarriage/Pages/Introduction.aspx> last accessed 15.02.15].

- 
- <sup>9</sup> John Kettlewood, *Death Made Comfortable; or the Way to Dye Well Consisting of Directions for an Holy and an Happy Death* (London, Robert Kettlewood, 1695), 222.
- <sup>10</sup> See Jennifer Evans and Sara Read, “‘Before Midnight she had Miscarried’: Men, Women and Miscarriage in Early Modern England”, *Journal of Family History*, 40/1 (2015), 3-23.
- <sup>11</sup> Richard Mayhew, *Charisma Patrikon, a Paternal gift; or the Legacie of a Dying Father* (London, John Hancock, 1676), 118.
- <sup>12</sup> Thomas Raynalde, *The Birth of Mankind; otherwise Named the Woman’s Book*, Elaine Hobby ed. (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2009), 134.
- <sup>13</sup> Cited in *Flesh and Spirit: an Anthology of Seventeenth-Century Women’s Writing*, eds Rachel Adcock, Sara Read and Anna Ziomek (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2014), 54-7 (line 74). Subsequent references are to this edition of the poem and line numbers will be given following a quotation.
- <sup>14</sup> Pamela Hammons, ‘Despised Creatures: The Illusion of Maternal Self-Effacement in Seventeenth-Century Child Loss Poetry’, *ELH*, 66 (1999), 25–49, at 27.
- <sup>15</sup> Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 63.
- <sup>16</sup> Antony Burgess, *Spiritual Refining: Or A Treatise of Grace and Assurance* (London, 1652), 235.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>18</sup> Rachel Adcock, “‘In Order to Spiritual Good the Body Often Afflicted’: Bodily Affliction in Lady Mary Carey’s Conversion Narrative (1649-57)”, *The Glass*, 25 (2013), 18-30, at 26.
- <sup>19</sup> Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 26 and 20.
- <sup>20</sup> Elizabeth, Viscountess Mordaunt, *The Private Diaries of Elizabeth the Viscountess Mordaunt*, ed. by the Earl of Roden (Duncairn: [n. pub], 1856), 153-4. Subsequent references are to this edition.
- <sup>21</sup> Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 53.
- <sup>22</sup> Joanna Moody, ed., *The Private Correspondence of Jane Lady Cornwallis Bacon 1613-1644* (London and Cranbury NJ, Associated University Presses, 2003), 264.
- <sup>23</sup> Joan Lane, *John Hall and his Patients: The Medical Practice of Shakespeare’s Son-in-Law* (Stratford, The Birthplace Trust, 2001), 44.
- <sup>24</sup> Nicholas Fonteyn, *The Womans Doctor* (London, 1652), 196.

- 
- <sup>25</sup> François Mauriceau, *The Diseases of Women with Child* (London, 1672), 196.
- <sup>26</sup> Richard Allestree, *The Causes of the Decay of Christian Piety* (London, 1667), 267-6.
- <sup>27</sup> Cited in *Flesh and Spirit: an Anthology of Seventeenth-Century Women's Writing*, 139-40.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>29</sup> Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 127.
- <sup>30</sup> Wellcome Library (hereafter WL), MS 1026/123, Lady Ayscough 'Recipe Book' (1692), 246.
- <sup>31</sup> Anonymous, *The County-mans physician* (London, 1680), 55.
- <sup>32</sup> WL, MS3712/52, Elizabeth Okover, 'Recipe Book' (1725?), 14.
- <sup>33</sup> Arthur Searle, ed., *Barrington Family Letters: 1628-1632* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1983), 174. This incident was described in a letter to her aunt. In this case the 'burglary' turned out to be the maid letting in her boyfriend and she was duly dismissed.
- <sup>34</sup> Jane Sharp, *The Midwives book, or the whole art of midwifry discovered* (London, 1671), 224.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 174. Being too lean was considered equally likely to result in a miscarriage since the womb was too dry and lacked the essential nourishment to support a foetus.
- <sup>37</sup> Lane, *John Hall and his Patients*, 100.
- <sup>38</sup> Alexandra Walsham, *Providence*, 2.
- <sup>39</sup> Arthur Searle, ed., *Barrington Family Letters: 1628–1632*, 92. Lady Masham was writing to her mother to comfort her after the loss of her husband.
- <sup>40</sup> William Shakespeare, 'Twelfth Night' in *Complete Works*, ed by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 2007) (1.5. 54).
- <sup>41</sup> Alice Thornton, *The Autobiography of Alice Thornton*, ed. by Charles Jackson (London, Mitchell and Hughes, 1875), 126.
- <sup>42</sup> Mordaunt, *The Private Diaries*, 154.

After his fortieth birthday, the king's mental and physical health underwent rapid deterioration. It has been suggested that argued that the repeated miscarriages / death of these babies could be caused if Henry VIII were positive for the Kell blood group [1] .Â Henry VIII's first two wives experienced multiple pregnancies culminating in late-term miscarriage, stillbirth, or neonatal mortality. After his fortieth birthday, the king's mental and physical health underwent rapid deterioration. It has been suggested that argued that the repeated miscarriages / death of these babies could be caused if Henry VIII were positive for the Kell blood group [1] . Kell is separate from the AOB blood grouping system and is a group of antigens on the surface of the red blood cell. Read about Thanksgiving History and Traditions. Thanksgiving Day is deeply rooted in American history. Here you will some interesting facts about the Pilgrims.Â Some Facts about Thanksgiving History and Traditions. When the Pilgrims began planting seeds they had to struggle with the rocky soil and bitter climate. Finally in the fall the fields produced a yield beyond expectation. They couldnâ€™t have done it on their own. Thanksgiving also includes the Native American Indians who helped the Pilgrims and showed them how to use fish heads as fertilizers. So the Pilgrims had to overcome difficulties they met on their way. How can we characterize them?