

**THE FAMILY OF LOVE AND THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND**

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**B.A., The University of British Columbia, 1979**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS**

in

**THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
(Department of History)**

**We accept this thesis as conforming  
to the required standard**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**

**August 1983**

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## ABSTRACT

The Family of Love was a sixteenth-century mystical sect. It was founded by Hendrik Niclaes, a Low German mercer, better known by his pseudonym "H.N.". The standard historical view has maintained that while Niclaes did attract a following in the Low Countries, the Family of Love had its greatest impact in England. This view is based primarily on the large amount of hostile attention which the sect attracted, both in the form of polemical literature and official repression, culminating in a Royal Proclamation against it in October, 1580.

It is the contention of this thesis that the standard historical view of the Family of Love is based on a misapprehension, that the amount of hostile attention which the sect attracted in England is not a reliable indicator of the sect's fortunes. The first chapter gives the necessary background on H.N.'s life and ideas. It then goes on to examine the historical literature on the Family of Love, showing how contemporary perceptions of the sect as a real and imminent threat have persisted to the present day. This has occurred because the Family of Love has been used as a pawn in ideological battles, either to demonstrate the excesses of religious fanaticism, or to claim the Family of Love as a predecessor of a modern denomination, especially the Quakers.

The second chapter examines the sources for the history of the Family of Love in England. It is shown that the standard historical view is an optical illusion based on a small core of truth: the fact that there actually were small groups of the Family of Love in Cambridgeshire and in London. This small core of truth has been distorted by a number of factors, producing the standard historical view.

The third chapter examines the three works which lie at the core of contemporary and historiographical perceptions of the Family of Love: John Knewstubb's A Confutation of Monstrous Heresies taught by H.N. (1579); John Rogers' The Displaying of an horrible Secte of grosse and wicked Heretiques . . . (1578); and William Wilkinson's A Confutation of Certaine Articles delivered unto the Family of Love (1579). Virtually every charge and accusation against the Family of Love arises from one or more of these works. By looking at these men and their works, alternative explanations are advanced both for the disproportionate scale of the attack on the Family of Love, and for the timing of that attack.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank my faculty advisor, Professor C.R. Friedrichs, for his invaluable guidance and encouragement. Thanks are also due to Professor M. Tolmie whose instincts and insights steered me in the proper directions. Of course, any errors that remain are entirely my own.

Special thanks to my family, whose unstinting support, both financial and moral, has not gone unappreciated. And especially to Candy, who inspired me in ways she will never know.

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## CHAPTER I

On October 3, 1580 a Royal Proclamation was issued entitled "Ordering Prosecution of the Family of Love."<sup>1</sup> In it the Queen expresses her displeasure at "certain persons which do secretly in corners make privy assemblies of divers simple unlearned people . . . [to] teach them damnable heresies, directly contrary to divers of the principal articles of our belief and Christian faith." This sect, identified as the Family of Love, "is maintained by certain lewd, heretical and seditious books first made in the Dutch tongue and lately translated into English . . . the author whereof they name H.N." The Queen goes on to command "that all her officers and ministers temporal shall . . . assist the archbishops and bishops . . . to search out all persons duly suspected to be either teachers or professors of the foresaid damnable sects; and . . . to proceed severely against them . . . and that also search be made . . . for the books and writings maintaining the said heresies and sects, and them to destroy and burn; and wheresoever such books shall be found, . . . the same persons to be attached and committed to the close prison . . . and that whosoever in this realm shall either print or bring or cause to be brought into this realm any of the said books, . . . to be attached and committed to prison, and to receive such bodily punishment and other mulct as fathers of damnable heresies."

This proclamation is unique in that it is the only one during Elizabeth's reign to be directed solely against a single heretical sect. The proclamation was accompanied and preceded by a substantial body of polemical literature which reflected a widespread concern with the Family of Love. The assumption of this literature and of the Royal Proclamation was that the Family of Love posed a real

and imminent threat which required swift and effective counteraction. This assumption has persisted through the centuries and is now reflected in a considerable body of modern historical literature on the Family. Neither then nor since, however, has it been asked if indeed the Family of Love posed such a threat. The purpose of this thesis is to ask just that question. And if, as we shall suggest, the Family of Love posed no real danger and was neither as large or as important as contemporaries thought, why did it provoke such a vehement reaction?

Before we attempt to answer these questions however, two preliminary problems must be dealt with. First we must describe the origins and the nature of the Family of Love; how did the works and ideas of the Low German H.N. (Hendrik Niclaes) find their way to England? Our second preliminary task will be to examine the ways in which the contemporary perception of the Family of Love and its underlying assumption have been transmitted through historical and polemical literature down to the present day. Thus this first chapter will describe briefly the life and teachings of H.N. and will then examine the historical literature on the Family of Love.

\* \* \*

The basic documentary sources for the history of H.N. and the Family of Love are three manuscripts in the Bibliothek der Maatschappij van Nederlandsche Letterkunde in Leiden.<sup>2</sup> These are:

1. Chronika des Hugesinnes der Liefden, by Daniel, an elder in the Family of Love. This is a mystical account of the life of Niclaes and the history of the Family of Love.



2. Acta H.N., by Zacharias, also an elder in the Family of Love, is an account of Niclaes' life and visions.

3. Ordo Sacerdotis, presumably by Niclaes himself, is one of his later works, which was apparently not widely known. In it, the prophet describes the rigid hierarchy and ceremonies which he is prescribing for his followers.

These three manuscripts form the basis for the earliest major study of Niclaes and the Family of Love, that of Friedrich Nippold in 1862.<sup>3</sup> Virtually all subsequent treatments rely to some degree on Nippold's monograph.<sup>4</sup>

Hendrik Niclaes (Niclas, Nicolas, Nicholas) was born in 1501 or 1502. The place of his birth cannot be stated with absolute certainty. Numerous commentators state that he was born in Münster. This is not unlikely given the Low German dialect in which he wrote.<sup>5</sup> A precocious youngster, according to the chroniclers, he was raised a devout Catholic by his extremely pious parents. He began to experience visions at an early age, but because of his parents' disapproval, he learned to keep his mystical ideas to himself.

Stimulated by Martin Luther, he began to read the Scriptures for himself. Though he disapproved of Catholic persecution of Lutherans, he could not bring himself to agree with Luther's rejection of the entire Roman Church and his solafidianism. Nevertheless, his involvement with Lutherans, with whom he had met to discuss Scripture, brought him to the attention of the authorities on suspicion of heresy in 1529. However, he apparently satisfied them as to his orthodoxy for he was quickly released. Shortly thereafter, in about 1530, he and his family (he had been married when he was about twenty years old) moved to Amsterdam.

In the early years of the Reformation, before the Münster debacle, Amsterdam had acquired a not unwarranted reputation as a centre of toleration.<sup>6</sup> Whether Niclaes moved there for this reason, or because of business opportunities is unclear.

In any case, he found himself in Anabaptist circles and was again hauled before the authorities in 1532 or 1533. He was brought before the Court of Holland but was again exonerated. Among the sectaries living in Amsterdam at this time was David Joris who had moved through the ranks of the Anabaptists and subsequently founded his own Spiritualist sect. Niclaes and Joris were acquainted at least by reputation if not personally. Nevertheless, later statements that Niclaes was a disciple of Joris, or as John Rogers put it, "David George [ Joris ] layde the egge, but H.N. brought forth the chickens,"<sup>7</sup> appear exaggerated. It appears indeed that they have "confused spiritual kinship with dependence."<sup>8</sup> In the aftermath of Münster and an attempted Anabaptist uprising in Amsterdam in 1534, that city became a good deal less tolerant. Nevertheless, Niclaes continued to live there until 1539 or 1540, possibly because of his business interests and Amsterdam's growing importance as a commercial entrepôt.

In 1539 or 1540, Niclaes experienced several more revelations instructing him to take three elders, Daniel, Elidad, and Tobias, to move to Emden, and to set down the "truth of God" in the written word.<sup>9</sup> As a result he moved to Emden where he was to live for about the next twenty years. Emden in the 1540's was not unlike Amsterdam in the 1520's in that under the rule of Anna of Oldenburg, numerous confessions were allowed to coexist.<sup>10</sup> Niclaes lived there without attracting any official attention, pursuing his business as a mercer and becoming quite prosperous. No one seems to have any idea that he was responsible for the works which were circulated in the Low Countries under the pseudonym of H.N. He became a citizen of that town in 1542. However, it was in Emden that Niclaes first attracted a following and the Family of Love had its origins. He lived quietly in the East Frisian town for the next twenty years, his sectarian activities and mystical writings a

closely guarded secret. His business gave him ample opportunity to travel and he spread his following throughout the business and mercantile centres of the Low Countries. Whether or not he travelled to England is unclear. Fuller states that he caused troubles in the Dutch Church in London during the reign of Edward VI.<sup>11</sup> Certainly his business would have given him opportunity to go to England, but there is no concrete evidence for an English journey either under Edward, or, as some have said, in 1561 or 1562 under Elizabeth.<sup>12</sup>

In any case, in 1560, suspicion was again cast upon Niclaes. Not wishing to again endure imprisonment and trial, possibly knowing that this time he would not get off so easily, he secretly fled Emden, leaving his family to join him later. Apparently, he made his move just in time, for a short time later the authorities ordered his wife to persuade him to refute the charges against him. The anxiety attached to this demand allegedly caused her death. Niclaes thereupon provided the requested vindication. Not convinced, the authorities confiscated and searched his house and belongings for evidence of heretical activities. Niclaes' life from the flight from Emden to his death is shrouded in mystery. Apparently he led a peripatetic existence travelling from place to place, spending quite a bit of time in Kampen and finally in Cologne, where he died in 1580 or 1581.

While it is not the purpose of this study to examine Niclaes' writings or beliefs in depth, something must be said of his works and circumstances of their printing, and of the core of his doctrine. Niclaes wrote voluminously and frequently. His chief work, The Glass of Righteousness (Den Spiegel der Gherechticheit) runs to more than eight hundred folio pages. His style was obscure and difficult, filled with Scriptural references and mystical allegories. John Rogers dismissed his works as "the drowsy dreams of a doting Dutchman."<sup>13</sup> Others have called it "strange mystic rigamarole",<sup>14</sup> and "extreme mistiness."<sup>15</sup>

During his life, Niclaes wrote numerous works in both prose and verse. It is unnecessary to go over all of them. We will concentrate on his major works and of those the ones that were translated into English. Previous observers have made the mistake of going through all of Niclaes' works and trying to combine them into a single system. While this is valuable in that it provides one with the outline of what is in Niclaes' works without actually having to read them, it does present the danger of imposing a system where none exists.

Over one hundred and sixteen editions of H.N.'s works have been identified.<sup>16</sup> For the purposes of this study, it is not necessary to describe them all. The circumstances of the printing of Niclaes' works are illuminating. Naturally, cautious merchant that he was, Niclaes would not use either of the two printers in Emden.<sup>17</sup> His earlier works were printed by Dirk van den Borne in Deventer. It was this same Van den Borne who had printed David Joris's chef d'oeuvre, T'Wonder-Boek, and got six months in prison for his trouble.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, it cannot be concluded that Van den Borne was a disciple of Niclaes. Rather, it seems to have been a matter more of economics than of ideological conviction. The last work printed by Van den Borne for Niclaes was the prospectus for Den Spiegel der Gherechticheit.<sup>19</sup> Upon his death in 1557 or 1558, it became necessary for Niclaes to look for a new printer.

The relationship between Niclaes and the great Antwerp printer Christopher Plantin was first alluded to by Nippold in 1862.<sup>20</sup> It was subsequently developed by Max Rooses, curator of the Plantin-Moretus Museum in Antwerp, in his monograph Christophe Plantin: Imprimeur Anversois in 1882.<sup>21</sup> Plantin was born about 1520 near Tours and was brought up in Lyons. During the 1530's and 1540's he led a wandering life, spending time in Orléans and Paris before settling in Antwerp in about 1548. Speculation that he had already been converted to the Family of Love while

living in Paris and that this was the reason for settling in Antwerp seems unfounded.<sup>22</sup> It seems much more probable that Plantin, as a young man seeking to establish himself in the trade would naturally gravitate to Antwerp because of the great opportunities which that city offered. In any case he worked as a binder and cabinetmaker before taking his printer's oath in 1555.

It is not known how or when Plantin was converted to the Family of Love. Certainly Niclaes, in his business as a mercer, would have had many occasions to travel to Antwerp. Also, Niclaes' son Franz was living in Antwerp.<sup>23</sup> In any case, it is certain that Plantin was converted at about this time. It also seems likely that it was Niclaes who enabled Plantin to set up his own printing shop.<sup>24</sup> The first work which Plantin printed for Niclaes was Den Spiegel der Gherechticheit. For obvious reasons, this work was published without the date or place of publication, or even with the printer's name. Typographical examination, however, has shown it to be the work of Plantin's press.<sup>25</sup>

In January 1562, it came to the attention of the authorities that several of Plantin's employees had (apparently without their master's knowledge -- he was in Paris on business at the time) printed some copies of Calvin's Brièfve instruction pour prier.<sup>26</sup> To prevent the confiscation of his assets, Plantin quickly engineered a bankruptcy, and his shop and its contents were bought at an auction by Lodewijk van Somere and Cornelius van Bomberghen, two of Plantin's friends and prominent Calvinists.<sup>27</sup> By June of 1563, Plantin had managed to convince the authorities of his innocence and was able to return to Antwerp. For the next four years Plantin was in partnership with Van Bomberghen, his cousin Karel, and several other members of his family.

Niclaes sent one of his earliest and most loyal (for the time being, anyways) disciples, Augustijn van Hasselt to work with Plantin in Antwerp for periods of several months at a time in 1565 and 1566. 1566 and 1567 were the years of iconoclasm and Alva's repression, marking the beginning of the Dutch Revolt. As a result, in November 1566, Plantin instructed Van Hasselt to set up a shop in Vianen, in the territory of the rebellious lord of Brederode, where the King's legal authority did not extend. In May 1567, Vianen was occupied by Alva's forces; however, Van Hasselt had managed to escape with his press and fled to Wesel, which had become a refuge for the rebels.<sup>28</sup>

This situation presented Plantin with a problem. He had remained in Antwerp where he had become the archtypographer to the King, which role obliged him to print the Index of prohibited books (many of which he had likely printed himself!). Also, he had professed his Catholic orthodoxy and was happily making money printing editions of the Vulgate, missals, breviaries, and the works of many Catholic writers.<sup>29</sup> Should his interest in the press at Wesel, which was busily churning out Protestant propaganda, be discovered, it would surely go hard for him. Niclaes suggested an ingenious solution. He was about to move to Cologne where he would engage in the revision of his works. For this, he needed a printer. If Plantin were to turn his press in Wesel over to Niclaes to be run by Van Hasselt, two birds could be killed with one stone: Plantin would sever his potentially embarrassing connection with the heretical press in Wesel, while Niclaes would have the printer he needed in Cologne. And this is precisely what happened. Plantin went on to engage in one of the most spectacular efforts in sixteenth-century printing, the Polyglot Bible, and would later become printer to the University of Leiden. Niclaes went with Van Hasselt to Cologne where the two worked together on new editions of H.N.'s works until the printer broke with Niclaes in 1573.<sup>30</sup>

Who Niclaes' printer was from the schism in the Family of Love in 1573 until his death is not clear. Some of these editions appear with the name Nicholas van Bomberghen. There is no record of any printer by this name in Cologne, nor were any of the Antwerp Van Bomberghens in Cologne at this time.<sup>31</sup> It was also at this time that the first English translations of Niclaes' works appear. There is no place of publication on these, but since they were definitely not printed in England, one may reasonably assume that they were the output of this mysterious Cologne press.<sup>32</sup>

One of the most fascinating aspects of the history of the Family of Love is the quasi-Familist circle which centred around Plantin in Antwerp. These were not the poorly educated craftsmen among whom such spiritualist mysticism is usually seen to have its greatest appeal. On the contrary, these were highly educated humanists, some of them among the most prominent of the intellectual merchant/scholar class of the sixteenth century.

Why these enlightened individuals chose to affiliate themselves with a sect which professed to despise "book-learning" and worldly wisdom seems at first puzzling. Upon closer consideration, however, perhaps it does not seem so strange. With the religious and political upheavals going on in the Netherlands, their way of life was threatened. What they desired most was peace and tranquility in which to pursue their business and intellectual endeavours. The Family of Love was to them a way of escaping both fanatical Catholicism, whose deeds they had witnessed in Alva's campaigns, and fanatical Calvinism. The Family of Love was a politique solution:

Familism, therefore, was taken as a creed by certain humanists, but it was they who adapted it to their own convictions rather than altering their convictions to suit the demands of Hendrik Niclaes.<sup>33</sup>

Here was a creed which allowed them to conform outwardly to the authorities' demands, while at the same time maintaining an inner faith which afforded them real spiritual satisfaction.

Among this group, as mentioned above, were some of the intellectual luminaries of the later sixteenth century. There was the geographer Ortelius, whom Plantin had known since 1558 and who at different times expressed varying degrees of commitment to the Family of Love.<sup>34</sup> There were the Hebrew scholar Andreus Masius and the Neo-Stoicist Justus Lipsius.<sup>35</sup> Through Plantin's friendship with the Parisian apothecary Pierre Porret, this kind of Familism spread to Paris. The eccentric French Orientalist Guillaume Postel and his disciple Guy La Fèvre de la Boderie were also possibly Familists.<sup>36</sup> These men were tied together by their humanist education and outlook, by common political views, by their friendship with Plantin, and especially by their involvement in Plantin's great publishing endeavour, the Polyglot Bible.

The Antwerp Polyglot, as envisioned by Plantin, would replace Cardinal Ximenes' Trilingual Complutensian Polyglot, adding to the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin texts of this earlier Polyglot, Aramaic and Syriac versions.<sup>37</sup> Such a huge undertaking required more capital than even so prominent a printer as Plantin could supply, and he was forced to look for patrons. He was successful in his bid to Philip II, who agreed to underwrite the project on the condition that his chaplain, Benito Arias Montano, go to Antwerp to supervise the project.<sup>38</sup>

Arias Montano arrived in Antwerp in 1568. Revolted by Alva's extremism, his letters were largely responsible for the Duke's recall and the appointment of Requesens as governor.<sup>39</sup> Arias Montano found the intellectual atmosphere in Antwerp much to his liking. Although Plantin and his friends kept their Familist



sympathies secret at first -- Arias Montano was, after all, an agent of the King of Spain and of the Inquisition -- by 1575, he had become a member of the Family of Love.<sup>40</sup>

The schism in the Family of Love about 1573 has already been alluded to. The Familist chronicles attribute the split to Plantin's ill will and greed and the treason of Niclaes' disciple Hendrik Jansen van Barrefelt. Barrefelt had been with Niclaes since Emden. In fact, it was Barrefelt whom Niclaes had sent to Deventer to supervise Van den Borne's printing of his works.<sup>41</sup> According to the Familist chroniclers, Plantin had deceitfully used Niclaes and the Family of Love to set up his shop and keep his presses running. Not only did he use the sect to make money, he actively stole from it. There was the affair of the Provençal jeweller who, having died in Paris in the early 1560's, entrusted a cask of jewels to Pierre Porret to be given to the sect. Plantin apparently took part of the bequest as payment for a debt which the jeweller owed him. According to the chronicles, he pocketed the rest. This version of events is most likely sour grapes. Plantin and Niclaes kept up their relationship for the next decade or so without any noticeable coolness between them.<sup>42</sup>

In reality, it was probably Niclaes himself who provoked the schism. After the flight from Emden, as he involved himself in the revision of his works, he also wrote Ordo Sacerdotis. This work outlines the new rigidly hierarchical structure which he tried to impose on his followers.<sup>43</sup> No doubt this alienated many, especially the Antwerp humanists whose allegiance to the sect lay precisely in its unstructured informality and emphasis on inward spirituality. Among those who deserted H.N. were Barrefelt, Van Hasselt, and Plantin and his circle of humanist friends. Barrefelt, who began to call himself "Hiel", or the "life of God",<sup>44</sup> assumed Niclaes'

mantle as the prophet of the new sect. It was to this Hielist branch of the Family of Love to which Arias Montano and the others belonged.

It has already been stated that the purpose of this study is not to examine H.N.'s writings and doctrines in any great detail. However, one point is crucial: the teachings of Niclaes and the Family of Love, while idiosyncratic, were not unique. This is important because many historians have assumed that any similarity of doctrine or practice between two groups is evidence of a link. Rather, these Spiritualist/mystical ideas have been a common currency of Christianity from the days of the Early Church right down to the present. As we have already seen, many commentators have concluded that because their doctrines and sects were quite similar, Niclaes must have been a disciple of David Joris. This is simply not so. The ideas were there, ready to be used, and it only took several individuals so inclined to draw on this reservoir and form a sect.

Niclaes' doctrines, then, were neither new nor unique. They were also not concisely written. To call this hodge-podge of ideas, proverbs, and admonishments a theology is misleading. One cannot (though some have tried) unify H.N.'s teachings into a coherent system and reconcile the contradictions. Rather, the approach to take is one of looking for the constants, those things that remain firm and unchanged in all of his writings.

At the core of H.N.'s teachings is the concept of Vergottung or "begoddedness". The spirit is of prime importance, the internal takes precedence over the external. Man can only be righteous when infused with the Spirit of Love of Jesus Christ. This mystical infusion does not, as some critics have claimed, entitle the believer to claim equality with Christ. This is a mystical union in which the will of the believer is united with and subsumed in the will of God. However,

Niclaes did not make this idea up. This is a tradition as old as Christianity itself. More relevant for our purposes than ancient Montanists, these ideas were to be found in late medieval works such as those of Joachim of Fiore, Tauler and Eckhart, Thomas à Kempis, Hans Denck, Sebastian Franck, and the Theologica Germanica.<sup>45</sup> The idea of a mystical union with God, Vergottung, of the inner light and spiritual inspiration were common fare in the religious discourse of the sixteenth century.

This emphasis on the inner life led to some particular positions on the burning religious questions of the day. For instance, on the Eucharist, H.N. could bypass the whole Real Presence/Memorial debate simply by maintaining the uselessness and inefficacy of outward forms and ceremonies. So also on the Scriptures: what counted was not scholastic quibbling over Greek and Latin verb tenses, but the interpretation which God put into one's heart. The Scriptures themselves were only ink and paper, an outward signification of the true Word which God reveals to the believer. This de-emphasis of outward forms and ceremonies led to one of the most consistently observed characteristics of the Family of Love: their Nicodemism or their willingness to conform outwardly to whatever was demanded of them in the way of religious observance. As we shall see, in England, this was perceived as dangerous deception and dissembling, and was one of the persistent complaints made against the Family of Love. Niclaes himself maintained his Catholic orthodoxy, while urging his followers to conform to the government's requirements, knowing all the while that it really did not matter what they said or did openly. What should emerge from this short synoptic discussion of H.N.'s teachings is an absolutely crucial distinction between "Famelist" and "member of the Family of Love"; that is, between people and groups who exhibit certain of the characteristics and teachings of H.N., and who may look upon him and his writings as instructional and

inspirational and those who follow him as one who has received revelation and whose writings are seen as necessary complements to the Scriptures. As we have seen, his ideas and teachings were not unique; therefore to say whenever we come across something that sounds like something Niclaes might have said, "There goes the Family of Love," would be to tremendously exaggerate the sect's numbers and importance. As we shall see, especially in England in the seventeenth century, the name "Famelist" was hurled about as an epithet, and to conclude that everyone who was called a Famelist was a member of the sect called the Family of Love, even if they exhibited "famelist" characteristics, is simply not justifiable.

\* \* \*

Historical treatment of the Family of Love in England may rightly be said to have started with Thomas Fuller, whose Church History of Britain first appeared in 1662. Fuller states that around the 1578 the Family of Love began "to grow so numerous, factious, and dangerous that the privy council thought fit to endeavour their suppression."<sup>46</sup> The Family, founded by Niclaes (Fuller erroneously states that he was born in Amsterdam), first found its way to England when Niclaes visited near the end of the reign of Edward VI when he caused trouble in the Dutch Church in London "seducing a number of artificers and silly women; amongst whom two daughters of one Warwick . . . were his principal perverts."<sup>47</sup> His errors were "zealously confuted" by Martin Micronius and Nicholas Carinaeus, but "their antidotes pierced not so deep as his poisons."<sup>48</sup> As a result of Niclaes' activities in England, the Family of Love began to spread in various parts of England, to the point where the Privy Council was provoked to action culminating in the Royal Proclamation of 1580.

Fuller objected especially to Niclaes' pretension and claims to be "raised up by the highest God from the death . . . godded with God in the Spirit of his love; made heir with Christ in the heavenly goods of the riches of God; illuminated in the Spirit with the heavenly truth, the true light of the perfect being . . ."49 In addition to H.N.'s presumption of divine election and inspiration, Fuller condemns their allegorical interpretation of Scriptures, making them "airy, empty, nothing,"50 and their antinomianism: "Yea, St. Paul's Supposition 'Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?' was their position."51 In connection with their antinomianism, he alludes to their lascivious conduct and their libertinism, as seen above in the quote about "seducing silly women" and the play on words, substituting "perverts" for "converts".

Fuller's account, while wrong about many things concerning the Family of Love, and despite its highly polemical tone, is nevertheless the first treatment of the Family of Love in an historical context, rather than as an ever-present danger or another character in a catalogue of heresies. It is thus noteworthy, not so much for describing the Family and its suppression as for its contributions to later treatments.

The next noteworthy account (and certainly more detached and scholarly) is in John Strype's Annals of the Reformation. While in basic outline, his account is very similar to Fuller's (from whom he undoubtedly derived much material) the tone is less strident and the treatment more extensive. For instance, he is more specific about dates and places: "It was derived from Holland; where one H.N. (i.e. Henry Nicholas) was the founder of it. A company of these were discovered in the parish of Balsham in Cambridgeshire, the Bishop of Ely's diocese." These, including one Robert Sharp, were examined before Dr. Perne and made "a declaration and

confession of this. . . . All which was certified and given by Dr. Perne, Decemb. anno 1574."<sup>52</sup>

Strype is also doubtful of the moral laxity which Fuller concludes was typical of the Family:

Whether this sect of the service of love were of such profligate principles and practices may be doubted; but that anabaptists and libertines (of whom those crimes were too true) shrouded themselves under those of this denomination may be justly suspected.<sup>53</sup>

If, however, Strype was doubtful of their libertinism and less strident in tone than Fuller, this, of course, does not mean that Strype approved of the sect or found them any less dangerous than did Fuller. Strype disapproves especially of their denial of the spiritual authority of the Church: "Also, they cried out against all spiritual offices and officers . . . whom . . . they called . . . dumb dogs, and sleeping hounds, with such like names."<sup>54</sup> He also criticizes the fact that H.N. allowed his followers to conform outwardly to the religious practices demanded by the authorities. This of course includes the Mass in Catholic countries, resulting in lingering suspicion of the Family of Love as papist subversives; that, in John Roger's words, they were "a chicken of the church of Rome."<sup>55</sup> This was, in the era of the Popish Plot, the Glorious Revolution, and Louis XIV, the kiss of death. Nevertheless, even if they were not really Catholics in sheep's clothing, Strype condemns them for their lack of principle in hiding their beliefs.

Strype describes several other sects which he considers to be offshoots of the Family of Love. There is the Family of the Mount, who held "all things in common, and lived in contemplation altogether; denying all prayers, and the resurrection of the body."<sup>56</sup> There is also the Family of the Essentialists who, "had their opinions from one Mrs. Dunbar, a Scotch woman. These held there was no sin at all: but

what is done, God doth all, in what kind soever it be. . . . These, and the like, were the spawn and improvements of this family of love, of the which Henry Nicholas, of Holland was the founder. . . ."57

If Strype is less strident in his tone than Fuller, it is perhaps because, writing forty years later, he senses them less as an ever-present danger: "For I remember, a gentleman, a great admirer of that sect, within less than twenty years ago, told me, that there was then but one of the family of love still alive, and he an old man."58 Nevertheless, despite the differences in tone, both Fuller and Strype may be seen as spokesmen of the Anglican establishment in that their chief complaints against H.N. and the Family of Love are that they undermine the foundations of an authoritative state church.

More recent treatments of the Family of Love fall into two general categories. One of these is the condemnation of the fanatical persecution of harmless mystics who posed no danger to the state or the social order. The other is parallel to the first, but has more to do with a "quest for roots" on the part of modern denominations, especially on the part of Quakers and Baptists.

Before going on to examine these traditions more closely, it would be useful to review the ideas of Ernst Troeltsch, whose classification of Christian churches did much to make the study of the "Left Wing of the Reformation" possible.<sup>59</sup> In general, Troeltsch distinguished three basic types of Christianity. The church-type, Catholic or Protestant, "works through the ministry, the Word and the sacraments; it is objective in its approach and attempts to supply the spiritual needs of the masses as well as those of the religiously gifted."<sup>60</sup> The sect-type as typified by various brands of Anabaptism, "stresses Christ's role as lawgiver, and tries to follow his recorded commandments by forming voluntary groups, withdrawn from the rest of

society." These were usually "quiet, biblicist congregations", but were occasionally susceptible, as at Münster, to resorting to violence to hasten the arrival of God's Kingdom on earth."<sup>61</sup>

The third type which Troeltsch distinguishes, and the one which concerns us most here, is the Spiritualist or mystical type. This type stresses direct inspiration from God, the reception of Christ as an "inward experience", and that the Bible is only an outward manifestation of the Word of God. To grasp the true meaning of the Scriptures, one must be aided and inspired by the Holy Spirit. Because of its inwardness and subjectivity, there is little interest in or use for ecclesiastical organization (as in the church-type) or in withdrawn communities of believers (as in the sect-type). What is important here is one's own inward experience and inspiration, not outward organization or conformity.<sup>62</sup>

One must keep in mind, however, that these are the distinctions of a twentieth-century German, and not those of contemporaries. For those participants caught up in the religious and social upheaval of the Reformation, there was no distinction between churches, sects, and mystics; there was only the true Church and the heretics. Nevertheless, Troeltsch's classifications are useful as long as we do not use them as rigid categories, but rather as tendencies and as tools for understanding.<sup>63</sup>

Troeltsch's own treatment of the Family of Love is illustrative of his classificatory system. He classified Nicolaus in the tradition of "Mysticism and Spiritual Idealism within Protestantism" along with such other groups and individuals as Münster, Carlstadt, Schwenckfeld, Franck, David Joris, and the Quakers; he does not identify H.N. with "sects" such as the Anabaptists, Mennonites, Levellers, Diggers, and Moravians.



Niclaes, according to Troeltsch, "swung over into a visionary 'Enthusiasm', combined with the familiar ideas of German mysticism, of 'deification' and of 'tranquillity', of the 'Divine Spark' of Light and Love; he also taught an ethic of religious perfection with its victory over 'the flesh' and 'the letter'."<sup>64</sup> This places H.N.'s doctrines firmly in the tradition of the Theologica Germanica, of Joachim of Fiore, and of medieval mysticism in general. Although, according to Troeltsch, "At the English Revolution, the movement disappeared,"<sup>65</sup> its influence continued to be felt. Bunyan used the prophet's Terra Pacis as a model for Pilgrim's Progress. In particular, the Ranters were the heirs of H.N.<sup>66</sup>

Besides the works of Nippold and Rooses already mentioned, one other nineteenth-century treatment of the Family of Love is worthy of notice. This is Robert Barclay's The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth. Barclay, as a Quaker, wrote a ringing vindication of the Friends' role in the establishment of religious liberty in England. Although Barclay finds H.N.'s books overly mystical,<sup>67</sup> he concludes that his teachings were in the main quite orthodox. The Family of Love's main contribution, however, lies in their anticipation of George Fox and John Wesley. It was groups such as the Family of Love who kept the "doctrines of sanctification and perfection"<sup>68</sup> alive when they were "becoming greatly obscured or wholly lost sight of in the teaching of the Puritan or Presbyterian party."<sup>69</sup>

How the doctrines of Niclaes arrived in England, Barclay does not explain, except for a short note on Christopher Vitell, "the first preacher sent by Niclaes, . . . who came from Delph to Colchester . . . in 1555."<sup>70</sup> They did, however, grow and survived official repression under Elizabeth, lasting until the time of the Commonwealth when they "silently disappeared in the fierce and open struggle of the time between truth and error."<sup>71</sup>

Here we begin to see the tendency outlined above: the desire to place the Family of Love in a Spiritualist tradition whose heirs can be traced down to the present day. Typical of this is Rufus Jones' interpretation.<sup>72</sup> Jones, as a Quaker, identifies many of the beliefs of the Family of Love with the original Quakers of the late seventeenth century. His tone is admiring. Here was a group that was "at its best the exponents of a very lofty type of mystical religion," whose founder "was a very extraordinary character, and his voluminous writings contain spiritual insights and religious teachings which deserve to be rescued from the oblivion into which they have largely fallen."<sup>73</sup> Jones especially commends their emphasis on an inward transformation, their pacifism, their "concern that the life should be put above forms,"<sup>74</sup> their insistence "on spiritualizing this life rather than on dogmatizing about the next life,"<sup>75</sup> and their desire for moral rectitude. Jones is also concerned with intolerance and fanaticism, thus bringing together both streams of historical treatment mentioned above. He castigates H.N.'s critics as not penetrating "the meaning of [his] deep mystical teaching,"<sup>76</sup> as writing in "a spirit of bigotry and intolerance and in ignorance of the real teachings" of the Family of Love.<sup>77</sup> However, Jones' ultimate purpose is to show that the Family of Love influenced George Fox and the earlier Quakers, as well as the Seekers and Ranters, in an effort to place the Quakers in an honorable and long-standing, if widely misunderstood, tradition.

Jones' treatment of the origins and history of the Family of Love in England is wholly standard, drawing on the usual sources: Fuller, Strype, Barclay, and Nippold. Nowhere has he attempted to re-examine the historical evidence relating to the Family of Love; indeed, to do so is unnecessary for the standard view accords very nicely with his own thesis. His view is dependent on the Family of Love surviving

into the late seventeenth century and beyond, in order for them to have influenced the Quakers. Indeed, he goes so far as to state that "[m]any Familists must have joined with Friends," although he does admit that "there is little positive proof of the fact that they did."<sup>78</sup>

Another Quaker, like Jones' writing from Haverford College, although some years earlier, is Allen C. Thomas.<sup>79</sup> In fact, Jones uses Thomas as an authority on the Family. Thomas does state that the Quakers are the true spiritual heirs of the Family of Love;

all that was really valuable in their teachings was now held by other bodies, notably by the Society of Friends and held and taught free from the extreme mistiness and positive error which pervaded the books of H.N. and the teaching and preaching of his followers.<sup>80</sup>

Nevertheless, Thomas' main concern is the intolerance which greeted a sect which, "though fundamentally wrong in many points . . . its members apprehended much that the church around them ignored or failed to comprehend."<sup>81</sup> Primary to his concern is that the Family of Love were really not all that bad and aroused such a hostile reaction only because of the blindness and pigheadedness of the religious authorities. He goes through the teachings of H.N. in some detail, refuting the critics' charges of antinomianism and immorality, their dissembling before authority, concluding that on "the main doctrines of Christianity the Familists seem to have been orthodox."<sup>82</sup> They did not deny the divinity of Christ, nor did H.N. grant himself divine status.<sup>83</sup>

His historical account of the Family is, like Jones', entirely standard, following in all important aspects Strype, Nippold, and Barclay. Particularly as concerns the Family of Love in England, he accepts without question that "their doctrines seem to have taken deeper root in England."<sup>84</sup> And, "[w]e find little public notice of the

sect in England after the address to King James, though the many allusions to their belief leads to the opinion that there must have been quite a number of members."<sup>85</sup> He thus concludes that "[t]he revival of the sect, about the middle of the seventeenth century, seems to have been but a brief awakening."<sup>86</sup>

Perhaps the most misguided and misinformed account of the Family of Love in England is to be found in E. Belfort Bax's Rise and Fall of the Anabaptists. In the chapter "The Anabaptist Movement in England", after a brief account of Anabaptism in the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Mary, we come upon the astonishing statement that during Elizabeth's reign, "English Anabaptism took definite shape in the form of a sect or party calling themselves the Family of Love."<sup>87</sup> The bulk of the rest of the chapter is devoted to the Family of Love. Clearly, Bax has succumbed to the invective of writers hostile to H.N., and while recognizing their polemical purposes and tone, has not thought fit to question their historical assumptions:

The most flourishing period of this sect is not quite easy to determine from the evidence, but between 1570 and 1580 it undoubtedly created considerable stir in the country, so much so that Elizabeth's lords of Council sent urgent letters to the Bishop of Norwich, pressing him to take forthwith most stringent measures for its suppression.<sup>88</sup>

While Bax cannot bring himself to approve of H.N.'s doctrines (at one point he calls them "strange mystic rigamarole,"<sup>89</sup> he does lament their disappearance:

With the name Anabaptism, the thing itself went. The old fervour, the zeal, the self-confidence, the idealism, that stopped at nothing in their aim to revolutionize all life in accordance with the conception of Christianity as the religion of the disinherited, have long ceased to exist in the Christian sects of the modern world.<sup>90</sup>

Another interpretation of the Family of Love which falls more or less into the "plea for tolerance" category (although, as we shall see, in a backhand sort of way)

is Ronald A. Knox's Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion. Knox, as a Catholic, admits quite freely that his book was originally meant to be

a broadside, a trumpet blast, an end of controversy . . . here, I would say, is what happens inevitably if once the principle of Catholic unity is lost! All this confusion, this prishness, this pedantry, this eccentricity and worse, follows directly from the rash step that takes you outside the fold of Peter! . . . But somehow, in the writing, my whole treatment of the subject became different; the more you got to know them, the more human did they become, for better or worse; you were more concerned to find out why they thought as they did than to prove it wrong.<sup>91</sup>

Nevertheless, after a very long book in which he traces Christian enthusiasm from the Early Church through John Wesley and beyond, he concludes that "enthusiasm is not a wrong tendency, but a false emphasis." Enthusiasts "saw clearly . . . something true and valuable; the exaggerations, the eccentricities, were hatched by the heat of controversy."<sup>92</sup> Thus enthusiasm is necessary, if sometimes inconvenient, for, "[m]en will not live without vision . . . [i]f we are content with the humdrum, the second-best, the hand-over-hand, it will not be forgiven us."<sup>93</sup> The book is thus a vindication of visionary enthusiasts (especially Catholic visionary enthusiasts) who, while going to extremes, restored true spirituality.

On the Family of Love in specific, Knox is entirely unoriginal, following Bax in concluding that they were a type of Anabaptist sect.<sup>94</sup> Clearly, though, for Knox the main importance of the Family of Love is their legacy to the Quakers. Indeed, his main passage on the Family is included in a "Note on Chapter VIII" entitled "On the prehistory of Quakerism."<sup>95</sup> His historical treatment is entirely standard. The sect had its beginnings in England in the 1550's, grew rapidly through the 1570's until the repression of the late '70's and '80's. It then enjoyed a brief revival about the time of the Commonwealth after which it disappeared from the scene. According to Knox, Niclaes's doctrines "are little better than cloudy nonsense. . . . But it is clear

that the meetings of the Family must have been a seed ground from which inner-light theologies [ie. the Quakers] might have been expected to spring."<sup>96</sup>

Champlin Burrage, in his book The Early English Dissenters (1550-1641), though certainly not as misguided as Bax, has nevertheless made some astonishing assertions concerning the Family of Love. Indeed, he considers the history of the Family as in need of no further research:

After what has been written concerning the Family of Love by Dr. F. Nippold and Mr. Robert Barclay, there seems little need to devote much time to that rather mysterious sect.<sup>97</sup>

While he is certainly correct in stating that they were not Anabaptists, the rest of what little time he devotes to the Family of Love is, to say the least, unsupportable. Basing his account primarily on Edmund Jessop's A Discovery of the Errors of the English Anabaptists (London, 1623), he concludes that the repression in the late 1570's and early 1580's "seem [s] to have failed, for the Family of Love was certainly well known in England as an existing society during the reigns of James I and Charles I."<sup>98</sup> Also:

Before 1600 the Family of Love can have attracted few converts in England, and even until 1620 and later it must have made slow progress.<sup>99</sup>

Obviously, he does not recognize that in the seventeenth century, the name "Famelist" was indiscriminately hurled about as an epithet without necessarily (or even probably) referring to devotees of H.N. and his Family of Love. The chief heirs of the Family of Love, he identifies not as the Quakers but rather the Seekers, although, as he himself admits the two groups were frequently confused and the connections are somewhat tentative.<sup>100</sup>

In a short article written in 1953, Ernest A. Payne, while not denying the influence of the Family of Love on the Quakers, widens the denominational spectrum of H.N.'s heirs:

Rufus Jones is a sympathetic and discriminating defender of the Familists. "They had," he says, "for more than a hundred years, maintained in England a steady testimony to the spiritual nature of religion, to the fact of a Divine Light and Life in the soul, and to the unimportance of outward forms and ordinances in comparison with the inward experience of God's Presence." Those are words that at once make an appeal to Baptists and it is certain that the Baptists of the modern world are among the Spiritual kinfolk of the Familists and have no reason for repudiating all connection with them.<sup>101</sup>

Payne's historical treatment (one is beginning to see a pattern here) is again entirely standard. He may quibble over the extent of David Joris' influence on Niclaes and other points, but as regards the Family in England, he follows the path already charted by Fuller, Strype, Barclay, and Jones. H.N. found his largest following in England, beginning with Vitell in the 1550's, continuing through H.N.'s alleged visit to England in 1560 or 1561, growing in strength through the '60's and '70's to the point where official repression ensued. Upon repression the group went underground, surfacing occasionally, as in the address to James I, and enjoyed a brief revival at the time of the Commonwealth.<sup>102</sup>

The culmination of this stream of historical treatment of the Family of Love may be found in G.H. Williams' massive study, The Radical Reformation. According to Williams, the "English Familists were communitarian, pacifistic Anabaptists. . . . Morphologically and to a certain extent genetically, the English Familists represent a transitional stage between evangelical Anabaptism and the completely nonsacramental Spiritualism of Quakerism."<sup>103</sup>

At the risk of being overly repetitive (the point, however, is crucial) one must say that Williams' historical treatment is entirely unoriginal. It is unnecessary at this point to repeat the basic outline of the standard history of the Family of Love in England. In Williams we see the apotheosis of the tendency to mold the various

Anabaptist and Spiritualist groups of the sixteenth century into a single movement, a "Radical Reformation". In this movement, H.N. and the Family of Love played an admittedly tiny part, but links can be drawn both backwards and forward in history, and the influence of such groups lives on long after their official expiration.

Emerging from the streams of historical treatment outlined above are attempts to describe and explain the Family of Love not so much in terms of being an ancestor of this or that group or of its suppression as an example of religious bigotry and fanaticism; rather these attempts try to describe and explain the Family of Love as a concrete historical phenomenon. The boundaries between these two types of treatment are difficult to draw and perhaps even harder to explain, but they are there nevertheless. Perhaps it is more a difference in emphasis than kind. Perhaps under the influence of Williams historians are more cognizant than before of seemingly obscure and unimportant groups and ideas. There can be no doubt that the concept of a "Radical Reformation" has opened up new avenues of research. Whatever the reason, in the last twenty years or so, the Family of Love has attracted more attention in and of itself rather than as a pawn in some denominational or ideological argument.

Of course, these two historiographical streams are interdependent and intersect at a number of points. The more recent stream has had to, of necessity, rely on what has gone before. From Nippold they derive the life and writings of H.N., from Rooses, the connection to Plantin and the Antwerp humanists, and so on. And herein lies its chief failing. For in relying on previous research and interpretation, the standard outline of the history of the Family of Love in England has assumed the proportions of a received truth, or at least of conventional wisdom. This is, of course, not to deny the value and indispensable nature of the work of



Nippold, Rooses, Barclay, Jones, Williams, et. al. Rather, later commentators have been caught up in the minute examination of one tree, quibbling about the shape of its cones, the colour of its needles, and its lifespan, without stepping back to see if there is indeed a forest. Thus we have arguments about H.N.'s views on the Mass, on baptism, the afterlife, the Bible, the nature of Christ, ad nauseum. What no one has thought worthwhile is to re-examine the conventional wisdom, particularly as regards the nature and extent of the Family of Love in England. Before we embark on the minute examination of one tree, we had better make sure of the nature of the forest.

Historical treatment of the Family of Love in and of itself may be said to have started (apart from Nippold's monograph) with the work of Herman de la Fontaine-Verwey. In 1942 he published a bibliography of all known editions of H.N.'s works.<sup>104</sup> In 1954, he compared H.N. with Joris and Hiel.<sup>105</sup> And then in 1976, he attempted to draw the whole thing together.<sup>106</sup> De la Fontaine-Verwey, as do most recent commentators, approaches the Family of Love as being more important than previously thought. Indeed, this is the basic preconception that runs through all recent accounts. If it cannot be shown (as indeed it cannot, though some have tried) that the Family of Love was a widespread underground movement with a large number of adherents, then it becomes important "in the greater understanding which has developed of the significance of the smaller churches, groups, and sects of the sixteenth century for the history of ideas. It is becoming increasingly clear that these movements . . . had considerable influence on the crisis of European consciousness at the end of the seventeenth century and the emergence of the modern world. For an understanding of this fact the study of sects in the sixteenth century provides one of the keys."<sup>107</sup> Thus we see that the Family of Love is not so

important in itself, but taken together with other groups, forms an important part of the religious landscape of the sixteenth century.

In accordance with this concept, de la Fontaine-Verwey distinguishes five principal religious currents in sixteenth-century Europe: the Tridentine Catholic Church, Lutheranism, Calvinist (Reformed), Anabaptists, and Spiritualist, called in another place "libertines".<sup>108</sup> We can see that he has followed Troeltsch's categories quite closely, or more exactly, he has applied Troeltsch's ideal categories to an actual historical situation. He is obviously concerned with the last category, and his work on Niclaes and the Family of Love is seen as a contribution to the history and understanding of the Spiritualist "type". To this end he is concerned with the similarities of these groups and their founders, especially of the "trois hérésiarches" mentioned above.

As for the Family of Love in England, one may already guess what his approach might be. It is not necessary to again repeat the standard view, but a few quotations will suffice to show de la Fontaine-Verwey's adherence to it:

there were Familists as early as 1553, at the beginning of Queen Mary's reign. Their leader was a cabinetmaker from Delft, Christopher Vittel . . . In the 1560's the sect expanded considerably. . . . Despite persecution the sect endured . . . At the beginning of the Civil War . . . [the] Familists, too, now appeared on the scene of opposition to the church.<sup>109</sup>

There have since been other lengthy treatments of the Family of Love. Jean Dietz Moss, in her 1969 Ph.D. dissertation states that "there are many contradictory statements about the Familists in modern histories of the period. . . . there is considerable confusion among modern historians as to who and what Familists were. The few studies which have investigated the society have focused on one or another aspect of it, and none has examined in depth the Family's teachings, as expressed by the founder, and their impact upon Englishmen."<sup>110</sup> This work, and another later

article,<sup>111</sup> may then be seen as a work of synthesis, an attempt to reconcile the contradictions and state definitively the origins, history, and doctrines of the Family of Love. Unfortunately, she too accepts without question the conventional wisdom. The accounts of various hostile writers are taken at face value in the sense that they describe accurately the origins of the Family of Love in Vitell's missionary activity,<sup>112</sup> the practices of early English Familism,<sup>113</sup> and its subsequent spread and repression.<sup>114</sup> One constantly comes across statements like the following:

After Niclaes' works began to appear in English, in 1574, there were numerous references to the Familists. From this time on the society must have developed rapidly.<sup>115</sup>

In the years from 1581 until the Queen's death there are fewer and fewer references to Familists. The directives issued in the proclamation of the Queen and the vigilance of the bishops must have been successful in accomplishing the suppression of the sect.<sup>116</sup>

That familism, itself, was destroyed cannot be concluded for it emerged again as soon as vigilance was relaxed after Elizabeth's death.<sup>117</sup>

That Familists were active again [under James I] is borne out by the frequent references to individual Familists, preaching elders, and their congregations.<sup>118</sup>

After the revolution there is a brief resurgence of familism. . . New editions of Niclaes' works were printed in the 1640's and 1650's.<sup>119</sup>

In the last fifteen years or so there have been numerous other works on the Family of Love in England. It is unnecessary to go through them all and show how they have all, with minor variation, followed the same approach. There has been only one other lengthier treatment of the Family of Love.<sup>120</sup> In it Alastair Hamilton provides the most useful and concise account of the Niclaes and the

Family of Love to date. Especially valuable are the chapters on the spiritual traditions within which the Family of Love was originated, and on the humanist circle in Antwerp around Plantin. Nevertheless, when he comes to treat the Family of Love in England, we come up against the same old story. Granted, Hamilton is a little more judicious than some others in his use of sources, for he doubts that the 1561 Surrey confession was really one of devoted followers of H.N. and the "most we can say, therefore, is that the sectarians of 1561 were ready to receive the Familist doctrine."<sup>121</sup> Other than such minor qualifications on the main outline, there is not much new here. We still have the same picture of the sect growing rapidly under the impetus of the translation of Niclaes' works and the missionary activity of Vitell, provoking official repression inducing the sect to go underground where it eventually died out sometime in the first half of the seventeenth century. Hamilton is more willing than some others to admit that "the numerical power of the Familists in the seventeenth century was very far from corresponding to the ever more frequent complaints against them."<sup>122</sup> Thus he does admit that in the seventeenth century the accusation of Familism and the number of works written against the Family of Love, or the references to it, are an unreliable guide to the extent of the sect in England. But he does not apply this same methodological incisiveness to the history of the Family in the sixteenth century.

Here we are at the heart of the problem. As we shall see, there is very little objective evidence about the Family of Love in England. Of necessity, historians have had to base their accounts on hostile sources. There is nothing wrong with this in itself, as long as the hostile and polemical purposes of the writers are kept in mind. Of the recent commentators on the Family of Love, not one has taken the accounts of John Rogers and other hostile writers at face value. There are lengthy

passages to show that the early critics misinterpreted either unknowingly or willfully, H.N.'s writings and doctrines.<sup>123</sup> Thus, as mentioned above, we have seemingly endless quibbling about various aspects of H.N.'s doctrines: What were his views on the Mass, on baptism, on regeneration, on sin, on the Scriptures, etc.? Thus, while admitting that H.N.'s critics were motivated by polemical purposes, and pointing out that the particulars of their attacks must be carefully weighed, the sheer volume of these attacks must serve as some sort of guide to the rise and fall of the Family of Love:

Information about Niclas' Elizabethan followers comes to us almost entirely through hostile channels: the "confessions" of ex-Familists or of persons suspected of being Familists, statements made in books attacking the sect . . . and actions taken by the government against the Family. But the inferences seem trustworthy when one finds persistent characteristics in the life of this sect that were not similarly prominent in other contemporary groups.<sup>124</sup>

In fact, the evidence of the state papers seems to indicate that the period of Familist activity singled out by Strype for particular attention marked the peak of Familist activity throughout England; this zenith in the sect's fortunes extended from 1575, when Vitells' translations first appeared in England, to 1580, when the sect was officially suppressed by royal proclamation.<sup>125</sup>

One can notice a rising concern among the public developing from 1578 through 1579 and culminating in a proclamation of the Queen in October of 1580.<sup>126</sup>

In the face of official suppression following the proclamation, familism waned and did not wax again until the early years of King James' reign.<sup>127</sup>

The underlying assumption is that even with the paucity of actual documentary sources, one can follow the fortunes of the Family of Love by looking at its critics and at governmental attempts to suppress it. This seems reasonable enough. Or is

it? The great failing of this approach is that it assumes a constant attitude on the part of intellectuals, churchmen, and governmental authorities. If these people were always equally concerned with stamping out sects such as the Family of Love, then this approach would be justified. But in fact they were not. It is as if an historian, several centuries from now, were to examine the U.S.A. in the early 1950's. Using this sort of approach, he would inevitably conclude, on the basis of Senator McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities Committee, that the Communist Party of the United States was attracting a large number of members and was actually about to overthrow the government.

By broadening the picture, we can place the Family of Love, and hence the reaction to it, in its proper context. But first we must examine the actual evidence for the history of the Family in England. This, it will be argued, is of three types: actual documentary sources, confessions of Familists, government records, and the like; works attributed to Familist authors including H.N. himself; and works written by authors hostile to the Family of Love. The earliest English critics of the Family of Love - John Rogers, John Knewstubb, and William Wilkinson - on whom virtually all other accounts rely so heavily, will be put into a broad intellectual and cultural tradition. This tradition is Continental in origin, primarily Swiss, and was transmitted to England by returning Marian exiles, by constant communication between Zürich and England, and through Martin Bucer and Cambridge University. Then there is also the matter of timing: Why was the Family of Love perceived as such a threat at this precise time in the late 1570's (the works of Rogers, Knewstubb, Wilkinson, and the Proclamation all appeared within three years of each other)? The standard answer is, as we have seen, simply that there were more Familists at this time. The key to the solution of this problem lies not so much in any inexplicable

and unprovable growth in the Family of Love, but in the perception of the authorities, in Elizabethan religious politics. In other words, they found Familists because they were looking for them.

## CHAPTER II

What are the sources for the history of the Family of Love in England? They fall into three general categories. First, there are actual documentary sources, confessions, letters, and government reports which allude to the sect's existence. Then there are works of the Family of Love in English, either translations of H.N.'s works, several of which make reference to followers in England, translations of the works of other continental Familist writers, or works attributable to English members of the Family of Love. Lastly, there are the hostile contemporary accounts. Let us examine each in turn.

The actual documentary sources for the history of the sect in England are very few. The first we come across is a confession taken in Guildford May 28, 1561 by William More.<sup>1</sup> This confession was given by Thomas Chaundeler and Robert Sterete. John Rogers included it in his Displaying of 1578. In it, the two men describe a group of sectaries complete with secret conventicles, passwords, rituals, and a code of ethics. Many of the articles to which the two subscribed sound very much indeed like the teachings of Niclaes. Significantly, however, neither the Family of Love nor H.N. are once mentioned by name. However, in one article (omitted by Rogers) there is a passing reference to "Henrike, a Dutchman, the head of all the congregation."<sup>2</sup> This, for some, is conclusive evidence that this Surrey group was a cell of the Family of Love.<sup>3</sup> The two men also allude to connections that their Surrey group had with other cells "in divers places of the realm . . . as in the Isle of Ely, Essex, Berkshire, Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire, Devonshire, and London."<sup>4</sup> The references to the Isle of Ely and London are especially tantalizing,



for, as we shall see, in these places there is evidence that the Family of Love was active. In fact, Chaundeler says that his wife was "fetched out of the Isle of Ely by two of the congregation, the man and the woman being utter strangers before they came together to be married."<sup>5</sup> However, Chaundeler and his wife apparently did not take to each other, this disgruntlement being a possible cause of the confession's existence. This in itself should make us wary of accepting all the articles of this confession carte blanche.

Were these two men and the group they describe Familists? Perhaps, in the sense alluded to above: they did exhibit certain characteristics which are vaguely similar to Niclaes' teachings. Were they members of the sect called the Family of Love? Probably not. Tempting as it is to identify the "Henrike" of the confession with Niclaes, in the absence of more conclusive evidence, the connection cannot be made. Remember that even in the Royal Proclamation of 1580, Niclaes was identified only as H.N. Nowhere in the evidence is any part of his name given. So it seems unlikely that even if they were followers of H.N., they would know any more of the prophet's identity than his initials. In addition, the time frame is all wrong. Niclaes' works were not translated into English until the mid-1570's. The Surrey sectaries are characterized by More as "all unlearned, saving that some of them can read English and that not very perfectly."<sup>6</sup> Thus, it seems impossible that they could have read H.N. in English, let alone in the original Low German.

Additional evidence has been adduced by Joseph Martin to try to show that this was a cell of the Family of Love.<sup>7</sup> Following the career of Thomas Allen of Womersley, identified in the confession as an elder, he concludes that this must have been the Family of Love. Looking into the later papers of Sir William More, the Surrey magistrate found that Allen possessed . . . "a booke of h n prevelye hidden at

the verye tyme of my comynge for I sawe his wyf when she dyd secretlie covere hit."<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, this episode occurred some twenty years after 1561, and there still was no evidence that "Allen" (even if it is the same person -- no Christian name is given for the later Allen) was a member of the Family of Love in 1561. In addition Christopher Vitell, when confronted with this confession by John Rogers some eighteen years later, denied that they were at that time members of the Family of Love: "of H.N. his doctrine at that time they knew not."<sup>9</sup> What is, of course, entirely possible is that in the meantime they had become acquainted with the Family of Love and become followers of H.N. This would account for "Allen's" possession of H.N.'s books. Indeed Hamilton seems to be right on the mark when he says, "[t]he most we can say, therefore, is that the sectarians were ready to receive the Familist doctrine."<sup>10</sup>

Then there is the case of Family of Love activity at Court. On September 28, 1578, the Privy Council sent a letter to Aylmer, then Bishop of London, "requiring him to call unto him Robert Seale, Thomas Mathewe, Lewes Stewarde, Anthony Enscombe and William Eling, Yeomen of the Garde, persons noted to be of the secte called the Familie of Love, and to conferre with them for their reformation in Relligion . . ."<sup>11</sup> However, a week and a half later, Aylmer informed the Council that "those of her Majesties Garde suspected to be of the Family of Love . . . are in all pointes of Religion verie sound." No further action was taken at this time, except that the Councillors reaffirmed the accused in their positions, and gave them some time off; "But before they return hither their Lordships thincke it meete that they repaire into some strete out of the Cittie, where they may remaine for to take the ayer for v or vj dayes."<sup>12</sup>

Two years later, however, on October 9, 1580 (note the timing -- the Royal Proclamation was issued on October 3), two Yeomen of the Guard, identified as -- Seale and Mathewe -- (obviously the same Robert Seale and Thomas Mathewe) were "committed to the prison of Marshallsea, refusing to subscribe unto certain erroneous and false articles gathered out of the bookes of one H.N., supposed to be the author of a certaine Secte called the Familie of Love, whereof they were vehemently suspected to be, and order geven to the Clerke of the Checke to take her Majesties coate from them."<sup>13</sup> Shortly thereafter Anthonie Ediscombe (obviously the Anthony Enscombe of 1578), "being suspected to be one of the sect of the Familie of Love, denied the same before ther Lordships. . . ."<sup>14</sup> On November 30, 1580, Thomas Seale (a relative of Robert Seale?), "charged before their Lordships with certen lewde and irreverent speeches of the Councell, tending to charge them with injustice in the punishing of certen persones . . . being of the Secte called the Familie of Love," was committed to Marshallsea, "there to remayne to be further examined and proceded with all as shold appertaine."<sup>15</sup> The only other bit of evidence regarding this case is an undated manuscript among the Harley manuscripts in the British Museum which would seem to be a confession of the accused guards:

The confesion of sele ely and mathew/beinge of the famely of Love  
&/of her maisties gard/They must be deyfyed in god & god in  
them/[T]he Jugement & resurexion is past already/ We are  
eylewmynatid that is to saye of the /[?resurexion] & restoryd to  
the perfection that Adam/[?had] before his fale/[Th]e Literall  
sence of the scrypture they do not regard/[What] so ever they do is  
no syne/ [Th]ey ought not to suffer their bodyes to be executed  
bycause / they are the temples of the holly gost/[The]y may  
lawfully deny religion of faithe before any/ [if] ther be any cause  
of persecusion/[The]r ought not to be any maiestarts amongst  
crystyans/<sup>16</sup>

Whether it was written by a secretary or by the guardsmen themselves is impossible to determine. The "sele" and "mathew" are obviously Robert Seale and Thomas Mathewe, while the "ely" could possibly be the William Eling of the group accused in 1578. With this confession, this group vanishes from the record. Granted, this is not much to go on; nevertheless, these men were almost certainly members of the Family of Love, and we shall have occasion to refer to them again.

That the Family of Love's centre of activity was Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely becomes apparent in several other confessions. In December, 1574, Dr. Andrew Perne, the Dean of Ely, alarmed by reports of private assemblies in the parish of Balsham, examined six villagers, among whom was one Robert Sharpe, parson at Strethall, in Essex, Edmund Rule, and two members of the Lawrence family.<sup>17</sup> Perne was apparently satisfied with their answers -- Sharpe "signed a lengthy confession attesting to his and his disciples' orthodoxy,"<sup>18</sup> and no further action was taken. However, some six months later Robert Sharpe, along with five others recanted their belief in the Family of Love at Paul's Cross.<sup>19</sup> That Sharpe, and by extension the Balsham groups were members of the Family of Love, there is little doubt. Sharpe admitted in his recantation that he had "heretofore unadvisedly, conceyved good opinion of certaine books of an author, otherwise unknown, save only that he noteth himself by the letters H.N."<sup>20</sup> The very next day, the Privy Council wrote to Sandys, then Bishop of London "touching order to be taken with Anabaptists and those of the Family of Love."<sup>21</sup>

In 1580, Richard Cox, the Bishop of Ely, at the urging of William Wilkinson, who had dedicated his Confutation to the Bishop, embarked on a campaign to hunt down the Family of Love in his diocese. As a result, a group of people from Wisbech were examined by the Bishop between October 3 and 5, 1580. Again, note the

timing: Cox's campaign is simultaneous with the promulgation of the Royal Proclamation. The leader of this group appears to have been John Bourne, a glover. All nine people examined (a tenth, Thomas Piersonne, "yeoman and the wealthiest of the company, before he was sent for conveyed himself away as it is thought to London . . .)<sup>22</sup> recanted their belief in H.N. and the Family of Love. What happened to this group afterwards is unknown. Certainly, they may have, as Felicity Heal suggests, returned to the sect.<sup>23</sup> This would be quite consistent with the behaviour alleged as typical of the Family of Love. But there is no evidence for it.

There is one other bit of evidence concerning the Wisbech group. This is a confession dictated to "Thomas Barwicke, minister," by Bourne's apprentice, Leonard Romsey.<sup>24</sup> Apparently Romsey had escaped questioning with his master and made his confession at some later date. Romsey describes how his master brought him into the sect and touches on their beliefs. Most interesting from our point of view, however, is his allusion to their connections at Court:

for it being reported upon a time that a commission was granted forth against us of Wisbech we had a letter from the Family of Love in the court, from one Dorrington and Zeale, wherein we were advertised how to behave our selves before the commissioners and charged that we should deny that we had seen any of the books of H.N., whereupon all the books were conveyed.<sup>25</sup>

Here is the only evidence of any connections between different groups of the Family of Love. It appears that "Dorrington and Zeale" (probably either Robert or Thomas Seale), acting upon their inside information, had informed their co-religionists at Wisbech of the upcoming persecution.

The possibility remains, however, that Romsey's confession was somewhat manufactured. Alastair Hamilton believes that the confession played too perfectly into the hands of the authorities to be as voluntary as advertised.<sup>26</sup> There is also the possibility that Romsey had been embittered against his employer and purposely

sought to damage him. In his confession, Romsey states that the sect was planning an armed uprising "when they are of sufficient number to undertake the matter."<sup>27</sup> Certainly H.N. would never have approved of this. Perhaps this was an idiosyncratic belief of the Wisbech group, or maybe the interrogators asked the questions in such a way as to lead to this statement, or perhaps Romsey was trying to make himself seem more important in the eyes of the authorities.

In 1576, David Thickpenny, curate of Brighthelmstone in the diocese of Chichester, was accused by his bishop, Richard Curteys, of being of the Family of Love.<sup>28</sup> Thickpenny denied the charge and appealed to the Council which turned the matter over to Archbishop Grindal. Grindal, having looked into the matter and examined Thickpenny, concluded that "my said lord [the Bishop of Chichester] shewed no sufficient ground of his said opinion."<sup>29</sup> Thickpenny was restored and ordered to preach several sermons against the Family of Love. However, Thickpenny was again called on the carpet before Bishop Curteys. We do not know what became of the matter. Certainly Thickpenny's behaviour seems in accordance with the behaviour of other Family members when confronted by authority; confess, recant, and when set free, continue as before. However, not having heard from Thickpenny himself, only from his accusers, it would seem an unwarranted assumption to make him a member of the Family of Love. After all, we know nothing of his beliefs, and members of the Family of Love were certainly not the only ones to falsely confess and recant.

The second category of evidence for the history of the Family of Love in England consists of written works attributed to members of the Family. Chief among these, of course, are the translations of H.N.'s own works. Though published without date or place of printing, the dates can be established with a fair degree of

accuracy. (The Short Title Catalogue has, seemingly arbitrarily, assigned dates of 1574 or 1575 to most of them.) Certainly they were printed after the 1573 schism -- they were not printed by Plantin in Antwerp or by Van Hasselt in Cologne -- and before the 1580 Proclamation where several of them are mentioned by name.

Robert Sharpe seemingly had access to H.N.'s works as early as 1574. It seems likely therefore, without being too specific, that English translations of H.N. started appearing shortly after the schism in 1573 and trickled slowly into England over the next six or seven years. As for the place of printing, the best we can do is attribute them to the mysterious Cologne press described in Chapter One.

Although a number of H.N.'s works were translated (the STC lists sixteen) only a few are really noteworthy for our purposes. These are:<sup>30</sup>

1. Evangelium Regni. Ein Frolicke Bodeschop vam Ryke. (Antwerp, 1555-1562); in English, Evangelium Regni. A joyfull Message of the Kingdom.
2. Prophetie des Geistes der Liefden. (Antwerp, 1555-1562); in English, The Prophetie of the Spirit of Love.
3. Den Spiegel der Gherechticheit. (Antwerp, 1562); the entire work was never translated into English. Rather, its two introductions were published separately under the titles An Introduction to the holy Understanding of the Glasse of Righteousness and A Figure of the true and Spiritual Tabernacle according to the inward Temple of the House of God in the Spirit.
4. Exhortatio. De Eerste Vormaninge H.N. Tot syne kinderen, unde dem Husgesinne der Liefden. (Cologne, 1573); in English, Exhortatio I. The first exhortation of H.N. to his Children, and to the Family of Love.
5. Revalatio Dei. De openbaringe Godes, und syne grote Prophetie. (Cologne c. 1575); in English, Revelatio Dei. The Reuelation of God, and his great Propheatie: which God now; in the last Daye; hath shewed unto his Elect.

6. Terra Pacis. Ware getügenisse van idt geistlich Landtschap des Fredes. (Cologne, 1580); in English, Terra Pacis. A True Testification of the Spirituall Lande of Peace; which is the Spirituall Lande of Promyse, and the holy Citie of Peace or the Heauenly Ierusalem.

As for who the translator was, the only suitable candidate (of whom we know, at any rate) is Christopher Vitell. (Occasionally the "t" is doubled, one "l" left off, or an "s" appended. Thus, Vitel, Vittell, Vitells, etc.)

We have already come across the name Christopher Vitell in connection with the Family of Love in England. He is described by both Rogers and Wilkinson as the chief elder of the Family of Love.<sup>31</sup> Rogers says that he was Dutch himself, but this is open to question.<sup>32</sup> However, whether he was English or Dutch is irrelevant. He does seem to have been the chief spokesman of the Family of Love in England, and was certainly the leader with the highest profile.

Even if he was Dutch, it appears Vitell had been living in England for quite some time. There are references to him as far back as Henry's reign:

... in King Henry's reign ... unconstant, in King Edward's reign, a dissembler, and Queen Mary's reign, a plain Arian, and now in this our Princes' reign, a chief teacher of the Family of Love.<sup>33</sup>

Vitell makes his first appearance on the scene in 1555 in Colchester. William Wilkinson, in his Confutation, includes the account of one Henry Crinell (Orinell) of Willingham in Cambridgeshire.<sup>34</sup> Orinell states that to escape Catholic persecution he went to Colchester, and while there, in an inn frequented by Protestants, heard a discussion between Vitell and another man. Vitell, of course, took the heretical side, denying infant baptism, predestination and even, according to Orinell, the divinity of Christ. It seems certain that at this time, Vitell was not a member of the Family of Love. Although, according to Orinell, he did mention a man "who lived as he sayd beyond the seas an holy life,"<sup>35</sup> it is not clear whether this refers to



H.N., David Joris, or someone else. Also, the views attributed to Vitell by Orinell bear little resemblance to the teachings of H.N., or at least, what little resemblance they do bear could certainly have come from other sources. In any case, sometime early in Elizabeth's reign, he recanted his Arian views at Paul's Cross.<sup>36</sup>

How and when Vitell was converted to the Family of Love is not known. It happened certainly some time between his recantation at Paul's Cross and 1577, when he is first mentioned by a hostile writer.<sup>37</sup> By that time, he appears to have emerged as the chief leader of the Family in England. Although he is often referred to as "Christopher Vitell of Southwark, joyner,"<sup>38</sup> he seems to have led a wandering life, both for the sake of the Family and his own liberty. Rogers states that his wife in London had not seen him in two years.<sup>39</sup>

Vitell must have travelled to the Continent, for his writings betray an intimate familiarity with H.N. and his teachings, which indicates some personal contact with the prophet. He was probably also the translator of several of H.N.'s works into English,<sup>40</sup> and this fact, if indeed the books were printed in Cologne, would indicate Continental travel. Certainly some contact with Niclaes would have been likely for the accomplishing of this task. What eventually happened to Vitell, we do not know. After John Rogers' Answer unto a wicked libel in 1579, nothing further is heard of him. One would think that if he had been arrested or interrogated, one would certainly have heard of it in the polemical literature.

Several of H.N.'s works are remarkable in that they make reference to his followers in England. The first of these is "An Epistle sent unto two daughters of Warwick." Fuller, as we have seen, used this as evidence of Niclaes' visit to England under Edward; these daughters of Warwick were, after all, his two principal "perverts."<sup>41</sup> However, since Niclaes signed the letter "your unknown friend," it

seems unlikely that he knew them personally.<sup>42</sup> This letter exists in two forms. One, from about 1579, is a manuscript to be found in Lambeth Palace.<sup>43</sup> Then, in 1608, it was reprinted with a refutation in Amsterdam by the separatist Henry Ainsworth.<sup>44</sup> It is not known when the letter was originally written, though Hamilton dates it sometime during Mary's reign.<sup>45</sup> The advice contained in this letter was grist to the authorities' mill:

No my beloved, no, the confession of Christ must stand in greater force or effect than to be confessed with the mouth, in the ceremonial service . . .<sup>46</sup>

The second exists only in manuscript form in Lambeth Palace.<sup>47</sup> This is "The Epistle of H.N. . . . unto the right Reverend Bishops." This letter is similar to the vindication Niclaes sent to the authorities in Emden some twenty years earlier, although "the epistle had a belligerent note" lacking in the former.<sup>48</sup> This letter was probably a response to one of the campaigns mounted against the sect in the 1570's. Its main assertion is that "There is no excuse for persecuting a community of law-abiding men who do their duty to the Queen and her civil and ecclesiastical representatives."<sup>49</sup> As far as the works of H.N. himself are concerned, these are the only two references to followers in England.

From time to time, members of the Family of Love took it upon themselves to defend themselves in print from their adversaries. The first of these is the anonymous Brief Rehearsall, printed in 1575.<sup>50</sup> Although there are no copies of this edition extant, the date seems certain, for the reprinted edition of 1656 bears that date, and John Rogers mentions having read it. The date is significant in that this document seems to have been a response to campaign against the Family of Love undertaken at the time. It was in late 1574 that Dr. Perne undertook the examination of Robert Sharpe and the Privy Council wrote to the Bishop of London regarding the Family of Love.

As might be expected, the thrust of the Brief Rehearsall is that the Family of Love is no threat. Throughout, the author or authors protest their loyalty, obedience, and peacefulness:

And to that end, obey we also our Sovereign Lady the Queen, and the Magistrates our foregoers, both spiritual and temporal: and that of Gods behalf, and even for our conscience and the peaces cause: paying all tribute unto these said Magistrates, living obediently and Subject-like, even as is meet and right under their Laws . . .<sup>51</sup>

As also might be expected, the author of the Brief Rehearsall downplays the foreign origins of the sect and its heterodox nature:

And for that cause, to the end that we might uprightly shew forth the same, both in the deed and truth . . . not using any other Ceremonies, Law, Statues, nor Sacraments of Baptism, then such as are ministered in the Church of England.<sup>52</sup>

Nevertheless, it does seem to be an authentic document of the Family of Love. For one thing, the name "Family of Love" is used in the title and throughout the work. Nowhere is this name used (except by critics) where it applies to anything other than H.N.'s sect.

A Brief Rehearsall being an anonymous work, the best we can do is speculate as to its authorship. As we have seen, there was a group of the Family of Love among the minor functionaries at Court. This seems to be the most likely source of any apologetics for the Family of Love.

The significance of this document is not easy to assess. It does show that there were definitely members of the Family sufficiently literate to pen it, sophisticated enough to couch it in the proper language, and powerful enough to have it printed. Who these people were, as mentioned above must remain a matter of speculation. As a creed of the Family of Love, it is certainly not entirely truthful, and here the sectaries may have been giving their enemies ammunition, for surely those who wanted to could find out that A Brief Rehearsall omitted more

than it included. Thus, it could be seen as yet another example of the group's deceitful nature.

Another anonymous work attributed to the Family of Love is An Apology for the Service of Love. This work is in the form of a play, a discussion between three characters: Exile, a member of the Family of Love, Citizen, and Countryman. Again, this is an attempt on the part of the Family of Love to answer the charges against them. However, rather than, as in A Brief Rehearsall where only general statements are made about the group's loyalty and orthodoxy, in An Apology charges are answered in specific:

Citizen: Wilt thou deny the Sacrament of Baptisme?

Exile: Though I speak of the true Baptisme of regeneration through repentance, and newnesse of life, yet do I not deny the holy Sacrament of Baptisme, which signifieth regeneration in Christ and is ministered unto Infants, though some have most unjustly so reported to us.<sup>53</sup>

The upshot of the discussion is, of course, that Citizen and Countryman are convinced of Exile's orthodoxy.<sup>54</sup>

The question of authorship, here as with A Brief Rehearsall, must remain in the realm of speculation. However, in the case of An Apology, we are at least given a clue. In the preface, the author describes himself as "one of her Majesties menial servants, who was in no small esteem with Her, for his known wisdom and godliness."<sup>55</sup> The category of "menial servants" would seem to fit the Yeoman Guards, among whom, as we have seen, the Family of Love was popular. The similarities between A Brief Rehearsall and An Apology do not end there. Both are extant only in editions printed in 1656 by Giles Calvert. In the case of A Brief Rehearsall, Calvert's edition bears the date 1575, but for An Apology, there is no such date. Strype says the original edition was published in 1575,<sup>56</sup> and it was certainly published between 1575 and 1580.<sup>57</sup> Thus, An Apology, like A Brief

Rehearsall, seems to have been a response to what was possibly perceived as a growing antagonism within official circles.

In addition to the English translations of Niclaes' works, there are several other English translations of Continental Familist tracts. One of these is A Good and fruitfull Exhortation unto the Family of Love by "Elidad", identified only as a "fellow elder with the Elder H.N." Though published without date or place of publication the STC lists the date as 1574. "Elidad" was one of the three elders Niclaes took with him from Amsterdam to Emden. Whether this "Elidad" and the "Elidad" who wrote A Good and fruitfull Exhortation are identical is unknown. Perhaps the name refers to an office rather than a particular person. In any case, A Good and fruitfull Exhortation seems to have been written after the Hielist rift, which would date the original "Base-Almayne" version out of which the English translation was made sometime after 1573:

But ye shall not contend or dispute; . . . with any of all those  
that bring-in Variaunce and make Breach.<sup>58</sup>

The emphasis in this work is on unity and uniformity within the Family of Love. Written, as one supposes, after the split in the sect (which, by the way, seems not to have affected the Family of Love in England at all), this is indeed understandable. It dwells at length on relationships within the Family of Love. Like the English translations of H.N.'s works, A Good and fruitfull Exhortation was not printed in England; the most likely spot seems to have been Cologne. As far as who did the translating, this is unknown, but as with H.N.'s works, the most likely candidate would seem to be Christopher Vitell.

Another of these works is A distinct declaration of the requiring of the Lord, by "Fidelitas", a fellow elder with H.N. in the Famelie of the Loue." Like A Good and fruitfull Exhortation, it was "translated out of the Base-Almayne" and printed

without date or place. (The STC lists the date as 1575). This also, like the former, appears to have been written after the split in the sect. If "Elidad" is a compassionate father, guiding the Family in its internal relations, then "Fidelitas" is much more an angel of vengeance, emphasizing judgment, the destruction of the ungodly, and the apocalypse:

Oh! what an unmeasurable woe, cometh then over the wicked Worlde: and also over all them that cleave unto her/ and shew-fourth no Repentaunce/ nor will assemble them wherunto they are called and bidden through the gracious Woord and his Service of Loue, to their preservation in the Godliness.<sup>59</sup>

Yes/even-then will the Lorde himself with his Arme/and the Armes of his holy ones, be the true Judge upon the Earth/ and cleanse the universall Earth, from all the Unrighteousness and Falshood that the Children of Men . . . have practised and erected upon the earth.<sup>60</sup>

A third work is A Reproofe Spoken and Given against all False Christians by "Abia Nazarenius." Julia Ebel has speculated that this is pseudonym for Vitell himself, but this is without substantiation.<sup>61</sup> This tract, unlike the others bears a date, 1579, but like the others, no place of printing. As its title suggests, it is an attack on the critics of the Family of Love. Especially interesting from our point of view is a preface which appears to have been written specifically for the English translation. (Perhaps this is by Vitell.) In it the three earliest English critics are mentioned by name: Stephen Bateman, John Rogers, and John Knewstubb.<sup>62</sup>

Another Familist work translated into English is Mirabilia opera Dei: Certaine wonderfull works of God which hapned to H.N. by "Tobias." "Tobias", like "Elidad", is the name of one of the three elders H.N. took with him from Amsterdam to Emden. This is an hagiographical account of H.N.'s life and works which runs parallel to the Chronika by "Daniel" and Acta H.N. by "Zacharias."<sup>63</sup>

What do these works tell us about the Family of Love in England? Apart from the preface to A Reproofe, England or English people are not mentioned at all. Yet the very fact that these works were translated from "base-almayne" or "nether-Saxon" into English, indicates that somebody thought the task was worthwhile. The expense and labour of translating, printing, and (after 1580, surreptitiously) transporting them into England, indicates that they were not shots in the dark, so to speak. Somebody was on the receiving end; there had to be a demand for them, however small. That these works actually found their way to England and were read by English members of the Family of Love is borne out by other sources. In the confession of the Family of Love at Wisbech, John Bourne admitted that among the works of H.N. which he possessed were also the works of "Elidad" and "Fidelitas."<sup>64</sup>

The only other document we have which definitely is a work of the Family of Love is a petition addressed to James I upon his accession in 1604.<sup>65</sup> This petition, couched in the subservient language of humble subjects addressing their monarch, seeks to correct His Majesty's view of the sect. In Basilikon Doron, published in 1599 as a work of instruction for his son, the King identified them with the Puritans:

First then, as to the name of Puritanes, I am not ignorant that the stile thereof doth properly belong only to that vile sect amongst the Anabaptistes called the Familie of love . . .<sup>66</sup>

The petitioners

doe beseech your Princely Majesty to understand that the people of the family of love, or of God, doe utterly disclaime and detest all the said absurd and self-conceited opinions and disobedient and erroneous sorts of the Anabaptists, Browne, Penry, Puritans, and all other proud minded sects and heresies whatsoever, protesting upon paine of our lives, that wee are not consenting with any such brainesicke preachers, nor their rebellious and disobedient sects whatsoever, but have been, and ever will be truly obedient to your Highnesse. . . .<sup>67</sup>

Their only offense, they say, is that "we have read certaine bookes brought forth by a Germane authour under the characters of H.N."<sup>68</sup> They also claim, probably somewhat dishonestly, for they must have known of the 1580 Proclamation, "Against which Authour and his books we never yet heard nor knew any Law established in this Realme by our late gracious Sovereigne."<sup>69</sup> They have been victimized by "malicious and slanderous reports," and by magistrates who "have framed divers and subtle articles for us, being plaine and unlearned men to answer upon our oaths, whereby to urge and gather somethings from our selves, so to approve their false and unchristian accusations to be true. . . ."<sup>70</sup>

Their request is that the King only read H.N.'s work for himself and meet with elders of the Family of Love to discuss them. Interestingly, they offer

to procure some of the learned men out of that Country (if there be any yet remaining alive that were well acquainted with the Author and his works in his life time, and which likewise have exercized his works ever since) to come over and attend upon your Majesty at your appointed time convenient, who can much more sufficiently instruct and resolve your Majesty in any unusual words, phrase, or matter that may happily seem darke and doubtfull to your Majesty than any of us in this land are able to doe.<sup>71</sup>

It is doubtful whether James ever saw this petition, and even if he had, it surely would not have made any difference. This petition again seems to have been the work of someone at Court, certainly of someone literate enough to be able to write it, and familiar enough with the proper forms of address to the King.

Hamilton believes that it was the work of Thomas or Robert Seale, more likely the latter.<sup>72</sup>

The 1604 petition is the last direct evidence we have for the existence of the Family of Love in England. No more is heard from the sect. All we get from now on are hostile accounts and innuendo. It does indeed seem likely that the 1604 petition represents the sect's last gasp, or at least its last attempt at justifying



itself before the authorities. If there were any members after this, they probably kept their beliefs to themselves, giving up any hope of evangelization or vindication.

The Family of Love seems to have existed in England on two different levels.<sup>73</sup> The first, the one which we have concerned ourselves with mostly up until now, is the Family of Love made up of Englishmen, chiefly in London and the Isle of Ely. The second revolved around the foreign, specifically the Dutch, community in London. The Dutch community in London had been granted their own church under Edward VI to be held in the former buildings of the Augustinian Friars.<sup>74</sup> Under the charter granted by the King, the Strangers' Church at Austin Friars was to be completely autonomous of the bishops' jurisdiction and authority, "to act and organize matters in our own way, even if we deviate in our ceremonies and church customs from the Anglican."<sup>75</sup> The Church was divided into a Walloon section and a Dutch section, Martin Micronius being one of the ministers of the latter.<sup>76</sup> John a Lasco was appointed superintendent over both. A Lasco was the son of a Polish nobleman who had studied with Erasmus and subsequently gone over to the Reformation. In 1540 he settled in Emden and became pastor of a church there. Countess Anna made him her superintendent of churches in 1542 to try and impose some kind of order in East Frisian churches. Thus, he would almost certainly have heard of H.N. and his Family of Love, even if he did not know that he and the prophet were living in the very same town. A Lasco first went to England in 1548 at Cranmer's invitation and settled there permanently in 1550 when he was appointed superintendent of the Strangers' Church. In 1553, he left England, never to return.<sup>77</sup>

Martin Micronius, one of the pastors (along with Wouter Delen)<sup>78</sup> of the Dutch Church, was a Fleming from Ghent. He had studied in Basel and Zürich. He met a Lasco in London upon the Pole's first visit there in 1548 and returned with him to

Emden. He returned in 1549, and shortly thereafter became pastor at Austin Friars. 79

Upon Edward's death and Mary's accession, the leaders of the Dutch Protestant community, seeing which way the wind was blowing, fled England, most of them, including Micronius, to Emden. While in "exile" from England, Micronius edited the attack on H.N. by Adrian de Kuiper, a Protestant pastor from Breda, and later revised and published it himself.<sup>80</sup> Upon Elizabeth's accession, the Dutch Church returned from its "exile." Although the church at Austin Friars was re-established, its independence was curtailed and it was now subject to the authority of the Bishop of London.<sup>81</sup>

Given the international nature of the intellectual and merchant community of the sixteenth century, and the close ties which the Dutch refugees in London maintained with the homeland, it would be surprising indeed if something of the Family of Love did not surface at Austin Friars. Although there is no conclusive evidence for it, some interesting inferences may be made. Living in London at this time were people who had connections with the Family of Love on the Continent. One, the historian Emmanuel van Meteren, was a relative of Ortelius.<sup>82</sup> Another, Jacob Cool the Elder (the name had been anglicized from Coels) was a silk merchant who was married to Ortelius' sister and was thus related to both the geographer and Van Meteren. He may also have been a relative of Martynken Coels, an active member of the Family on the Continent.<sup>83</sup> Yet another was Johann Radermacher the Elder, a friend of Ortelius'; he had been involved in a scheme with Niclaes and Plantin to export Hebrew Bibles to Jewish communities in Morocco.<sup>84</sup>

In 1559 a new preacher appeared at Austin Friars. This was Adrian van Haemstede. Van Haemstede's reputation preceded him. He had already been in

trouble in the Low Countries -- there was a price on his head<sup>85</sup> -- for being "soft" on the Anabaptists. In London, Van Haemstede attracted both followers and enemies. Among his followers were Van Meteren and by implication the Cools and Radermacher.<sup>86</sup> The poet Karel Utenhove accused the preacher of Familism in a letter to his brother Jan, one of the founders of the Dutch Church and now an elder there.<sup>87</sup> Although there is no solid evidence to support this accusation, Van Haemstede's career caused a serious rift before he was forced to leave England on pain of death in August 1562.<sup>88</sup> Adding speculative fuel to the fire that Van Haemstede was a member of the Family of Love, one of the triplets (of whom two lived) born to his wife during their flight from England, was named "Charitas."

To take Van Haemstede's place, a young pastor named Nicholas Carinaeus was persuaded to leave his church in Jenlet, East Friesland and go to London.<sup>89</sup> Carinaeus had further revised De Kuiper's and Micronius' attacks on H.N.<sup>90</sup> Both attacks are included by John Knewstubb in his Confutation. Carinaeus arrived in London in 1562 and died of the plague the next year.<sup>91</sup>

Any statements about the Family of Love in Austin Friars must be accounted speculation, but not completely uninformed speculation. If we cannot agree with Fuller that Niclaes caused trouble in the Dutch Church under Edward, it seems likely that his reputation or his doctrines did. Perhaps the "two daughters of Warwick" to whom he wrote were somehow affiliated with the Dutch community in London. In any case, both Micronius and Carinaeus came to London having attacked H.N. in print, and they were not likely to have left their prejudices back in East Friesland.

We come now to the third type of evidence concerning the Family of Love in England; the most plentiful and certainly the most misunderstood: hostile writings

against the sect. For now, however, we shall only be looking at minor and incidental treatments. In the next chapter we shall deal with the three major anti-Family of Love works, putting them into a political, religious, and diplomatic context: John Rogers' Displaying of an Horrible Secte of grosse and wicked heretiques, John Knewstubb's Confutation of Monstrous Heresies, and William Wilkinson's Confutation of Certain Articles delivered unto the Family of Love. As will be clear later on, it is more suitable to deal with these works in the context of the religious and political convictions of their authors and the general political and religious situation. The three works are strikingly similar in style and substance, and it was indeed these three which formed the core of official and public perception of the Family of Love, and the picture they presented influenced all those who came after.

The first English literary attack on the Family of Love was contained in The Golden Booke of Leaden Goddes, by Stephen Bateman (Batman) printed in 1577. This book, dedicated to Henry Cary, Lord Hunsdon (for whom, in 1582 Bateman was to become chaplain)<sup>92</sup> is a catalogue of "the vayne imagination of heathen Pagans and counterfaict Christians." Among the "counterfaict Christians" are Niclaes and the Family of Love. Bateman appears to have been the first to put together the letters H.N. with Niclaes in print, although it seems unlikely that he made the connection himself. Here also we find the first mention of Christopher Vitell in connection with the Family of Love. In a short section on the Family of Love,<sup>93</sup> Bateman condemns Niclaes as an "extravagant heretike" adding a list of his works. Interestingly, it was Bateman, who having already spoken on the subject, that Rogers got to write the preface to his Displaying.

In 1583, William Fulke that Puritan troublemaker of St. John's, Cambridge, and now master of Pembroke Hall, published his Defense of the sincere and true

Translations of the holie Scriptures into the English tong, against the manifold  
cauills, friuillous quarels, and impudent slaunders of Gregorie Martin, one of the  
readers of Popish diuinitie in the trayterous Seminarie of Rhemes. Martin had  
accused the Protestants of having no authority save Scripture, and no authority to  
interpret that, and had illustrated the inevitable fragmentation:

Luther shall judge for Lutherans, Calvin for the Calvinists,  
Cartwright for the Puritans, and another for the brethren of love:  
Briefly, themselves will be judges of councils and fathers . . . and  
every youth among them. . . will saucily control not only one, but  
all the fathers consenting together. . . .<sup>94</sup>

Fulke naturally denies this. He takes exception especially to the inclusion of the  
Family of Love among the Protestants:

But all the rest that you assume . . . is a stark staring lie, except  
that you say of H.N. for the brethren of love which are more like  
to you than to us.<sup>95</sup>

Thomas Rogers, chaplain to Archbishop Bancroft, in his Catholic Doctrine of  
the Church of England, an exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles, found something in  
the Family of Love to object to in discussing almost every article. Here is a small  
sampling:

Christ took not flesh of the Virgin Mary; so did the Valentinians  
think, and so think the Anabaptists, and the Family of Love, who  
make an allegory of the incarnation of Christ.<sup>96</sup>

To them, finally, are we adversaries, which above the Scriptures do  
prefer their own . . . imaginations; as did the Manichees, David  
George, and the Family of Love.<sup>97</sup>

Another sort of people there is amongst us, which will observe, and  
use all ceremonies whatsoever, as the temporizing Familists, who .  
. . keep all external orders, albeit in their hearts they scorn all  
professions and services but their own.<sup>98</sup>

This is only a small part of what Rogers has to say about the Family. They are  
mentioned frequently, almost always in connection with other heretical groups, both

ancient and contemporary: Valentinians, Manichees, Cerinthians, Ebionites, Anabaptists, Sabbatarians, Davidjorists, etc. Almost every charge against them is to be found in John Rogers' Displaying, from their propensity to swear falsely to their baptism at age thirty (which John Rogers erroneously derived from the 1561 confession of the Surrey "Familists").<sup>99</sup>

These charges and others are repeated in Whitaker's Disputation on Holy Scriptures against the Papists, and by Sandys in a sermon before the Queen:

some Christians deny the scriptures, such as the Schwenkfeldians, Anabaptists, and in England the Familists and Superilluminati. . . . These are not Christians truly but equivocally . . .<sup>100</sup>

Which practice the Family of Love hath lately drawn to a precept, and hath newly broached it as a saleable doctrine, that men need not openly be of any religion whereby they may endanger themselves; that it is good christendom to lie, swear, and forswear . . .<sup>101</sup>

One could no doubt find much more on the Family of Love in contemporary literature. The Family was the object of universal obloquy, and as such, was attacked by almost everyone who put his pen to paper on the subject of religion. The crucial point however, is the repetitiveness of the charges and their origin. Almost every accusation against H.N. and the Family of Love can be traced back to the works of Rogers, Knewstubb, and Wilkinson. We will return to these works in the next chapter.

When the Family of Love vanished from the historical record after the petition to James I, the attacks upon it did not cease. After all, what could be easier than attacking a group that would not or could not defend itself? If we go on the assumption that the number of hostile references to the sect are an accurate guide to its fortunes, then obviously we could conclude that the Family of Love maintained its existence and even grew during the first half of the seventeenth

century. However, this view is a result of faulty methodology. In Hamilton's words, "the numerical power of the Familists in the seventeenth century was very far from corresponding to the ever more frequent complaints against them."<sup>102</sup> In fact, if we look at the complaints against them, we see that those being called Familists, even if they shared H.N.'s mystical views, even if they had read and approved of his works, were not members of his Family of Love. They were called Familists because that was one of the worst names their critics could think of.

A case in point is the affair of John Etherington (Hetherington). Etherington had attracted a certain amount of notoriety in the first two decades of the seventeenth century as a London non-conformist preacher. Dr. Stephen Denison persuaded the Archbishop of Canterbury to proceed against him and he was arrested.<sup>103</sup> Etherington was forced to endure a long harangue against him by Denison at Paul's Cross in 1627, while standing bareheaded with a paper on his chest stating his errors.<sup>104</sup> Interestingly, while Denison does call him a "Familist", he is not once connected to "H.N." or "the Family of Love." Indeed, the only reference to H.N. is contained in a brief attack on Edmund Jessop, whose Discovery of English Anabaptists had appeared in 1623. Jessop had called the Family of Love "the most blasphemous and erroneous sect this day in the world."<sup>105</sup> No doubt Denison would have agreed with this evaluation, but, he says, Jessop is another kind of Familist, not one of H.N.'s Family of Love.<sup>106</sup> In this connection, Denison describes various types of Familists: Castalian Familists, Gringletonians (Grindletonians), Familists of the Mountain, of the Valley, and of the Cap.<sup>107</sup> These are the groups which Strype described as "the spawn and improvements of this family of love, of the which Henry Nicholas, of Holland was the founder."<sup>108</sup> The only way to make sense of this array of "Familists" is to posit that they were not offshoots of H.N.'s Family of Love, but

rather were independent and unconnected groups who were linked together as Familists only by their critics. Indeed, Strype himself informs us that the Family of the Mount were followers of a Scottish woman, a Mrs. Dunbar.<sup>109</sup>

This is further illustrated by the Grindletonians, so named after Grindleton, the Yorkshire village where they were first discovered.<sup>110</sup> They were followers of Roger Brearly, not Niclaes. Although the two groups share some traits, there are substantial differences as well. The Grindletonians did not revere the writings of Niclaes, and many of Brearly's views were vastly different from H.N.'s.<sup>111</sup>

To return to Etherington. Although accused by Denison of being a "Familist", as we have seen, he is not connected with H.N. or the Family of Love. The articles against him do not include accusations of Familism, only that he scandalized "the whole Church of England, in saying it is no true Church of Christ, and publishing other erroneous opinion, proceeding from that ill ground."<sup>112</sup> Therefore, Jean Dietz Moss' assertion that "Denison may indeed have cornered a seventeenth-century Familist,"<sup>113</sup> appears unfounded. Etherington himself vehemently denied Denison's charges in several later works:

Although I confesse, as touching my self, I being in my youth zealously affected, was very inquisitive into those several sorts of Religions which I heard of, then professed. . . . And as touching this of H.N. especially (praised be the Lord) I never had any the least inclination in my mind toward, but have always . . . opposed the same as a very blasphemous deceit, though I have bin by some very falsely charged with it.<sup>114</sup>

The reprinting of many of Niclaes' works in the 1640's and 1650's has been seen by some as evidence of resurgence in the Family's fortunes. However, most of these editions were printed by Giles Calvert who also printed many Quaker and Leveller works, the first English translations of Hiel, as well as translations of Jacob Boehme, of whose works he published just as many as he did of Niclaes'.<sup>115</sup> This



indicates a renewed interest in Spiritualist religion and radical mysticism, but not a new period of growth for the Family of Love. These editions of H.N. were read, appreciated or castigated, depending on the reader; but there is absolutely nothing to indicate that they were in any way tied in with any revival of the Family of Love.

Throughout the Civil War period and even into the Restoration, the name "Famelist" was a term of abuse. It was used because of its connotations of libertinism, perfectionism, antinomianism, and deceit. It was quite simply one of the worst things to be called. It was used in much the same way the epithet "Fascist" is used today.

In the Civil War period the term was directed against various radical sects. Samuel Rutherford used it against certain Army prophets: John Saltmarsh, William Del, and others. Later on, it was used against the Quakers, as in Henry Hallywell's An Account of Familism As It is Revived and Propagated by the Quakers. One of the last, tantalizing references to the Family of Love is contained in the diaries of John Evelyn. He recounts that several people of the Family of Love had presented a petition to James II in 1687. When the King asked about their form of worship, they describe themselves as "a sort of refined Quakers . . . not above three-score in all . . . chiefly belonging to the Isle of Ely."<sup>116</sup> Perhaps, after all, a small group had managed to survive in Cambridgeshire for eighty years or so. This would accord with Strype's statement:

I remember a gentleman, a great admirer of this sect, within less than twenty years ago, told me, that there was then but one of the Family of Love alive, and he an old man.<sup>117</sup>

If, however, this group did survive, it was only because they were so insignificant as to escape official notice and repression. A far cry indeed from the view which hostile writers (and modern historians) presented. On the other hand, there may be

no genetic connection at all. With the reprinting of H.N.'s works in the 1640's and 50's, there may have been some kind of small revival, or an already existing, but unconnected group may have appropriated the name for themselves.<sup>118</sup>

Thus we see that the standard view of the history of the Family of Love in England, as described in the first chapter, is an optical illusion based on a small core of truth. The small core of truth is that there were groups of the Family of Love in Cambridgeshire and London. At no time, however, were these large or significant. Although the Family vanishes from sight after the petition to James I, it may have survived (but just barely) in the Isle of Ely into the last half of the seventeenth century. This core of truth was distorted by several factors, resulting in the standard view. First there was the general prevalence of "Famelist" ideas. These are to be found everywhere in Christianity, from ancient heresies to the Spiritualist sects and writers of the Reformation. They are in no way unique to the Family of Love. There was also the experience of the Dutch Church in London. A Lasco, Micronius, and Carinaeus all had had experience with H.N.'s doctrines in the Low Countries and were likely faced with the same spectre in London with the Van Haemstede affair. Their experience seems to have made an impression on Englishmen. Lastly, and most importantly, the standard historical view is based on the volume and vehemence with which the Family of Love was attacked and repressed in England. It has already been shown that the response was out of all proportion to the threat. What remains now is to explain why such an insignificant and harmless sect provoked such a violent response.

### CHAPTER 3

We come now to our central problem. If the Family of Love was so tiny and insignificant, why did it provoke such a reaction? To answer this question, we shall have to look at the three works which initiated the attack and at their authors, putting them in a general context of Elizabethan religious politics. It has already been mentioned that the core of the reaction to the Family of Love lies in three literary works published within several years of each other and the Royal Proclamation: John Knewstubb's A Confutation of Monstrous Heresies taught by H.N. (1579); John Rogers' The Displaying of an horrible Secte of grosse and wicked Heretiques (1578); and William Wilkinson's A Confutation of Certaine Articles delivered unto the Family of Love (1579). Virtually all other attacks took their cue from these three. We have already seen how Thomas Rogers derived his information on the Family of Love from John Rogers' Displaying.<sup>1</sup> William Fulke's assertion to Gregory Martin that "the brethren of love . . . are more like to you than to us," is lifted almost word for word from Knewstubb.<sup>2</sup> These are only a couple of examples. Almost every charge against the Family which later writers pronounced can be found first in either Rogers, Knewstubb, or Wilkinson. Therefore, it would certainly be worth our while to examine these men and their works more closely.

John Knewstubb was the critic with the highest profile of the three.<sup>3</sup> Born in Westmorland in 1544, he went up to Cambridge where he graduated B.A. in 1564, M.A. in 1568, and finally B.D. in 1576. In that same year he began his attack on the Family of Love in a sermon preached at Paul's Cross on Good Friday. This sermon was appended to his Confutation published several years later. In this sermon, the

Family of Love is mentioned only tangentially. Perhaps Knewstubb trotted out his old sermon, which would certainly have been one of the highlights of his still young career, both to make extra use of it and to further convince the reader of his authority. In several brief passages where he mentions the Family of Love he condemns them along with "The Papists, Anabaptists, [and] Libertines . . . for as much as they will have the word subject to their spirite."<sup>4</sup> He also castigates H.N.'s concept of "begoddedness" in relation to Christ. H.N., says Knewstubb, affirms that Christ became God, or was "begodded," only after his suffering. This he can affirm only by turning Scripture into allegory.<sup>5</sup>

It seems that this brief attack planted the seeds for a longer diatribe, for in 1579 Knewstubb came out with his Confutation. This work is standard in form, with the customary dedication to a luminary (and patron?), in this case Leicester's brother, Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick. The greatest danger to the Church is from within, says Knewstubb, and therefore we may no longer be satisfied with external confessions only. Those who submit to the Church outwardly while maintaining another faith secretly are the greatest enemy. Therefore, such people must be brutally suppressed, according to the Scriptural injunction in Deuteronomy 14. Knewstubb urges the Earl to use his influence to accomplish this repression. The dedication to the reader takes more of an anti-Catholic slant. The sins of England are so great that God has sent not only Papists as a judgment, but also Arians, Anabaptists, and the Family of Love. Though the Papists profess to hate the Family, they do not suppress it, for they have a great deal in common with it. Though the Family is not Protestant, Protestants must share the blame for it, for they have not combatted it fiercely enough. Then there is an advertisement in the form of "The judgement of a godly learned man," who commends the book to the

readers. This "godly learned man" is identified only as "W.C." Hamilton identified "W.C." as William Cecil, although he adduces no evidence to support this assertion.<sup>6</sup>

The text of the Confutation itself is a long-winded, involved theological argument in which Knewstubb takes various of H.N.'s points of doctrine and refutes them with the same passages of Scripture with which H.N. had supported them. The complex theological arguments do not overly concern us here, except to say that Knewstubb's theological training at Cambridge was not wasted. Appended to the text, as we have seen, are Knewstubb's Paul's Cross sermon, as well as Micronius and Carinaeus against the Family of Love. There is also "The judgement of an other godly learned man," signed "L.T.", whom Hamilton identifies as Laurence Tomson, Walsingham's secretary.<sup>7</sup>

Of John Rogers, who wrote The Displaying of an horrible Secte of grosse and wicked Heretiques and An Answere unto a wicked and infamous Libel made by Christopher Vitel . . ., we are considerably less well-informed. In fact, we do not even know exactly who he was. There are two candidates, however, both having been educated at Oxford. There was a John Rogers who graduated B.A. in 1554, M.A. in 1556, and became a fellow at Queens' College in 1559.<sup>8</sup> Another John Rogers graduated B.A. from Merton College in 1569-70 and M.A. from St. Alban's Hall in 1576.<sup>9</sup> Which of these two wrote the anti-Familist works cannot be determined; however, that it was one of the two is borne out by Anthony Wood's Athenae Oxonienses.<sup>10</sup> In either case, we see that our author was roughly contemporary with Knewstubb at Cambridge.

Rogers' Displaying was obviously intended for a different readership than Knewstubb's Confutation. Knewstubb's book is filled with Scriptural and patristic references and was obviously intended for the theologically sophisticated reader.

The Displaying, a shorter, less dense book -- about ninety pages compared to Knewstubb's almost two hundred -- is more chatty in tone and was clearly aimed at a wider, more popular audience. In the preface, Rogers states that he wrote the book to rescue a friend who had fallen into the errors of the Family of Love. Whether this is true, or just a literary device is not clear. However, Rogers does display a good deal of familiarity with H.N.'s works and doctrines. Like Knewstubb, Rogers' chief concern is that the family be repressed which is his "duetie which I owe unto Christs Church . . . to cleanse and purge [ it] from such errorrs and false doctrine."<sup>11</sup> Throughout the Displaying, one of Rogers' chief complaints against the Family of Love, and especially against Vitell, is their hypocrisy in outward confirmity:

if the doctrine of H.N. be a trueth, why is it taught in corners? Why dare none step foorth to maintaine the doctrine of H.N. being euerywhere spoken against?<sup>12</sup>

Why do they not come forward plainly and declare their beliefs, "creepe in corners," as Rogers puts it?<sup>13</sup> Because "their doctrine dareth not abide the light."<sup>14</sup> Thus the fact that they keep their beliefs secret is enough to condemn their doctrines as false.

There is also a preface by Stephen Bateman, as already mentioned. The emphasis here is also on repression, "or else will assuredly followe the like plague on us, as was at Münster."<sup>15</sup> Rogers' account, much more than Knewstubb's, is concerned with the origins and history of the Family of Love. The text of the Displaying itself begins with an account of the life and heresies of David George (David Joris), whose disciple, Rogers assures us, Niclaes was:

David George was the hatcher of this heresie, and layde the egge, but H.N. brought forth the chickens.<sup>16</sup>

Henrie Nicholas . . . after the death of David George tooke upon him to maintaine the same doctrine, not in the name of David, but in his owne name. . . <sup>17</sup>

Many of the same criticisms are shared by Rogers and Knewstubb. Rogers maintains that H.N. turns Scripture into allegory, that "there is nothing left certaine."<sup>18</sup> H.N.'s books are not written in a simple and godly style, but "subtiley and darkely" to "dasell the simple."<sup>19</sup> The accusations of licentiousness and libertinism with which the Family of Love was so frequently charged in later years seem also to have originated with Rogers.<sup>20</sup> Again, Rogers shares with Knewstubb the conviction that the Family of Love are really a fifth column of Papists:

Wherein they followe the steppes of the Pelagians and Papists directly, whose doctrine of works . . . doth in divers treatises manifestly appeare, destroying the worke wrought by Christ our Lord.<sup>21</sup>

And least the Papists should imagine that this H.N. should be a professor of the Gospell, I will declare manifest causes to prove that he is a right chicken of the Church of Rome.<sup>22</sup>

H.N., declares Rogers, agrees with Rome on the authority of the Pope, on the Mass, and on the efficacy of works.<sup>23</sup> In the matter of confession, he exceeds even the Catholics, "for where the Pope requireth but a confession of the [acte?] committed, H.N. requireth a declaration of the thought."<sup>24</sup>

As mentioned above, it is from Rogers that we derive much of our information concerning Christopher Vitell.<sup>25</sup> In fact it was Rogers' Displaying which prompted Vitell to refute the charges against him and the Family of Love. Vitell's refutation and Rogers' answer are contained in Rogers' An Answere unto a wicked and infamous Libel . . . (1579). In essence, it is a rehashing of what Rogers said in his Displaying and is more interesting for what Vitell says (after all, this is all we have of his writing) than for what Rogers repeats. After an exhortation to the Family of Love to repent, and a section titled "Certain absurd speeches taken out of the bookes of

H.N. as errors of the Family of Love," and an admonition to Vitell, Rogers concludes with the 1561 confession of the Surrey sectarians. Throughout the Displaying, Rogers is very conscious of firing the opening shots in an ongoing campaign:

No man hitherto (that I can learne) hath endeavoured to confute them in writing.<sup>26</sup>

He is also very conscious that others must carry on the battle:

Notwithstanding, so many as either by the doctrine of Henrie Nicholas, or by conference I haue learned, I have set downe, to the ende that some good man might be encouraged to confute so impious an author, and such horrible errors, and perfourme in some learned worke that which my want and capacitie is not able to supply. . . .<sup>27</sup>

It is enough for me to beginne the skirmishe, to display the Familie, to make readie the way, and discerie their force, that others may come after and overthrow their camp.<sup>28</sup>

It was not long before Knewstubb and Wilkinson accepted the challenge laid down by Rogers.

The third of our three major attacks on the Family of Love is William Wilkinson's A Confutation of Certaine Articles delivered unto the Family of Love, also published in 1579. It is the longest of the three books, close to three hundred pages, and it is also the least well-organized. It has something of a rush job about it, for Wilkinson's text itself is but a small part of the total, the balance being made up of sections from various contributors. The customary dedication to an eminent personage is to Richard Cox, Bishop of Ely. It is unusual, however, in that we have Cox's reply printed alongside:

Perusing over this little treatise of M. Wilkinsons, I could not but alowe his diligence and painefull trauell in this hereticall and schismaticall world, and I would hartely wishe of God, that our Church of England might be well weeded from to to [sic] grosse errors, for it is high tyme.<sup>29</sup>



The dedication itself is not remarkable, touching all the familiar bases. The church must be guarded from Satan, and especially from the Family of Love, "the most pestiferous and deadly Heresie of all others."<sup>30</sup> The Family of Love is increasing rapidly, especially in the Bishop's diocese. The dedication ends with the familiar call to action and repression.

The dedication to the reader is unremarkable, except that Wilkinson relates how he communicated with the Family of Love, and how they supplied him with their replies to his allegations. There follows "A very brief and true description of the first springing up of the Heresie, termed the Familie of Loue . . . ." After a thumbnail history of the "the fury of the Romishe Baalamites" under Mary, we are told how Colchester became a place of refuge for true Christians.<sup>31</sup> But Satan "styrred up divers schismaticall spirites,"<sup>32</sup> among whom was Christopher Vitell. It is here that we get the description and testimony of "Henry Crinell [Orinell] of Willingham in the County of Cambridge," as described in the last chapter.

Now there comes "Notes upon the book entitled Evangelium Regni," by John Young, Bishop of Rochester. Young brings up such familiar bugbears as the Family of Love as Papists, H.N.'s pretention of divinity, and his allegorization of Scripture. Appended to Young's commentary are "Errours and absurde asseuerations out of H.N. his Euangelie, gathered by William Wilkinson." Following this is "Hereticall affirmations, and ungodly expositions of Scriptures by H.N. out of the documentall sentences." ("Documentall sentences" refers to Dicta H.N. Documentall sentences: eaven as those-same were spoken fourth by H.N., one of Niclaes' works translated into English.)

Finally we are at the heart of the work: "Articles which I exhibited into a frend of mine, to be conuained unto the Familie of loue, that I might be certified of

the doubts in them contained. Which for my further instruction one Theophilus sent me with a letter, and an Exhortation, in the following manner." It appears that somehow Wilkinson was able to contact some members of the Family of Love and confront them with his charges. "Theophilus," described only as "a supposed Elder in the sayd Familie," refuted Wilkinson's charges in a letter. Wilkinson, in the same way Rogers dealt with Vitell's letter in his Answer, published "Theophilus'" reply along with his own defense of his original charges. These charges are contained in fourteen articles, among which are such as: "H.N. sayeth we have no truth," "H.N. sayeth we have no Ministrie," and so on.

There is one aspect of the attack on the Family of Love which remained very much in the background in the books of Knewstubb and Rogers, but is explicitly stated by Wilkinson. This is the affirmation that the Family of Love is very much a type of Anabaptist sect. In Rogers we had the affirmation that H.N. was a disciple of Joris, and Bateman emphasized that England must suppress the Family or suffer the fate of Munster. Wilkinson, however, states the relationship quite baldly: "Therefore are they [the Family of Love] Anabaptists and David Georges Schollers."<sup>33</sup> Indeed, sprinkled liberally throughout the text are references to Heinrich Bullinger, that Swiss scourge of Anabaptists. The clear implication is that the Family of Love are really Anabaptists and should be dealt with by the same rules. As if to hammer the point home, after dealing with the fourteen articles, Wilkinson includes "Certaine profitable notes to know an Heretique, especially an Anabaptist. With the opinions, the behaviour of them out of various Authors." Chief among the "various Authors," of course, is Bullinger himself, but also Calvin and Zwingli. The idea, of course, is to "know your enemy," and who better to perform this task than three pre-eminent continental theologians, all of whom had had extensive dealings and struggles against Anabaptists.

Lest we think, however, that identification of the Family of Love with the Anabaptists exonerates them from charges of Popery, it must be stated that to many Protestants, Anabaptism and Rome were working hand in hand. In Wilkinson's paraphrase of Bullinger: "Anabaptists were hartned by those which desired the overthrow of the Gospell and the restoring of Popery."<sup>34</sup> Thus, in the same way modern-day revolutionaries have been known to try and establish an extreme left-wing regime by fomenting conditions in which an extreme right-wing regime may flourish, so, according to Protestants, did the Anabaptists threaten, either knowingly or unwittingly, to restore the Pope by sowing discord and dissension in the true Church.

It should be apparent by now that Knewstubb, Rogers, and Wilkinson were all what we might call "puritans." One hesitates to use such an overworked and anachronistic term. Though an anachronism, it is nevertheless indispensable; however, we must be careful not to attach too broad a definition to it. Over the centuries the name has acquired accretions of meaning which would never have occurred to contemporaries. If we are not using it in its broadest sense, neither are we using it in its narrow sixteenth-century meaning, as a term of abuse attached to those "precisians" who refused to conform to Parker's orders commanding uniformity of dress among the clergy, especially the wearing of the square cap and the surplice. The term will be used here in Patrick Collinson's sense.<sup>35</sup> Puritans were those who believed that the Church of England was "but halfly reformed." They believed, to a greater or lesser degree, that the Elizabethan church retained popish vestiges in ceremony and government that denied it the status of a truly "Reformed" church, such as existed in Switzerland, Germany, and among French Huguenots. Even this definition is misleading. For if we define "puritan" as those who wished to see the

English church further reformed, we would have to include almost all of the church leadership in the early years of Elizabeth's reign, composed as it was almost entirely of Marian exiles but recently returned from the continent where they had been exposed to the Reformed churches of Strasbourg, Zürich, and Geneva. That they did not accomplish a further reformation is largely due to Elizabeth herself, and to Archbishops Parker, Whitgift, and Bancroft. If we are to make this our definition of "puritan," we shall have to include such widely divergent characters as the cautious, conservative reformers Grindal, Sandys, and Cox, firebrands such as Cartwright, Sampson, and Humphrey, and out-and-out rabble-rousers such as John Field, Thomas Wilcox (authors of the Admonition to Parliament) and Percival Wiburne in the same category. Obviously this will not do. We need finer categories of analysis if we are to understand Elizabethan religion and politics and tie the attack on the Family of Love into a general context.

In essence, there were as many kinds of Protestantism as there were Protestants. For the sake of analysis, however, it is possible to define several broad categories. In the first place, as mentioned above, there were cautious, conservative reformers. Leading the way in this category were most of the first Elizabethan bishops, with the notable exception of Matthew Parker, Elizabeth's first Archbishop of Canterbury. Drawn almost exclusively from the ranks of returned Marian exiles, this includes such prominent figures as Edmund Grindal (Bishop of London, 1559-1570; Archbishop of York, 1570-1575; and of Canterbury, 1576-1583), Edwin Sandys (Bishop of Worcester, 1559-1570; of London, 1570-1577; Archbishop of York, 1577-1588), and Richard Cox (Bishop of Ely, 1559-1581). We might also include in this category other luminaries such as William Cecil as well as other Privy Councillors. In general, these men, while not entirely satisfied with the Elizabethan

settlement, recognized that a Protestant Queen, even if not as Protestant as they would have liked, was infinitely preferable to the more plausible alternatives: civil religious war, or foreign invasion and the restoration of the Roman Church. They hoped to further reform the church by slow increments, gently nudging the Queen in the right direction. This indeed was their reason for accepting positions of leadership in the church when many of their "hotter" Protestant colleagues urged them not to have anything to do with a semi-papistical church. At the time, of course, they had no way of knowing that the settlement of 1559 was to be permanent, and their chances of success must have seemed very high indeed.

At the other extreme were radical preachers, especially in London and East Anglia, who were very outspoken about Popish remnants in the church. In this category we would include the radical Londoners Field and Wilcox, Wiburne, Anthony Gilby, and Robert Fitz. It was, in fact to puritans of this stripe that the name was first applied.

The name "puritan" first appeared in connection with the vestiarian controversy of the 1560's. Chief among the offending articles of clothing were the "Popish" vestiges of the surplice and the square cap. In fact, the controversy dated back to Edward's reign when John Hooper, Bishop-elect of Gloucester refused to wear the offensive apparel and hence delayed his investiture, and it was the chief cause of strife in the English church at Frankfurt and the resulting victory of the "Coxians" over the "Knoxians." In the 1560's diversity of practice crept in, with clergy wearing the vestments or not, according to their preference. This could not help but displease the Queen with her attachment to order and uniformity. In fact, even the relatively conservative churchmen described above had no great love for the garments and what they represented. Grindal himself told some radical

Londoners in 1567, "I had rather minister without these things, but for order's sake, and obedience to the prince."<sup>36</sup> This indeed was the nub of the matter. Vestments themselves were things indifferent, adiaphora, neither prescribed nor prohibited by Scripture. Therefore, if the prince orders that they be worn, they must be worn and need cause no one an uneasy conscience. But, replied the radicals, if they are indifferent, the Queen ought not to make us wear them. In the words of Henry Barrow: "Even now yow said it was a thing indifferent; if it be so, ther is no powr can bringe me in bondage to my libertie."<sup>37</sup>

In January 1565, the Queen had written to Parker ordering that he enforce the Royal Injunctions ordering conformity of dress among clergy. In typical fashion, however, she declined to back him up with royal authority. As a result, Parker's orders were contained in "Advertisements" of "doubtful constitutional validity."<sup>38</sup> Parker was left dangling, drawing all the abuse and criticism, while the Queen remained above the fray. The Advertisements were printed and circulated in March 1566 and drew immediate hostile reaction, especially in London and Cambridge. Thirty-seven nonconforming London clergy were suspended and threatened with deprivation.<sup>39</sup> A long and virulent pamphlet war ensued against "this bloody beast's gear," "lordly bishops," and "filthy ware."<sup>40</sup> Letters were fired off by both sides to Bullinger and Gualter in Zürich, Beza in Geneva, and John Knox in Scotland. The Zürichers were sympathetic to the bishops and said so.<sup>41</sup> Beza was more inclined to the radicals' side, but declined whole-hearted support. Surprisingly, John Knox favoured the maintenance of order and sided with the bishops.<sup>42</sup>

Somewhere between these two extremes, one suspects, were the majority of educated, articulate, and Protestant Englishmen. If they were dissatisfied with the pace of reform in the 1560's and 70's, neither were they able to condone the radical

nonconformity, and ultimately the separatism, of "London's Protestant Underworld."<sup>43</sup>

It should be emphasized, however, that the situation was extremely fluid. There were no party lines, only floating coalitions which coalesced and disbanded as circumstances dictated. As Elizabeth moved the church more in her own direction under Archbishop Whitgift in the 1580's and 90's, the situation became less fluid and puritan opposition more cohesive. However, in the 1560's and 70's, the situation remained fluid and the "puritans" remained within the embrace of the Church of England.

It should also be emphasized that underneath such seemingly divisive questions as the vestiarian controversy, the form of church government, and the "prophesyings" or "exercises," there was substantial agreement on the single most burning religious question of the time: the Eucharist. Though the Queen herself was probably more inclined to a Lutheran view, it is significant that the question of Real Presence versus Memorial Supper is very rarely a bone of contention. Virtually the entire church was united behind the Swiss/German view.<sup>44</sup>

It should also be pointed out that people did not always align themselves with one brand of Protestantism or another purely out of religious conviction. In an age where religion was indissolubly intertwined with politics and culture, it is often difficult if not impossible to distinguish motivation. The best example of this in Elizabethan England is the career of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. Leicester's personal religious convictions are a mystery to us today, yet he aligned himself with, and built a patronage network among, the more radical puritans, and led the expedition to the Netherlands in aid of the Dutch Protestants, it seems, out of a desire for personal glory and aggrandizement. Conversely, many must have aligned

themselves with Leicester's party, not out of religious scruple, but out of sheer opportunism. On a more mundane level, Mullinger relates the humourous anecdote of a student at Cambridge who, alone among his colleagues, showed up at chapel without his surplice, thinking to make a point of conscience. When haled before the dean however, he admitted that he "had pawned his surplice to some purveyors of dainties to the colleges in order to defray the cost of a more than usually sumptuous entertainment!"<sup>45</sup>

John Knewstubb was what we might call a radically-tinged moderate. No friend of vestments and square caps, in his days at Cambridge he had petitioned in favour of Cartwright.<sup>46</sup> He had also taken part in "prophesyings" or conferences of ministers designed to elicit the true meaning of Scripture and instruct unlearned clergy.<sup>47</sup> It was Grindal's refusal to suppress the prophesyings, and worse yet, his attempt to justify his disobedience to Elizabeth herself, which led to his fall from favour. Yet for Knewstubb, there was no question of separation. The conclusive, damning evidence for Knewstubb of the falseness of Papists, Arians, and Anabaptists is that they have removed themselves from the church.<sup>48</sup> The question was not one of whether there ought to be an authoritative church coterminous with the nation, but rather, what form that church ought to take. Viewing Knewstubb's career in retrospect one might think that he would be anathema to the authorities. He was after all one of the leaders of the crypto-Presbyterian Dedham conference in the 1580's,<sup>49</sup> the leading puritan preacher in Suffolk,<sup>50</sup> and took the nonconforming side in 1604 at Hampton Court.<sup>51</sup> Not the sort of man we would expect Elizabeth or her Council, which had to answer to her, to entrust with much responsibility. Yet we find him preaching at Paul's Cross on Good Friday, presented to the living of Cockfield in Sussex, and, most relevant for our purposes, the Privy Council, at the



height of the Familist "scare" in early 1581 (1580 o.s.), appointed him as a sort of consultant to the bishops in the repression of the Family of Love.<sup>52</sup>

Not knowing very much about John Rogers, we must extapolate from his writings to gain any idea of his religious convictions. Throughout his Displaying he uses many concepts and phrases which would seem to put him on the side of the "hotter" Protestants. There is his constant castigation of the Roman Church. Granted, this was commonplace, but his continued repetition of charges against the Papists would lead one to believe that there is more to it than literary fashion. There is also his black and white view of the religious situation. Not for him were Parker's "mediocrity" or an Elizabethan via media:

with the bloudie Papistes with their fire and fagot, continual warre, with horrible murders on the one side, and the Anabaptistes, Free will men, Arrians, Pelagians, and the Famelie of Loue on the other side, Christes Church hath little rest, and small favour in the sight of man, but spurned on euery side.<sup>53</sup>

Some of his assertions would seem, at first sight, to imply his approval of the Church of England as it then existed:

... in all ages, when the Christes Churches did most flourish in perfection, then was errour and heresies most rife ...<sup>54</sup>

... when the Gospell began to shine againe, then began Sathan ... to envie the prosperities of the Gospell.<sup>55</sup>

However, conspicuously absent are any references to "the Church of England," "the English Church," "our Church," or the Thirty-Nine Articles. Rather, "church" is used in a universal sense, the body of believers, the invisible church, the Bride of Christ. Clearly, the Gospel shining again refers not to the English church specifically, but to the Reformation in general. Keeping this in mind, his approval would more likely have gone to the continental reformed churches.

Besides the Displaying and the Answer, the STC attributes only one other work to our John Rogers. This is The Summe of Christianity . . . (1578). As its title suggests, this is a sort of primer in the basics of Christian theology. Its very existence suggests that Rogers was more inclined to the "hotter" Protestants. It implies that the Prayer Book is not enough, that it need a "briefe and plaine" supplement. In particular, Rogers' emphasis on the ultimate authority of Scripture,<sup>56</sup> on preaching and discipline,<sup>57</sup> and on a godly life,<sup>58</sup> would seem to put him on the puritan side of things. It is not a question of theology: anyone but a Catholic would have to agree with his theological assertions. Rather, it is a question, and the judgment is admittedly subjective and speculative, of tendency and emphasis. There is only one clear reference to the religious controversies of the day:

. . . abstinence even from lawful pleasures and profits, when they are either offensive unto others, or hurtfull unto ourselves . . . so by bringing us under the bondage and servitude of earthly things, which all of them are ordained unto corruption.<sup>59</sup>

This would seem to be a reference to the vestiarian problems, when, as we have seen, the question of "lawful" versus "offensive" was at the heart of religious debate.

In the case of William Wilkinson, we know more about him than we do about John Rogers, but less than we know about Knewstubb. He matriculated a sizar of Queens' College, Cambridge in 1568, proceeded B.A. in 1571-72, M.A. in 1575, and B.D. in 1582.<sup>60</sup> Thus we see that he was an almost exact contemporary of John Knewstubb. Though we have no record of his activities at Cambridge, it would be a safe assumption to say that he was inclined to the puritan side in the religious controversies of the day, the vestiarian problems and the resistance against the new statutes for the university in 1570.

That Wilkinson, like Knewstubb and Rogers, was a puritan, is evident not only from his Confutation, wherein he made prodigious use of Bullinger and other Reformed theologians, but also from his other writings. In 1580 while residing in London, he published A very godly and learned treatise of the exercise of Fastyng, described out of the word of God, very necessarye to bee applyed unto our churches in England in these perillous times. Again, as with Knewstubb, one notices that even though one would place him in the "puritan opposition," this did not prevent him from advancing his career within the Church of England. In 1588, though a layman, he became prebend of Fridaythorpe in York Cathedral, which post he was to hold until his death in 1613. Thus, again we see that even though on some issues he and the "Anglicans" were opposite sides, this did not hinder his preferment within the church, nor did this opposition prevent the sides from cooperating on the really important issues: the Catholic threat, and sectarianism, the threats from right and left, as it were.

One of things which stands out when we look at our three authors is that not only were they all university men (Knewstubb and Wilkinson at Cambridge, Rogers at Oxford) but they were also almost exact contemporaries. Knewstubb graduated B.A. in 1564, Rogers in 1554 (or more probably in 1569), and Wilkinson in 1568. That these three men, similar in age, background, education, and religious conviction all undertook to attack the Family of Love within two years of each other is no accident. Rather, it was the result of their education, the way they had been taught to view the world, especially the religious situation and the church. To understand these men and their writings, we must go back to their days at university, when their ideals and convictions were formed.

Cambridge University, of course, had acquired a reputation as a hotbed of Protestantism as early as the 1520's and the meetings in the White Horse Inn. From William Tyndale on through Cranmer and Ridley, the University had provided English Protestants with models, heroes, and martyrs. Under Edward Cambridge was much more the royally favoured university. And it is under Edward that we must seek the origins of the teachings which inspired Knewstubb and Wilkinson to attack the Family of Love in the career of Martin Bucer.

Bucer was indeed one of the luminaries of the Reformation. If he does not occupy the same lofty rank as a Luther, a Calvin, or a Zwingli, that is no reflection on the man himself. Before he was invited to England by Cranmer in 1548, he had long been active in Reformation politics. Generally speaking, he was one of the more tolerant of reformers, and worked tirelessly for concord among Protestants. However, this attitude only earned him the enmity of both sides: the Swiss thought he inclined too much to the Lutheran view of the Eucharist, and the Lutherans mistrusted him as being too close to the Swiss. In fact, in reading the reaction of some English Protestants to Bucer's arrival in England, one might be forgiven for thinking that he was Cardinal or a Jesuit, or some other such lackey of the Whore of Babylon:

In case of his [Bucer's] death, England will be happy and more favoured than all other countries, in having been delivered in the same year from two men, of most pernicious talent, namely Paul [Fagius] and Bucer.<sup>61</sup>

Thus wrote Burcher, an English partisan of Bullinger's, to the master in Zürich. However, this smacks of the followers being more ardent in the struggle than the principals, for Bucer and Bullinger maintained correspondence over a period of years, and though they had their differences, Bullinger protected Bucer on several occasions, restraining intemperate attacks on him.<sup>62</sup>

In any case, just as Cranmer renewed his invitation to Bucer in 1548 (he had offered his hospitality once before, in 1547), Bucer was looking to move on. In refusing to accept the Augsburg Interim (his endorsement had been diligently sought) he had become persona non grata in Imperial and Lutheran circles and he deemed it expedient to leave Strasbourg, his home for the previous three decades.

Bucer arrived in England in the spring of 1549 and stayed for a time with Cranmer at Lambeth and at Croydon before he was appointed Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge. Though only at Cambridge for a short time (he was to die in 1551) and ill much of the time he was there, he left a lasting impression. His influence was to be felt for generations. Among those who sat at his feet were a number of future bishops: Grindal, Sandys, Parker, and Pilkington. Thus we can see that Bucer's influence survived in a direct way, affecting church and state under Elizabeth. Grindal especially was a favourite of the reformer, and Bucer was the dominant influence in the life and thinking of the future Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>63</sup> Besides these luminaries, hundreds of other subsequently prominent leaders must have listened to and been taught by Bucer. According to contemporary observers, one never forgot having been taught by Martin Bucer.<sup>64</sup>

But what was it these eager students learned? We have already mentioned Bucer's eirenic message and nature. This, doctrinal disputes aside, was one of his major reasons for opposing the Augsburg Interim--it was a compromise imposed by force.<sup>65</sup> If, however, Bucer was more tolerant than other reformers, there were limits to his tolerance. Beyond a certain point he would not go. For all his efforts at concord, he would not compromise on the core of his faith, on justification by faith, for instance.<sup>66</sup> Diversity of practise was also not to be tolerated. Granted, he was fairly indulgent when it came to drawing the line, and his view of adiaphora

was especially generous. But diversity of essential religious practice? Never. This is based on his view of the essential unity of church and state, or rather, their symbiosis, as a societas christiana.<sup>67</sup> However, in the last analysis, church had to come before state, God before magistrates. When all is said and done, however, Bucer's prime emphasis was on pastoral work. From the lordliest archbishop to the lowliest curate, their chief duty was as pastors, "effective in teaching and discipline, free from secular attractions."<sup>68</sup> His concern for the essential unity of church and state is reflected in his attitude towards the Anabaptists. His arguments condemned not so much their denial of infant baptism as their tendency to withdrawal and separation, thus rending the unity of the Christian community. He urged stringent measures against the Anabaptists in Strasbourg during the Peasants' Revolt and had Carlstadt expelled from the city.<sup>69</sup> As an advisor to Philip of Hesse, he suppressed Anabaptism there.<sup>70</sup> At the Smalkald Conference, he took the lead in drafting a petition to suppress various Anabaptists and Separatists.<sup>71</sup> Though more inclined to persuade than to burn, he nevertheless was not above using physical force when he deemed it necessary.<sup>72</sup> This then was the dominant intellectual and theological influence at Cambridge for years afterward, and it could not have helped but to shape Elizabethan religious politics, both directly through men such as Grindal and Sandys, and indirectly through the lasting impression which Bucer left on the University. And it was to this university that young men such as Knewstubb and Wilkinson came.

Cambridge in the 1560's must have been an exciting place for a young man. Not only was there a new regime which would further pursue the reformation begun under Edward (or so they thought), they were to be the leaders of it. The early 1560's saw a considerable increase in the university population.<sup>73</sup> By a statute of

1559, the regents (a regent was a Master of Arts of up to three years standing) were given considerable authority within the university by virtue of their control of the Senate.<sup>74</sup> That these young dons should incline more to the puritan side is not surprising since there was an "anti-Establishment" tinge to the whole thing.

In many ways St. John's College was at the centre of religious controversy in Cambridge. The first great dispute was a reflection of the vestiarian controversy already mentioned. The Archbishop's orders applied just as much to Cambridge dons as to London clergy. Needless to say, the square cap and surplice had many enemies at Cambridge. Chief among them was William Fulke, fellow of St. John's. Fulke attracted a following preaching sermons on popish remnants and caused no small problem in the university. Interestingly, one of Fulke's chief opponents was Richard Curteys, later Bishop of Chichester, who accused David Thickpenny of belonging to the Family of Love.

So far the controversy had been limited to clothing. In 1570, however, Thomas Cartwright, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity applied the concept of "popish dregs" to church government. In a series of lectures he dismissed the office and function of bishops and commended a Presbyterian system as the only one scripturally sanctioned. The reaction of the authorities was not hard to predict. Grindal, newly appointed Archbishop of York, urged Cecil as Chancellor of the University to refuse Cartwright the grace for his doctorate of divinity. On June 29, during the meeting of the Senate for the purpose of electing the members of the Caput Senatus (a sort of executive council of the Senate composed of the Vice-Chancellor, three doctors, one non-regent, and one regent master), the regents, who, (as outlined above) possessed the decisive majority, vetoed the election of any who opposed Cartwright. John May, the Vice-Chancellor, refused Cartwright his grace

anyways. Petitions were flung back and forth. John Knewstubb of St. John's was prominent among Cartwright's supporters.<sup>75</sup> How William Wilkinson lined up we do not know, although if his later career is anything to go by, he certainly would have been a Cartwrightian. John Whitgift, Regius Professor, Master of Trinity, future Archbishop of Canterbury and Cartwright's great opponent, urged Cecil to action and prepared a new set of statutes for the University.<sup>76</sup> These new statutes received royal assent in September, and removed effective power from the regents and gave it to the Vice-Chancellor and Heads of Colleges. In November, Whitgift himself was elected Vice-Chancellor. In December, Cartwright was hauled on the carpet and was deprived of his professorship and forbidden to preach. Shortly afterward he went to Geneva. This was the opening round in a battle which was to rage for the next thirty years. However as we have seen, Knewstubb's support for Cartwright did not overly hinder his career. The whole affair smacks of academic intrigue and factional politics. There were those who supported Cartwright not out of sympathy for his convictions, but to protect the ancient rights and liberties of the University, which they felt the new statutes violated. The point is that in many ways this kind of controversy resembles the row over Greek pronunciation in the 1530's, with its mixture of personal, factional, academic, and political motives, rather than a life and death struggle over the future of the church.<sup>77</sup> Only in rare cases, when someone proved as outspoken and intractable as Cartwright were such severe measures taken.

Cambridge has quite rightly attracted the limelight so far. There is the "familiar image of puritan Cambridge and churchy, conservative Oxford."<sup>78</sup> The reputation of Cambridge has overshadowed the significant, if numerically much smaller, puritan influence at Oxford. Part of the reason for this stereotype is



simply that we know more about Cambridge graduates than we do about Oxford alumni. Also, Oxford's hinterland was not as heavily Protestant as that of the other university.<sup>79</sup> As Cambridge had been the royal favourite under Edward, so Oxford was under Mary. Upon Elizabeth's accession, the University was staunchly Catholic. Over the next several years the university was gradually purged and reliable Protestants put into positions of authority.

The point is that puritan influence, if less than at Cambridge, was not completely lacking at Oxford. Leicester, that patron of puritans, was appointed Chancellor in 1564 and took an active role in administration.<sup>80</sup> And those puritans which Oxford did produce tended to be of a more radical stripe, "brought up, it may be, in a harsher school."<sup>81</sup> Field and Wilcox were both Oxonians. There was also the influence of Laurence Humphrey at Magdalen, Thomas Sampson at Christ Church, and John Reynolds at Corpus Christi.

There was also the influence of the Italian reformer Peter Martyr Vermigli. Peter Martyr had, like Bucer, been invited to England by Cranmer after the death of Henry VIII. Indeed, Martyr filled much the same role at Oxford as did Bucer at Cambridge. Martyr, however, had a much tougher time of it. As Regius Professor of Divinity he constantly came up against the predominantly Catholic prejudices of the university. It seemed that the only thing that kept him going were his correspondence with Bucer and the presence of foreign Protestant students, especially from Switzerland.<sup>82</sup> The Swiss presence at Oxford began in the 1530's when Rodolph Gualter, Bullinger's foster son and later his son-in-law, paid a short visit. Under Edward there was a virtual exchange program between Oxford and Zürich. Among the Zürichers who studied at Oxford were John ab Ulmis, John Stumphius, and Thomas Blaurer. A simple glance at the Zürich Letters will confirm

the lasting friendships and enduring influence on both sides. The Zürich connection was especially important in the first half of Elizabeth's reign. Among the English correspondents were Sandys, Jewel, Foxe, Lever, Sampson, Cox, Grindal and (familiar names!) Martin Micronius and Jan Utenhove. On the Swiss side there were Stumphius, Gualter, Rodolph Zwingli (son of the reformer), and, of course, Bullinger himself. These ties which were established under Edward were strengthened under Mary when many English Protestants found refuge in Zürich.

The crucial point is that even though Oxford has justly acquired the label "Catholic," puritan influences were not lacking. Continental reformed theology was brought to the university through Peter Martyr, foreign students and the influence of Zürich, and later on through Leicester's chancellorship and the influence of such men as Humphrey, Sampson, and Reynolds. Thus, John Rogers was very probably exposed to continental theology and puritan influences during his time at Oxford.

The thrust of this chapter has been that it was Englishmen more inclined to the puritan side in religious controversy who took the lead in the attack on the Family of Love. This fact is underlined very nicely by an episode in Parliament.<sup>83</sup> On February 15, 1581 a bill for the suppression of the Family of Love was brought in by "divers preachers . . . commended . . . from the Convocation."<sup>84</sup> The penalties prescribed were whipping for the first offense, branding for the second, and felony for the third. Sent to committee after Second Reading on February 16, the committee returned with a new bill the next week. This new bill received Second Reading and was committed, but it never returned and would seem to have been lost in the shuffle. It may be that the bishops opposed it on jurisdictional grounds. In any case no more is heard of it.

What is interesting about this episode is the committee members responsible for it. Since this was not a bill of overwhelming importance, those who sat on the committees were likely those who had some interest in the matter. Most of those whom we can identify are of pronounced puritan leanings. Generally speaking, there was a whole bundle of issues tied together on which the puritans usually took the same side; what in our day is known as "linkage:" seemingly unconnected political and cultural issues which attract support from much the same constituency. Sixteenth-century "linkage" (and these were not exclusively puritan issues) consisted of several great issues: the fate of Mary Queen of Scots, increased penalties for recusant Catholics, a more aggressively Protestant foreign policy including concrete aid to Dutch Protestants and French Huguenots, and, of course, further purification of the church, which for some meant its presbyterianization. Generally speaking, the issues that a person took on these issues is a fairly reliable guide to his religious convictions. In any case, our committee members were definitely puritans of varying degrees of radicalism.

Sir Thomas Scott had supported a bill to enforce the Act of Uniformity against Catholics only, leaving puritan ministers free to vary the Prayer Book service as they wished.<sup>85</sup> He was a chief enemy of Mary Stuart and consistently urged her execution.<sup>86</sup> Sir Henry Killigrew, the diplomat, was in league with Leicester and Walsingham in urging a more aggressively Protestant foreign policy on the Queen. He connived in promoting puritan influence in the English church at Antwerp.<sup>87</sup> His wife was a friend and confidante of Edward Dering.<sup>88</sup> Robert Beal, Clerk of the Privy Council, was an enemy of Aylmer and Whitgift. It was he who carried Mary's death warrant to Fotheringay.<sup>89</sup> Thomas Norton, Cranmer's son-in-law and translator of Calvin's Institutes, was a consistent advocate of Mary's execution and

supporter of the anti-Catholic bill in 1581.<sup>90</sup> Edward Lewkenor was constantly in trouble for his anti-episcopal views and landed in the Tower in 1586.<sup>91</sup> There was also Sir William More, the same William More who had taken Chaundeler's and Sterete's confession twenty years earlier, indicating a continued interest in the Family of Love.

Thus far, we have seen that it was the "hotter" Protestants who initiated the attack on the Family of Love. Even so, this was an issue on which everyone could agree. Puritans and their erstwhile "enemies" in the official church establishment cooperated wonderfully in this arena. As we have seen, Bishop Cox of Ely (who was soon to die) hunted down the Family of Love in his diocese. Among those who aided him in his questioning of the villagers of Wisbech was William Fulke, the same William Fulke who had stirred up trouble at St. John's over vestments. Andrew Perne, who conducted the earlier interrogations at Balsham, was hardly what we would call a puritan. He had conformed under Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth and was therefore naturally suspect to the puritans.<sup>92</sup> As Master of Peterhouse he had taken the official side in the vestment troubles at Cambridge and was a firm opponent of Cartwright.<sup>93</sup> Under Mary he testified against Bucer at his posthumous trial and the burning of his bones. Under Elizabeth he participated in his rehabilitation.<sup>94</sup> All of which gave rise to the derogatory term, "Pernecoat." Yet on the Family of Love, he was foursquare in agreement with his puritan "enemies." The lords of Council recognized the "danger" and, as we have seen, appointed Knewstubb as a consultant to the bishops. The point is that underneath the seeming division, underneath the vestments controversy, Cartwright, and the prophesyings, there lay a solid bedrock of consensus: separatists and sectarians must not be tolerated and must be made to conform. Even Elizabeth herself shared this opinion, despite not wanting "to make windows into men's souls," as witnessed by her Royal Proclamation.

This underlying consensus was the result of a number of causes. Everyone, puritans included, agreed that church and state were inseparable and coterminous. There was no question of separate and competing churches. Here is the influence of Bucer and continental theology which coincided very nicely with the requirements of Tudor monarchs. There was also substantial agreement on the Eucharist, though puritans were naturally very sensitive to anything they thought implied worship of the Host. Though the Queen herself was perhaps more inclined to a Lutheran view, among churchmen themselves there was almost complete agreement on this most contentious issue. Puritans recognized also that a "halfly reformed" church was better than one not reformed at all. If the English church was not yet what it should be, neither was it what it once had been. For the vast majority (as yet) there was no question of separation: the only church they could envision was a church of England.

One is struck by the way in which the Family of Love was attacked almost because it was pro forma, the thing to do. Again here the influence of continental theologians is felt. Despite the bitter disputes between Wittenberg, Zürich, and Geneva, one aspect was common to all: enmity for and persecution of Anabaptists. Anabaptists were anathema precisely because their beliefs meant the end of a coterminous church and state, a societas christiana. On the Anabaptists, there was solid agreement about ends, if not about means. One almost gets the impression that Englishmen felt left out. Having no real indigenous Anabaptists to hunt, they came up with a more than adequate replacement: the Family of Love. To be more specific, there was a small group of ambitious Englishmen who were looking for a target to attack. Remember that Knewstubb, Rogers, and Wilkinson were all relatively young men when they wrote their anti-Family works, perhaps in their

early thirties. Their careers were really just starting. What better way to cut one's teeth than to write in a tried and true genre graced by such illustrious names as Zwingli, Calvin, and especially Bullinger. We have already seen how frequently the Family of Love is tied to Anabaptism by its critics. In Patrick Collinson's words, "there is ample evidence of a kind of informal agreement prevailing in many quarters that 'civil wars of the Church of God' would be abandoned in favour of an affirmation of those things in which all protestants assented, against papists, against such sectarian threats as the Family of Love . .!"<sup>95</sup>

There remains one large question to be answered: Why just then? Why did the attack on the Family of Love begin and reach its peak in the late 1570's and early 1580's? As we have seen, the standard historical answer will not do, that the Family of Love was attracting new members and constituted a real threat. The answer lies elsewhere.

The late 1570's represented something of a hiatus in the tensions within the church. In the past were the vestiarian controversies, Cartwright, and the Admonition to Parliament. The puritans had a sympathetic Archbishop of Canterbury in Edmund Grindal, whose great troubles still lay in the future, and whose primacy held high hopes for the godly.<sup>96</sup> To a large extent this represents consolidation in the face of a common threat: resurgent post-Trent Catholicism and native recusancy. Here again is part of the bedrock of agreement. However objectionable some of the Queen's policies might be to the godly, she was, after all, a Protestant. A Protestant Queen, even if slow to purify the church of Popish vestiges, was infinitely preferable to a Catholic monarch and a restoration of the Roman Church. We must never forget that the Catholic threat lies behind virtually all aspects of Elizabethan politics and religion. The year 1571 had seen the victory

at Lepanto and Spanish dominance in the Mediterranean, 1572 the St. Bartholomew's Massacre, and 1578 the victories of Don John in the Netherlands. On every side Protestant Europe, and especially England, seemed threatened. The King of Spain's "English Enterprise" was thought to be imminent. In 1579 a Papal force landed in Ireland and was soon reinforced from Spain. In 1580 the English Jesuits Edmund Campion and Robert Parsons arrived to bring succour to English Catholics. In addition the Queen had hinted once again that she was open to matrimonial overtures to the Duke d'Alencon, the French King's brother. Then there was the perennial trouble spot of the Queen of Scots, a rallying point for English Catholics while she lived. It was a time indeed in which Laurence Humphrey could write to Switzerland:

There are the signs preceding the end of the world . . . Satan is roaring like a lion, the world is going mad, Antichrist is resorting to every extreme, that he may with wolf-like ferocity devour the sheep of Christ.<sup>97</sup>

That the Family of Love should be the object of persecution then is no surprise. There was, as we have seen, lingering suspicion of the Family of Love as crypto-Catholics, a Popish fifth column ready to revolt at any time. On a deeper level, there was the feeling that now more than any other time concord and unity were essential. Wrote John Rogers:

How the wicked take occasion by these and like errours [ the Family of Love ], to speake euil of Christs Church, the eares of many godly doe heare, Especially the Papists: who speak and write, and nothing is heard more common in their mouths, then these tearmes, ye are at variaunce amongst your selves: no unitie of doctrine is observed: ye are of diuers opinions and sectes.<sup>98</sup>

If euer there were disturbers of the Church . . . I thinke that now is the time: For what with the bloudie Papistes with their fire and fagot, continuall warre, with horrible murders on one side, and the Anabaptistes, Freewill men, Arrians, Pelagians, and the Familie of Loue on the other side, Christes Church hath little rest, and small favour in the sight of man, but spurned on euery side.<sup>99</sup>

This indeed is a theme which, if not explicitly stated, was certainly always in the background. Now was not the time to engage in "civil wars of the Church of God;" now was the time to combat the Catholic threat and the best way to do that was to make sure your own house was in order and to display strength and unity, not division and dissension. This concern was fundamental to all Protestant Englishmen. That puritans took the lead in attacking the Family of Love is perhaps attributable to their greater sensitivity to the Roman threat and to their greater emphasis on a completely godly life as opposed to formal religious practice. Though they led the way, all joined in, attacking a threat which never really existed. That the attack was pursued with such gusto is perhaps attributable to those things which "puritans" and "Anglicans" had in common, especially their belief in an authoritative national church. It was only natural then that they should concentrate on those areas and issues in which they were in substantial agreement, and leave the others to sort themselves out later. There was also a careerist aspect to the origins of the attack on the Family of Love.<sup>100</sup> It is significant that our three authors were all roughly the same age: in the late 1570's they were just coming into their official maturity. John Rogers' three works were all printed within two years of each other. All of John Knewstubb's writings were published during an eight year period in the late 70's and early 80's. For the rest of his long career, he did not publish another thing. William Wilkinson's other major book was published in 1580, one year after his Confutation. The fact that these men's official careers were just starting, that they



were looking for some issue with which to make their mark, when the Family of Love presented itself as a target, and when conditions within England and the church were most conducive to such an attack, only served to intensify the campaign against the Family of Love.

The Family of Love in England was unimportant and insignificant in the grand scheme of things. However, for the reasons outlined above, it provoked a response out of all proportion to any threat it may have presented. This vehement attack has magnified the marginal significance of the Family of Love in Elizabethan England beyond recognition. This has been transmitted to the present through historical writings which were more concerned with making an ideological or genealogical point than with establishing the real historical significance of the Family of Love. By a critical evaluation of sources, it has been established that the standard view of the Family's history in England is a vastly distorted version of the truth. The only reason it has become a subject of research at all is because a peculiar conjunction of circumstances led certain Englishmen to attack it in a certain way. The Family of Love, and the attack on it, are a mirror in which we see reflected the concerns and attitudes of Elizabethan England.

## NOTES

### Chapter I

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- <sup>2</sup> Jean Dietz Moss, "The Family of Love in England," Diss. West Virginia 1969, pp. 10-14.
- <sup>3</sup> Moss, Diss., pp. 10-11; Rufus M. Jones, Studies in Mystical Religion, (London: Macmillan, 1909), p. 429 n. 1.
- <sup>4</sup> Friedrich Nippold, "Heinrich Niclaes und das Haus der Liebe," Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie, 32 (1862).
- <sup>5</sup> Accounts of Niclaes' life are quite numerous. Almost everyone includes a short biography of the founder and leader of the Family of Love. The information for the following sections are taken primarily from the following sources:

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- 7 John Rogers, The Displaying of an horrible Secte of grosse and wicked Heretiques, naming themselves the Family of Love (London: 1578).
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- 22 De la Fontaine-Verwey, Quarendo, pp. 231-234; Hamilton, p. 230.
- 23 Hamilton, p. 41; de la Fontaine-Verwey, Quarendo, p. 230.

- <sup>24</sup> Rooses, p. 68; de la Fontaine-Verwey, Quarendo, p. 231; Hamilton, p. 44. For a dissenting view, see Colin Clair, Christopher Plantin (London: Cassell, 1960) pp. 29-31. But see also Harry Carter, "Review of C. Clair, Christopher Plantin," The Library, 15 (1960), pp. 210-214, and C. Clair, "Reply to Harry Carter's Review," The Library, 16 (1961), pp. 216-217.
- <sup>25</sup> Rooses, pp. 85-87.
- <sup>26</sup> Hamilton, p. 45.
- <sup>27</sup> Hamilton, pp. 46-47; de la Fontaine-Verwey, Quarendo, p. 235; Clair, Plantin, pp. 23-27, 38-39.
- <sup>28</sup> De la Fontaine-Verwey, Quarendo, p. 239.
- <sup>29</sup> Clair, Plantin, p. 32.
- <sup>30</sup> Hamilton, p. 62; de la Fontaine-Verwey, Quarendo, p. 241; Moss APS, p. 13.
- <sup>31</sup> De la Fontaine-Verwey, Quarendo, pp. 241-243.
- <sup>32</sup> De la Fontaine-Verwey, Quarendo, p. 243.
- <sup>33</sup> Hamilton, p. 73.
- <sup>34</sup> Hamilton, pp. 70-74.
- <sup>35</sup> Hamilton, p. 1.
- <sup>36</sup> W. Kirsop, "The Family of Love in France," Journal of Religious History, III (1964-65), pp. 111-113.
- <sup>37</sup> Hamilton, p. 76.
- <sup>38</sup> Bernard Rekers, Benito Arias Montano (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), pp. 70-114.
- <sup>39</sup> Hamilton, pp. 77-78.
- <sup>40</sup> Rekers, p. 77; For a dissenting view, see Hamilton, p. 81.
- <sup>41</sup> De la Fontaine-Verwey, Quarendo, p. 229.
- <sup>42</sup> Hamilton, p. 46.

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## NOTES

### Chapter II

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- 33.
- 38 J. Rogers, Displaying, fol. E3; Wilkinson, Confutation, preface, iii.
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- 40 The STC lists four of H.N.'s works as having been translated by Vitell, These are Evangelium Regni, The Prophetie of the Spirit of Loue, Prouerbia H.N., and A publishing of the peace upon earth. The editions themselves do not state that Vitell was the translator. However, Vitell never denies the charge and it therefore seems likely that Vitell translated at least some of H.N.'s works.
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- 92 Thompson Cooper, "Stephen Batman," DNB, vol. 1, pp. 1334-1335.
- 93 Bateman, fol. A8.

- 94 William Fulke, A Defense of the sincere and true Translations of the holie Scriptures into the English tong, against the manifold cauills, friuillous quarels, and impudent slaunders of Gregorie Martin, one of the readers of Popish diuinitie in the trayterous Seminarie of Rhemes (London: 1583; rpt. Cambridge University press for the Parker Society, 1843), p. 36.
- 95 Fulke, p. 37.
- 96 Thomas Rogers, Catholic Doctrine of the Church of England (London: 1585; rpt. Cambridge University Press for the Parker Society, 1854), p. 52.
- 97 T. Rogers, p. 79.
- 98 T. Rogers, p. 320.
- 99 T. Rogers, p. 280; John Rogers, Displaying, fol. H7.
- 100 William Whitaker, A Disputation on Holy Scripture against the Papists, especially against Bellarmine and Stapleton, trans. and ed. W. Fitzgerald (London: 1588; rpt. Cambridge University Press for the Parker Society, 1844), p. 298.
- 101 Edwin Sandys, Sermons, ed. J. Ayre (Cambridge University Press for the Parker Society, 1842), p. 130.
- 102 Hamilton, p. 135.
- 103 Hamilton, p. 136; Moss, APS, pp. 55-56.
- 104 Hamilton, p. 136; The sermon was entitled "The White Wolfe."
- 105 Edmund Jessop, A Discovery of the errors of English Anabaptists (London: 1623), p. 89.
- 106 Stephen Denison, The White Wolfe; or, a sermon preached at Pauls Crosse (London: 1623), p. 46.
- 107 Denison, pp. 38-39.

<sup>108</sup> Strype, pp. 563-564.

<sup>109</sup> Strype, pp. 563-564.

<sup>110</sup> Hamilton, p. 135.

<sup>111</sup> Hamilton, pp. 135-136.

<sup>112</sup> Denison, pp. 33-34.

<sup>113</sup> Moss, APS, p. 56.

<sup>114</sup> John Etherington, A brief discovery of the blasphemous doctrine of familisme  
(London: 1645), quoted in Hamilton, p. 137.

<sup>115</sup> Hamilton, p. 139.

<sup>116</sup> Hamilton, pp. 140-141; Moss, APS, p. 69.

<sup>117</sup> Strype, pp. 561-562.

<sup>118</sup> I owe this suggestion to Professor C.R. Friedrichs.

## NOTES

### Chapter III

- 1    supra, p. 56.
- 2    Fulke, p. 36; Knewstubb, Confutation, Dedication to the Reader, p. 3.
- 3    J.B. Mullinger, "John Knewstubb," DNB vol. 11, p. 224; J. and J.A. Venn, Alumni Cantabrigensis (Cambridge University Press, 1922).
- 4    Knewstubb, fol. R4.
- 5    Knewstubb, fol. S2.
- 6    Hamilton, p. 128.
- 7    Hamilton, pp. 128-129.
- 8    Joseph Foster, Alumni Oxonienses 1500-1714 (Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint Ltd., 1968), III, 1274.
- 9    Foster, III, 1274.
- 10   Anthony Wood, Athenae Oxonienses (London: 1691), I, 156-157.
- 11   John Rogers, Displaying, fol. A3.
- 12   Displaying, fol. A5.
- 13   Displaying, fol. E5.
- 14   Displaying, fol. A6.
- 15   Displaying, fol. B1.
- 16   Displaying, fol. C8.
- 17   Displaying, fol. B4.
- 18   Displaying, fol. F5.



- 19 Displaying, fol. C4.
- 20 Displaying, fol. B6.
- 21 Displaying, fol. D1.
- 22 Displaying, fol. D3.
- 23 Displaying, fol. D3.
- 24 Displaying, fol. D3.
- 25 Displaying, fols. E4 ff.
- 26 Displaying, fol. C3.
- 27 Displaying, fol. C3.
- 28 Displaying, fol. H5.
- 29 William Wilkinson, A Confutation of Certain Article delivered unto the Family of Love (London: 1579), dedication to the Bishop of Ely, i.
- 30 Wilkinson, dedication to the Bishop of Ely, iiiii.
- 31 Wilkinson, iii.
- 32 Wilkinson, iii.
- 33 Wilkinson, fol. J1.
- 34 Wilkinson, fol. X2.
- 35 Patrick Collinson, The Elizabethan Puritan Movement (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 11-15.
- 36 Patrick Collinson, Archibishop Grindal 1519-1583 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1979), p. 171.
- 37 Collinson, EPM, p. 71.
- 38 Collinson, EPM, p. 70.
- 39 Collinson, EPM, p. 76.
- 40 Collinson, EPM, p. 78.

- <sup>41</sup> Bullinger to Bishop Horn, Zürich Letters, ed. H. Robinson (Cambridge University Press for the Parker Society, 1842, 1845), I, 343.
- <sup>42</sup> Collinson, EPM, pp. 84-91.
- <sup>43</sup> Collinson, Grindal, pp. 42-46.
- <sup>44</sup> Collinson, Grindal, pp. 42-44.
- <sup>45</sup> J.B. Mullinger, The University of Cambridge (Cambridge University Press: 1873), II, 206.
- <sup>46</sup> H.C. Porter, Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge (Cambridge University Press: 1958), p. 190.
- <sup>47</sup> Collinson, EPM, pp. 126, 215.
- <sup>48</sup> Knewstubb, Confutation, dedication to the reader, ii.
- <sup>49</sup> Collinson, EPM, p. 232.
- <sup>50</sup> Collinson, EPM, pp. 218-219.
- <sup>51</sup> J.B. Mullinger, "John Knewstubb," DNB, vol. 11, p. 244.
- <sup>52</sup> Acts of the Privy Council, vol. 12, pp. 317-318.
- <sup>53</sup> John Rogers, Displaying, fol. F7.
- <sup>54</sup> Displaying, fol. C2.
- <sup>55</sup> Displaying, fol. H6.
- <sup>56</sup> John Rogers, The Summe of Christianity, reduced unto eight propositions, briefly and plainly confirmed out of the holy worde of God (London: 1578), pp. 10-12.
- <sup>57</sup> Summe, pp. 19-23.
- <sup>58</sup> Summe, pp. 10-12.
- <sup>59</sup> Summe, p. 19.
- <sup>60</sup> E.I. Carlyle, "William Wilkinson," DNB, vol. 21, p. 278; Venn and Venn, Alumni Cantabrigensis, pt. 1, vol. 4, p. 412.

- 61 Constantin Hopf, Martin Bucer and the English Reformation (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946), p. 12.
- 62 Hastings Eells, Martin Bucer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931), pp. 142, 217.
- 63 Collinson, Grindal, pp. 49-56.
- 64 Collinson, Grindal, p. 49.
- 65 Eells, p. 394.
- 66 Eells, p. 394.
- 67 Collinson, Grindal, pp. 52-53.
- 68 Collinson, Grindal, p. 53.
- 69 Eells, pp. 54-64, 71.
- 70 Eells, pp. 238-240.
- 71 Eells, pp. 267-268.
- 72 Eells, p. 64.
- 73 Porter, pp. 107-109.
- 74 Porter, pp. 163-164.
- 75 Porter, p. 190
- 76 Porter, p. 176.
- 77 see W.S. Hudson, The Cambridge Connection (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1980), pp. 43-60; Mullinger, Cambridge, II, 53-64.
- 78 Collinson, EPM, p. 129.
- 79 Collinson, EPM, p. 129; Mark H. Curtis, Oxford and Cambridge in Transition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), pp. 191-193.
- 80 C.E. Mallet, A History of the University of Oxford (London: Methuen and Co., 1924), II, 115.

- 81 Collinson, EPM, P. 129.
- 82 Claire Cross, "Continental Students and the Protestant Reformation in England in the Sixteenth Century," Reform and Reformation: England and the Continent c. 1500-c. 1750, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford: Basil Blackwell for the Ecclesiastical History Society, 1979), pp. 44-45.
- 83 House of Commons Journals, I, 127, 128, 129, 130.
- 84 Sir J.E. Neale, Elizabeth and her Parliaments (New York: St Martin's Press, 1958), I, 410.
- 85 M.M. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), p. 234.
- 86 Neale, I, 250.
- 87 Knappen, p. 249; Collinson, EPM, p. 166.
- 88 Collinson, EPM, p. 258.
- 89 Neale, I, 342.
- 90 Collinson, EPM, pp. 216-217; Neale, I, 252-253, 385-387.
- 91 Collinson, EPM, pp. 306-307.
- 92 Mullinger, Cambridge, II, 180.
- 93 Porter, p. 177.
- 94 Mullinger, Cambridge, II, 181-182.
- 95 Collinson, Grindal, p. 287.
- 96 Collinson, EPM, pp. 154-155, 159-161.
- 97 Neale, I, 369.
- 98 Displaying, fol. C2.
- 99 Displaying, fol. F7.
- 100 I am grateful to Professor Murray Tolmie for this insight.

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