Children of Baal: Clergy Families and Their Memories of Sequestration during the English Civil War

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ABSTRACT Fiona McCall investigates memories of the English Civil War as conveyed in stories told by the sons and daughters of loyalist clergy, published in John Walker’s The Sufferings of the Clergy (1714). The storytellers recall early lives blighted by violence, poverty, and ostracism. McCall explores their interpretations of these difficult experiences and analyzes tropes common to their narratives. These stories are shown to be an essential component of the tellers’ personal, family, and group identity, yet they have the characteristic fractured forms of traumatic memories and are shared only reluctantly. KEYWORDS: John Walker; The Sufferings of the Clergy; loyalist clergy during the civil wars and Interregnum; social memory; narratives of traumatic memory

IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR, commonly referred to as “the troubles”1 by the late seventeenth century, the sons and daughters of loyalist clergy had more reason than most to take a dim view of the past. During the 1640s and 1650s many of them had been violently evicted from their homes, their fathers imprisoned, their families humiliated, impoverished, and ostracized. In 1704, Richard Clark, the son of an ejected Dorset incumbent, related his family’s ordeal:

My father Roger Clark Master of Arts . . . Rector of Ashmore of 120 £ value . . . a man of great worth . . . Took arms for the King under Lord Hopton . . . plunder’d of all leaving only the feathers thrown out of the bed . . . He had by a wife daughter of Richard Ringham of Strickland . . . 1000+ fortune . . . they took the two young sons being twins . . . Roger

1. See, for example, W. Dugdale, A Short View of the Late Troubles in England (Oxford, 1681).
and ... Richard ... and laid them stark naked in a dripping pan before the fire with a design to roast them ... but a certain woman ... snatch'd them ... and carried them away in her Apron. The mother stript of all cloathing except her shift and petticoats. He himself turn'd out by the Committee for refusing the Covenant.²

Clark's account is one of many harrowing and dramatic personal stories obtained from the sons and daughters of clergy by John Walker, an Exeter clergyman. He incorporated them, in edited versions, in a book published in 1714 that is now commonly referred to as *The Sufferings of the Clergy*.³ For the children of ejected clergy these events had been very difficult indeed, and they later referred to this period as a “black” time, the worst of times, a “fatal” time of oppression and of “traitorous and rebelious inequities.” The “wickedly wicked times,” one Essex correspondent described the period.⁴ Drawing on the original letters from Walker’s correspondents, now held in the John Walker archive in the Bodleian Library, this essay investigates the use these people made of their own conflicted past—the sense they made of difficult life events, and the lessons they hoped to pass on to posterity.

Research on the impact of the English civil wars is still dominated by the study of elite sources. Loyalist clergy, while they often had social and familial connections with the gentry, were mostly “middling sort,” and among the next generation we find ironmongers, tailors, and farmers. Many of the accounts of the sons and daughters of sequestered clergy were transmitted orally by people who would never otherwise have had ambitions to appear in print. By studying their stories, we may gain insight into what the conflicted past meant to ordinary people and how their understanding of it affected post-Restoration society.

This essay analyzes the main themes and tropes that appear in the narratives of clergy sons and daughters, and why these particular aspects of their life story, rather than others, were selected for potential public transmission. The experiences they related were at the heart of personal, family, and group identity, yet the stories had an ambivalent status for their narrators. They strongly reinforce Matthew Neufeld’s observation, in the introduction to this volume, that “for many people in late Stuart England, the civil wars were far from over.” But, as I will show, the psychological difficulty of dealing with past afflictions inhibited those who had suffered. Near the end of their lives, when they did at last reluctantly disclose these painful memories, they chose the fractured forms characteristic of narratives of trauma, the complexities of which have to date obscured their true significance for historians.

2. Bodleian Library, MS J. Walker, C2, fol. 194; Walker manuscripts are cited henceforward in the format “WMS C2.194.”

3. The full title is *An Attempt Towards Recovering an Account of the Numbers and Sufferings of the Clergy of the Church of England: Heads of colleges, fellows, scholars, &c. who were sequester'd, harrass'd, &c. in the late times of the Grand Rebellion* (London, 1714).

4. WMS: C1.26–27, 90; C2.284, 340; C5.19.
Seventeenth-century biographical convention often drew a veil over the personal lives of ecclesiastics, to such an extent that information about the families even of celebrated loyalists like Thomas Fuller and Jeremy Taylor has often been subject to debate. The standard work on the sequestered loyalist clergy, A. G. Matthews’s *Walker Revised*, continued this tradition: in line with the historical biases of his time, Matthews seems to have considered the families’ experiences of marginal interest. Yet they had been a prime consideration for the ejected clergy themselves. “How many Ministers Wives and children, now adayes are outed of house and home ready to be starved, How few are invited to their Tables, who hold the sequestrations of their Husbands or Fathers benefices?” wrote Fuller in 1647. In 1655, at the first meeting of the charity later known as the Sons of the Clergy, George Hall urged compassion for the “posterity” of ministers:

> forlorn, unblest, and destitute, exposed, and left like Ostriches Eggs in the earth, . . . that the wild Beast may break them.

For many years after its official formation in 1678, the Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy prioritized the needs of sequestered clergy families. It was probably no coincidence that its registrar, Thomas Tyllot, was himself the impoverished son of an ejected Suffolk loyalist (WMS: C1.303, 313; C3.378). The roster of generous early benefactors included names featuring prominently in Walker’s list of ejected clergy—Dr Townson, Dr Fulham, Dr Gatford, Mr Middleton, Bishop Turner—suggesting the extent to which those who had experienced sequestration as children remembered their own unhappy experiences and felt obligated to relieve those now subsisting in similarly straitened circumstances.

Family sufferings, rather than being perceived as peripheral, as Matthews later implied, were often seen as central, and accounts from the relatives of ejected clergy form the mainstay of Walker’s archive. It is a heterogeneous collection: the reliability of some of the stories may be questioned because they are anecdotal or traditional or both, and some are told by people born well after the period they describe. People remember their fathers, Keith Thomas has observed, “but their grandfathers are hazier.” Accounts of suffering by the sons and daughters of clergy are less open to doubt, since their narrators were old enough in the 1640s and 1650s to remember the

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experiences they recounted. Gathering such accounts required considerable effort and determination on Walker’s part, however. In an era when life expectancy was shorter than today, there were not many still alive in the early eighteenth century who could remember the civil wars. Once Walker began his research in 1704, he was forced to trawl for potential informants.

“I am still alive; all else gone,” wrote Frances King, daughter of sequestered Cambridgeshire rector John Manby, the granddaughter of Bishop Francis White of Ely (WMS C5.17). Daughters were often the last survivors who recalled the 1640s, and the ones who contributed to Walker’s enterprise. The average literacy rate for women was only around 30 percent at this time, so most gave their accounts orally to male intermediaries. Even if they could write, women may have needed persuasion to contribute to the discourse of a male, clerical elite. In a couple of cases, daughters clearly felt happier if their memories were represented as an account written by their husbands. But Walker persisted in his search for credible evidence and eventually obtained more than forty separate contributions by daughters of sequestered clergy. Around fifty testimonies in the archive, usually written but sometimes oral, are from sons.

William Reader’s account of his own father, John Reader, rector of Herne and Bobbing in Kent, was as “short as I could pen it, because I would not trouble you with a long and large Harange of His merits” (WMS C5.3). But such scruples were not typical: a recital of patrimonial virtues appears early in most of these narratives. The “best and truest Character” that the son of Daniel Horsmonden could give of his father was of his meeknes, humility, Learning, piety, patience, temperance, Resignation, Charity and Loyalty, from which noe persecucion could ever in the least make him swerve. (WMS C3.157)

Hyperbolic statements like these must be understood in the context of seventeenth-century conventions of memorialization and biography, which were mainly derived from funerary practices. The Greek encomium, the monumental inscription, the funeral sermon, and the elegy were templates, useful for presenting a carefully fashioned model of behavior for descendants and others to emulate. Individualized representation of personality, introduced into England with, for example, the portrait miniatures of Samuel Cooper and the long-unpublished Lives of John Aubrey,

11. Ages are sometimes stated. Thomas Kemp’s account of his father, William Kemp (WMS C4.19), dated June 2, 1708, is inscribed “Aetat. 88”; William Markes, son of Robert Markes of Bristol, is described in WMS C1.339, dated July 30, 1705, as “84 years of age”; Mrs Moreton, daughter of Robert Clarke of Andover, is described in WMS C7.28–32 as over 90. In other cases, ages of informants can be obtained from contemporary sources; for example, Gloucester Record Office, P71 IN 1/1, South Cerney parish register, indicates that the son and namesake of Humphrey Jasper died at 100 in 1720.
remained an unfamiliar concept to most. The “Theophrastan,” or generalized character study, typified by John Earle's *Micro-cosmographie* (1628), was better known. Possibly with Earle's characters of the “grave divine” or the “good old man” in mind, accounts by sons and daughters of the clergy praise their fathers’ piety and their “unspotted life and conversation.” To be described as “unexceptional” in this context was a compliment (WMS: C2.412; C8.90).

As well as expressing a natural familial loyalty, such praise had another purpose: to counter a Nonconformist interpretation of the past holding that the reform of the ministry had been a positive outcome of the English Revolution, an interpretation that characterized ejected loyalists well into the eighteenth century either as scandalous or as “readers”—completely lacking in the biblical knowledge and vocation requisite to their calling. A hostile correspondent, James Owen, encapsulated this view in a letter to Walker:

> [T]here were many of them notoriously debauched . . . and lamentably ignorant, and it will be hard to persuade us, that the removing of such was any great curse to the nation. (WMS C1.9)

Hence, it was critically important to the sons and daughters of clergy to defend the behavior of their own forebears. “Articles were exhibited . . . not any against his life or conversation, but for reading the common prayer,” wrote James Samborne, son of Hampshire rector Thomas Samborne (WMS C7.32b). Perhaps aware of the contemporary readiness to characterize personal enemies as “turbulent,” “quarrelsome,” “contentious,” or “vexatious,” writers of these accounts celebrate their parents for good relationships with local gentry and for charity to the poor. Sarah Rudkin described her father, Norfolk incumbent Christopher Barnard, as “well beloved by his parishioners” and “much lamented” when he died (WMS C1.44). Warwickshire rector John Riland’s son and namesake described him as “affable, humble,... [he] many times deposited the mony out of his own pockett, that he might make one of two contending partys”; and “soe charitable, that he carryd a poore-Box about him and never reckond himself poor, but when that was empty” (WMS C1.124).

The typical ejected incumbent was a Master of Arts, so the accusation of ignorance from Nonconformists was clearly unjust. Sons and daughters felt the need to counter such claims all the same. John Newte and Robert Bowber, the sons of two Devonshire incumbents, highlighted their respective fathers’ expertise in Greek and Hebrew (WMS C8.24; C2.231). Richard Towgood of Bristol was praised by his son not only for his “retaining memory”—considered a cardinal virtue for a clergyman—but also for the ability to apply his “great reading,” and for being “signally remark’d for . . . strength of judgment” (WMS C2.133).

Richard Towgood’s son was also his namesake, common among loyalist clergy families and consistent with the view that an individual’s identity should be barely distinguishable from that of his forebears. Family was supremely important to these loyalist correspondents: in the early eighteenth century virtue was still so inextricably linked to family status that these accounts frequently rate the reliability of their information according to their informants’ “quality,” or rank in society. Nepotism went unchallenged. In the West Country the richer benefices were filled by the progeny of former bishops, the Cottons and the Halls, or by members of the extended Travers or Trosse families. Most Walker correspondents state the initial family status of their subject: lineage, networks of kinship, private estates, and wives’ portions. Ancestors of any distinction are listed: several bishops; two translators of the King James Bible; a “Wardrobe keeper to three successive Monarchs.” In 1643 Daniel Horsmonden had featured as no. 78 in John White’s First Century of Scandalous Malignant Priests, so it was particularly important to his son to prove that his father had been a man of distinction. Thus we learn that Daniel Horsmonden married the daughter of Sir Warham St. Leger, “with a very good porcion, . . . such matches seldom . . . falling to the lott of a Drunken man” (WMS C3.157).

Descendants of those accused of scandal were less eager to rush to their defense; episodes of this sort would somehow prove impossible for family members to recollect in detail. “Nothing ought to be recorded against the party whom we love and honour, that may give his adversaries the least occasion to reproach his Name,” wrote Peter Heylin’s son-in-law and biographer, John Barnard, in 1683. Many of Walker’s correspondents clearly agreed, considering “everlasting silence” the best policy concerning their subjects’ past peccadillos. Three of Walker’s correspondents mention William Fairfax, accused by White of stalking women at night, but they reveal little about him, while Sussex vicar John Wilson, White’s notorious first case, was practically written out of the family history after his death in 1649 (WMS: C1.11; C3.134; C7.13).

22. WMS: C2.301, 340, 342–43; C4.4; C5.100; C7.98–100; C8.48–49, 63, 68, 76; G. Oliver, Lives of the Bishops of Exeter (Exeter, 1861), 145–47; J. Jones, Bishop Hall, His Life and Times (London, 1826), 20–21.
23. WMS: C1.26, 27, 88, 395; C3.203, 237; C4.33; C5.90, 254; C7.119, 134; C8.29, 36.
26. White, Century, 1–2, 7; British Library, Add. MSS 49608, and 46905, fols. 73–82.
Sons and daughters of clergy naturally preferred to feature experiences that cast their fathers in a good light, typically their Civil War exploits. Post-Restoration military anecdotes and memoirs, with their roll call of skirmishes, sallies, and vivid incidents, influenced accounts Walker incorporated.27 If many clergy themselves had been too old for active combat, their sons usually were not, and their own experiences pervade the accounts they wrote of their fathers. William Wake, a highly fortunate survivor of the Penruddock rebellion of 1655—“eighteene times a Prisoner, and twice condemned to be hanged drawne and quartred”—represented his own experiences as just as notable as those of his father and namesake, the rector of Wareham (WMS C1.143). Henry Byam’s own story pales beside the exploits of his “5 sons . . . engaged in that just quarrel,” including William, who for three years, was “forced . . . to . . . Trail a Pike in the Lowe Countries,” Henry, “killed in a fight at sea,” and John, killed “in a Battel in Ireland” (WMS C5.178).

Yet the accounts rarely detail military activities in those cases where the subjects were young and committed enough to take up arms for the king. John Nation provided only a cryptic comment on his father’s long years in arms: that he was “seized on in Wales . . . for a Major.” He declined to say more about his father’s military record, writing: “But I shall leave to speak of this and come to his sufferings” (WMS C2.267). In 1642, at the outset of civil war, Elizabeth Trosse’s father, John Trosse, a twenty-three-year-old student at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, had rushed to volunteer when Lord Byron raised his standard in the city. She performed a similar stroke of censorship:

Entred himselfe under . . . Sir Thomas Hele of ffleett; where hee served in a troope of horse; till the bussin[ess] was over; and the king brought to the block. (WMS C2.340)

Although loyalists reminisced among themselves about roundheads they had killed, their descendants—contributing accounts that would potentially become public—faced a dilemma. How could they demonstrate their subjects’ royalist credentials without making them seem violently unchristian in what was, after all, a Church of England martyrology? The solution they adopted was to make their narratives as full of incident as cavalier memoirs while casting their fathers as victims, hunted like “a Partridge upon the mountains” (WMS: C2.245; C3.131). The narratives often feature clerics who concealed themselves inches away from soldiers seeking them out, in hiding places ingeniously disguised in familiar surroundings. Robert Clarke of Andover was said by his daughter to have made a hole through the ceiling of his upper chamber into a neighbor’s house, and “by a rope would convey him self thither, when sought for” (WMS C5.25). Edmund Elys described how “80 Dragoons from Dartmouth” came to the family home in search of his father, then at supper, who rushed to “a chamber where there was an hollow-place in the wall, and a loose Board that might be . . . pull’d

up . . . it Pleas'd GOD that my father had . . . drawn up the Board before the souldiers came" (WMS C2.471). Others took advantage of the nearby wilderness. Robert Bowber, having escaped out of a window, was, according to his son, “forced to lie out three dayes and . . . nights in a furse brake only my self, then a little lad with him” (WMS C2.231).

These narratives frequently depicted fathers as the victims of violence. Theologian William Cave recalled the treatment of his father, Leicestershire rector John Cave:

[T]hey one time came into the Church, and discharged a Pistol at him then in the Pulpit; and at another time pluck' d him out of the Pulpit, and pull'd his gown over his ears. (WMS C3.361)

John Riland’s family kept an annual commemorative feast on the day he was shot by passing soldiers, narrowly escaping death when a bullet only burned his face and hair (WMS C1.124). Retelling such long-repeated stories, sons and daughters pictured their fathers as brave, even defiant, when faced with danger. When soldiers came to remove Thomas Pestell from Packington Church in Leicestershire, pointing loaded pistols at him as he was reading prayers, Pestell’s response, according to his daughter, was calm and measured: “He said, Gentlemen, use no violence, here is none will resist you,” before taking his seat in the congregation.

Responses in kind, acts of aggression on the part of the sequestered clergy themselves, are rarely described in these accounts, although there is plenty of surviving evidence of such actions from other sources. Responses to attempts to remove clergy from their livings were frequently much more combative than their children liked to remember. For example, parliamentary records show that Hertfordshire vicar Joseph Soan was imprisoned in London's Fleet prison in 1643 for leading his parishioners in “a mutiny and disturbance in the Church of Aldenham.” According to affidavits sent to the House of Lords, replacement minister Gilpin was coshed on the head with a cudgel by one of Soan’s large party of supporters. Soan himself was supposed to have said that “he would make the Churchyard too hot” for Gilpin’s followers. None of this appears in Soan’s daughter’s short account of the father she characterized as “prudent, pious and learned” (WMS C1.284).

There were other aspects of their fathers’ experience that sons and daughters preferred not to mention. Some loyalist accounts suggest that in the revolutionary years of the 1640s, clergy were frequently subjected to unofficial justice in the form of an inversion
ritual, “the riding,” as a public demonstration of their loss of authority. Thomas Turner’s son was prepared to admit that a trooper who arrested his father put on his father’s surplice and rode with it, “tyed round with an orange-Tawny scarf” (WMS C8.244). But a later incumbent in the parish, Dr Rudge, provided more details of this incident, which was presumably well remembered locally. He related how Turner, the son-in-law of Secretary of State Sir Francis Windebank and later dean of Canterbury Cathedral, was laid on horseback, “His face to the Horses Tail,” and the prayer book trodden in the dirt before him (WMS C2.466). Such incidents, however, were reported in the form of local parish legend only; family members found them too shameful to mention.

For clergy accustomed to being treated with a great deal of respect, being stripped of home, income, possessions, and often even of clothing must have been profoundly demeaning. Michelle Wolfe describes sequestration as something that “unmanned the minister” by depriving him of the basic ability to provide for his family.31 It is likely because of this that the next generation exalted their fathers’ status and made them the heroes of these stories. Many had seen their fathers eventually ground down and defeated by their experiences in the 1640s and 1650s. John Cave, according to his son, “worn out with long and tedious winter journeys from Committee to Committee . . . departed this life” in 1657 (WMS C3.361). In their post-Restoration portraits, ejected loyalists often seem both physically and psychologically reduced by their sufferings: in 1660, Gilbert Ironside described himself as “much decayd in Strength, Lungs, parts . . . by . . . our late Confusions.”32 But in these accounts, the pater familias remains undefiled, not humiliated, their words of Christian fortitude in times of difficulty long celebrated. A conversation between John Gandy and some soldiers, remembered by his daughter, suggests the unassailability of his calling. Seized by soldiers as he was going to church, Gandy is offered the chance to change his clothing before being taken to Dartmouth, eleven miles away:

He answered them, he was in the habit proper to his function . . . he wud carry the Armour . . . in his hand . . . the Holy Bible. (WMS C2.283)

Morgan Godwyn’s daughter imagined her father defiant when he was hauled before Cromwell:

[When Dr Godwin . . . did not Comply to what he desired Olyver threat- end him . . . Do you not know I can take of you [sic] head yes my Lord he Reply’d that will be a great kindness since you already have taken my esteat. Olyver said send him to the Tower. (WMS C5.254)

32. G. Ironside, A Sermon Preached at Dorchester (1660).
Elizabeth Theker remembered a conversation with her father, John Coren, the day he failed his religious examination before the local committee of “Triers”:

His children were earnest to Know How their Poor father had been Treated; and was like to speed for the future. All that she can Remember He said, was this: I Answerd the Questions They Ask’d me: But They could not Answer mine. (WMS C8.93)

This conversation was remembered long afterward because it concerned a turning point for the family.

David Pillemer’s research on memory suggests that turning points like this, because they reorient an individual’s life story, belong to several classes of memory that tend to be recalled most accurately and clearly. Within this class are cataclysms suffered in infancy, often converted by other family members into a conspicuous fixture in an individual’s life story. In the Walker archive, some of the most striking incidents are reported by those who were infants at the time: the baby Richard Clark and his twin brother, snatched from the fire; Edward Seddon, who was born during the siege of Chester:

And the City being closely besieged, . . . my Mother was on the 12th day of Octob[er] 1645 deliv’d of me her 9th child, . . . the last that was publicly baptiz’d in the Font of the Cathedral there before . . . 1660. (WMS C2.217)

The ejection of the family from the parsonage was the event most often recalled from childhood, featuring in dozens of these accounts. This was the point at which children discovered for themselves the full impact of political and military contingencies on their own lives. Accounts often focus on the brutality shown to the mothers who, with their husbands in hiding or in prison, frequently faced eviction alone. Henry Gandy blamed the intruding minister Christopher Jellinger for watching in the garden as soldiers went in to clear the parsonage at South Brent on his behalf, forcing Gandy’s mother out:

[O]ne of them . . . presented a Pistoll cockt to her breast, and threatned to shoot her if she did not immediately quit the house . . . he took her by force with a sucking Child (my sister Spurway) at her breast and thrust her out of the Gate, and bolted the Gate upon her. (WMS C2.344)

According to John Newte, the eviction of his mother, Thomasine, from the rectory at Tiverton, was assisted by a baying crowd:

[T]he mob of the Town were encouraged to make Alarms all night at the Gates and doors . . . to weary and frighten her out . . . All which . . . she

bore a long time, with a great deal of Patience and Courage, but at last she was forced to remove. (WMS C8.26)

Before the Civil War, a country living provided a comfortable and healthy place to raise children. Clergymen not infrequently married much younger wives who bore them many children, who were often ejected with their mothers. Several ejected families are described as consisting of as many as nine, twelve, and in one case fourteen, children. Their ejection was a source of embarrassment to the local community, who clearly had no idea how to handle the situation and were often remembered as distinctly lukewarm in their efforts to help.34 Sons and daughters offered the explanation that neighbors were banned by the military from interceding, not liking to concede that their fathers were unpopular with their parishioners. Frances King, daughter of John Manby, rector of Cottenham in Cambridgeshire, remembered:

[ E]very one was afraid to give us shelter. My father had a sister in towne, married to one Mr John Lass . . . but they troubled him many ways for harboring us, indighting him for taking inmates into his house . . . they sent a bell man about the town, to forbid everyone that owed him mony to pay him. (WMS C1.26)

Charles Tarlton, son of Somerset minister John Tarlton, recalled penalties for entertaining the ejected family, so that they were forced “to lodge several nights in the shambles in the open street, in terrible severe winter weather” (WMS C5.447).

Children who lived through this never forgot the humiliation and discomfort of sheltering in primitive temporary refuges: a stable remembered by the son of Richard Atkinson, archdeacon of Norwich; a brewhouse by the daughter of Dorset rector Gamaliel Chase (WMS C2.367). William Cave, about ten when his family was ejected from their Leicestershire parsonage, remembered how they were not allowed bread or drink “out of their own house” (WMS C3.361).35 “Meate was att the fire, roasting for dinner, they seized that and gobbled it upp, and left none,” wrote Frances King of her own family’s ejection (WMS C1.26). Precise details about food made an indelible impression on hungry children. John Edsaw’s daughter remembered being “glad to feed on half an egg”; James Buck’s son saw crabs floating in his drinking water (WMS: C1.66; C3.377). William Higgins, son of the archdeacon of Derby, related:

I my self not having tasted . . . Bread two or three days, have been glad to satisfy my Hunger by eating . . . the Fruits of the Hedges; which I did . . . as if they had been Dainties, so Extream was my Hunger; we distributing that little we had betwixt my Father and the smaller Children, they being not so well able to endure the sharp Bitings of Famine as we were. (WMS C3.56)

34. See, for example, WMS: C1.218, 339; C2.337.
35. Matthews, Walker Revised, 23
Clergy sons and daughters never forgot being reduced to eating the staples of a poor peasant’s diet, “barley dumplings,” or “Puddings made of Boar’s blood” (WMS: C5.46; C8.13). At Rose Ash in Devon, there was a remembered anecdote of the sorry plight of Roger Trosse’s family, who, having “no other Place to go,” were “cramm’ d in” to an outhouse kitchen, still used by the “invader,” the intruding minister John Bolt:

Bolts family had carried some Tarts (made with Apples) into The kitchin-oven to be Bak’t . . . Roger Trosses children were Poor and Hungry . . . They open’d The Oven and did eate some . . . Bolt . . . fell foul upon the Incumbents children . . . But a young Lad . . . made Answer—You need not be so angry; I’m sure the Apples were ours. (WMS C8 76–77)

If they remained in the vicinity, ejected clergy families might have to accept the status of local pariahs. Frances King recalled the pain this caused:

[T]here very children were soe full of hatred, taking itt from there parents, . . . att play time in the yard some boyes pretended to spy a wonder . . . and I running amongst . . . to see, a boy; son to an adversary, tooke upp a forke, and Struk the tines into my head, a Little above my forehead, the scare of I have yet. (WMS C1.26)

Others quickly removed themselves, turning to their extended families for succor after ejection. Philip Goddard’s son described how he “tooke up his heels and ran” to his Berkshire relations (WMS C5.16). Formerly, the possession of a living had allowed clergy to provide occupations and support for blood relatives. Now the direction of family influence was reversed. Incumbents had to appeal to the store of good will they had built up within the extended family network. Even distant kinsmen might be called upon. The family of unlucky Shropshire curate Thomas Orpe was sustained as the “Ravens fed Elisha” by the “Noble Family of the Corbetts,” according to his son. Orpe lost one living after another because of his dogged refusal to adapt his religious beliefs to the times. But three successive members of the Corbet family procured him a new living each time, merely because he was “somewhat” related by marriage to one of the Corbet widows (WMS C3.53–55). John Gandy, the vicar for South Brent in Devon, appears to have been well connected locally; in consequence the family quickly recovered from the shock of a rather brutal ejection. According to his son-in-law, Mrs. Gandy lived in “good reputation” in Exeter, her relatives “persons of the best note among the Cityzens.”36 Gandy also assiduously exploited other family contacts to gain protection in a new living (WMS C2.283–84).

Family loyalties often outweighed political differences, with clergy families frequently rescued by their connections with the new elite. The son of William Battishill,

the vicar of Shebbear in Devon, for example, related how his father managed to have his sequestration reversed with the help of his brother-in-law, a local commissioner (WMS C2.399). But in the end, the more quotidian support of immediate family mattered more. Walker’s correspondents often praised the resilience of clergy wives and daughters, like the “deare mother and sister” of William Wake, “inforced to worke for bred for themselves and Children” after his father was imprisoned; or the wife of Devonshire minister Philip Hall, who, according to his daughter Mary Quick, practiced as a midwife, assisted by the “labor and industry” of their twelve grown-up children (WMS: C1.143; C2.316).

Some of these accounts, however, told of kinsmen who preferred their principles to helping distant relatives. Leicestershire incumbent John Cave, facing sequestration, was relying on two near kinsmen, Sir William Armyn and Sir Arthur Heselrige, who had “firmly promis’d him to be at the Committees, and to support his cause.” However, with Heselrige and members of his family named as the chief persecutors of several other loyalist clergy, this was perhaps a forlorn hope. As Cave’s son William related, “both of them thought fit to be absent: Accordingly the cause went against him” (WMS: C1.46; C3.361; C5.71; C7.136). Civil war opened fissures in some families. The bond between Cheshire minister William Seddon and his Presbyterian brother Peter was probably never strong. Peter was nearly a generation older than William and had instigated the removal of the moderate Cheshire minister Isaac Allen (WMS C5.277–97). His uncompromising response to William’s appeal for help, recalled by William’s son Edward, is therefore unsurprising:

[He] then dispatch’d a letter to his eldest Brother Mr. Peter Seddon at Outwood in Lancashire . . . then . . . turnd zealous Presbiterian, . . . requesting him to cover, either all or part of his family, till he could weather the storm . . . the answer . . . was that would he conform himself to the Godly party, his own merits would protect . . . him, which so insen-s’d my Father that he never more held any Correspondence with him.37

Those who had taken a principled stand for their religious beliefs could also be disappointed by children who too easily defected in extremis. Remembered with shame by their siblings were Philip Hall’s son Richard, who temporarily converted to Catholicism, and the clerical son of Robert Dixon, who “ran with the Multitude, and saved his Bacon . . . in stead of suffering as our Father had done” (WMS: C1.39; C2.316). But paternal guidance weakened in clerical families, with fathers in exile, hiding, or absent, eking out a living. Edmund Elys commented sadly, “My father was seldome at home all the Time of the wars” (WMS C2.471). Dionysius Venn, son of Richard Venn of Tiverton, whose family were repeatedly “disperrst and left to more miserable shifts then before in a strange place,” ended up calling another man “father,”

“to his dying day,” an “Honest Farmer” who at his own expense raised and educated Venn (WMS C2.416). There are several stories of exiled clergy abandoning children, and (often pregnant) wives, at home in England, to fend for themselves. Dorcas Gatford became pregnant just before her husband went into exile, according to her son:

His Poor wife could get no Admittance to him till the day before he was forced away; whom he left with child, with five other children in a Poor Thatch’t House In... Dennington. (WMS C4.56)

It was another seven years before he returned.

It is impossible to calculate the psychological effect on children of unsettled early lives: families wandering from place to place in search of a livelihood, children dispersed to survive on charity, or exposed to violence and combat, as in the cases of Robert Higgins, who remembered being fired on during the siege of Lichfield; or William Wake, who as a teenager saw his father shot in the head at point-blank range (WMS: C1.143; C3.56). According to Judith Herman, studies of young children provide some of the clearest examples of traumatic memories, with their heightened sense of threat and retention of “indelible images.” In the Walker archive, there are vivid accounts from those who were young children at the time, in which they remember their terror at a father or mother threatened with a pistol, or being told their father would be “hang’d and damned”; or their shock at finding themselves abused (WMS: C1.179; C3.53; C7.119; C8.15). The two sons of George Pierce of Tiverton recalled being thrown out of their beds onto the floor and having the sheets and bedding removed from under them (WMS C8.19). The daughter-in-law of Richard Venn related what her husband had told her about his early memories:

Mr Dionysius Venn was... about 7 or 8 years old when his Father was expelled,... as he was innocently putting his finger into the pinkt Hose (... then the fashion) of the sequestrator as he was turning hym out of doors, he struck the child... with a violent blow. (WMS C2.416)

Older children faced additional pressures. They might be required to take responsibility for helping the family. Robert Bowber related how he was recalled from Oxford University to “try what might be done” for his father’s “preservation,” first bribing the local commissioners to defer his ejection from his Devonshire living, then appearing “with the chiefest the honestest inhabitants of the parish” to

38. J. L. Herman, Trauma and Recovery (London, 2001), 38.
argue his case, and facing “scorn taunts and threats” for so doing (WMS C2.231). Some, like William Wake, became radicalized as a result; for others, cumulative experiences of deprivation and fear became a burden impossible to bear (WMS C1.143). Francis King described the long-term effects on her two brothers:

[H]e [John Manby] educated 2 sons in Clare Hall in Cambridge, in his most indigent condition, the first was soe deeply concerned att the times, and my fathers afflictions that he fell into a consumption, att 12 yeares old, was admitted at 14, Batcheller of Arts at 18, butt soone after died . . . the second was Master of Arts, soone after the Kings returne and had the Kings mandamus for a fellowship in the college, but they were factious, and Dr Dillingham the Master . . . opposed itt soe he followed the ministry a while, but drilled on 3 or 4 yeares resenting itt too much, and died. (WMS C5.17)

Yet not all were psychologically broken by violence and poverty. The son of Wiltshire minister Thomas Hickman laughed off disturbing early experiences as comic stories concerning the stupidity of Parliamentary soldiers. One, transmitted to his son, concerned plundering soldiers who found a box of mince pies,

which they immediatly laid Hands on, crying out . . . O monstrous superstition! to which one of their fellows . . . in another chamber . . . answerd . . . down with it (thinking it . . . some picture . . .). On which word of command they all immediately fell onn, like a kennell of Hounds, not leaving the least superstitious fragment to the great mortification of the poor children. (WMS C5.19–20)

Coping with poverty was perhaps easier if, like John Phare, son of the curate at Whimple in Devon, children had lower expectations to begin with. “This merry Relator,” Walker noted down from Phare’s oral account, “[being the eldest son] went and Beggd for them, traveling from one Gentlemens Hous to Another weekely with Bag and one would give a Loafe Another A Chees . . . this he did for a Considerable time til he was Bound oute Apprentice” (WMS C2.387). Thomas Washer’s daughter Mary, married to a carpenter, was one of many children reduced to a “condition much the poorer in the world,” without education and financial prospects, as a result of their fathers’ years of sequestration; yet she remained sanguine, considering that the “worldly circumstances” of the family of seven “were very well” (WMS: C2.313; C4.75). William Seddon was given the chance to leave Chester with other royalists after the siege, but instead risked staying with his wife and nine children. His son’s account concluded happily, “in all this time he had not . . . any temporal estate whatever, yet he liv’d cheerfully and contentedly, and saw many of his children comfortably dispos’d of” (WMS C2.217).
In the longer term, many sons and daughters of clergy took comfort in providentialism. Often thought a characteristic of “godly” writings, this was in fact, as Alexandra Walsham has demonstrated, a way of thinking that permeated all sections of seventeenth-century society. Those who had suffered severe hardship as children could only make sense of past misfortunes by seeking signs that God’s hand eventually acted against their oppressors, allowing them some psychological compensation for years of penury. Frances King related:

[M]y father buried both these sequestrators after his returne; they have seene there Riches... gone. Tailers wife; and Daughter, releived by the parish, and Wrigts children and, grandchilde wretched, Nye; was a sickly man, all the time of his intrusion, he buried his wife, then and all his children borne in that house. (WMS C1.26)

The three daughters of Christopher Baitson of Devon, who had been threatened with rape during the Civil War, were given satisfaction by the unnatural deaths of those who articulated against their father, “one by a fall from his horse, a 2nd was drowned and the 3rd dyed ravingly distracted” (WMS C2.337). Yet for Frances King, such a coping strategy scarcely concealed a bitter despondency not dispelled at the Restoration, when the continuing difficulties faced by the Manby family and the death of the only son, “quite broake my fathers heart, that he died a monthe after him, and soe there was nothing butt troubles; to the end of his dayes” (WMS C5.17).

Following the Restoration Act of Oblivion, families like the Manbys were not encouraged to complain too vociferously or publicly about the past; they were supposed to forget prior suffering and move on. Some public remembrance was allowable, but Charles II, it was claimed, had said, “Recrimination was not purgation” (WMS C1.99). Those who continued to harp on their sufferings found, in short time, their cries falling on deaf ears. In any case, as Damias Nussbaum explains, the propagation of a discourse of suffering, much favored by Dissenters, was “the trump card of a weak hand.” The Church of England much preferred the more potent myth of its strength, of unbroken tradition, to a rhetoric of persecution.

Reading the Walker narratives, one has a strong sense that these stories have struggled to see the light of day. Many of Walker’s potential contributors appeared to suffer amnesia about the recent past. At Steeple Langford in Wiltshire, however, Arthur Collier found it hard to believe that “our... family have so soon forgotten... their past suffering” (WMS C3.38). Where parents had died young, their surviving family

often knew little about them; several wrote to Walker apologizing for their ignorance (WMS: C1.72, 238; C3.180). But such apparent forgetfulness was not always an actual memory lapse. Intense religious divisions still existed within communities in Walker’s time: reluctance to contribute might arise from natural caution against stirring up a “hornets’ nest” of argument with those of differing religious or political persuasions. Although Elizabeth Bentham was one of Walker’s more enthusiastic contributors, supplying accounts of both her father and her father-in-law and several other Hertfordshire clergy, she worried that Walker’s book would “inflame the desenters and doe the Church noe good” (WMS C2.97).

Many of those who exerted influence and power in Walker’s time, even if they were now apparently loyal Anglicans, came from families that had other political sympathies in the prior century. It would be difficult to extract reliable accounts from them, as John Croker described:

Some Few who are alive and cou’d give us the best accounts . . . were sequestrators Themselves, and will be very Tender of Exposing a Faction, which They heartily espous’d, for the sake of a Church which they couldly conform’d for the sake of a living . . . Others have contracted alliances with the familyes of sequestrators, and They cannot spread Truth, least they pull down the House on their heades. (WMS C8.53)

No one wanted to upset the sensibilities of someone who was now loyal to the Church of England. Even the son of the Sussex Puritan Francis Cheynell, notorious for his persecution of the dying William Chillingworth, found an advocate to plead that Cheynell’s name be kept out of Walker’s publication (WMS: C3.377; C4.10; C5.220).42 And many in the church were quite hostile to what Walker was setting out to do. Richard Lloyd, the father of William Lloyd, the bishop of Worcester, had been one of the first loyalist clergy to be denounced by Parliament in the early 1640s. His son was supportive of Walker’s efforts and promised to talk to other bishops, “though perhaps not with all” (WMS C1.404).43

There were also theological reasons behind Anglican reluctance to lay bare past sufferings. The “martyrological” approach to suffering favored by Dissenters was only one of several possible responses in Christian teaching.44 The tone of seventeenth-century Anglican writings on this subject was characterized by rather old-fashioned severity, many theologians being inclined to see suffering as a form of divine chastisement. The purpose of affliction, wrote Richard Allestree, the author of the bestselling Anglican tract *The Whole Duty of Man*, was “to examine our hearts and lives,”

42. F. Cheynell, *Chillingworthi Novissima* (London, 1643).
searching diligently for the sins that “provoked God thus to smite us,” and to forsake them. As a natural consequence of such ideas, past sufferings could seem shameful, the church’s eclipse a subject reserved for private contemplation alone, a temporary aberration that was not for public discussion.

In line with such attitudes, clergy families often preferred not to talk about their losses and chose denial instead. Inscriptions on funeral monuments to clergy sufferers often pretended to a continuous, uninterrupted incumbency. In the chancel at Dickleburgh in Norfolk, Christopher Barnard’s monument records that he had been “per 58 Annos Rector.” There is no mention of the plundering, imprisonment, and ejection that, according to his daughter Sarah Rudkin, he had preferred to suffer rather than take the covenant (WMS C1.44–45). “He was minister of Norham fifty years,” wrote Mary Trotter of her father, Alexander Davidson, “for he Reckoned himself the lawfull minister of it all the time” (WMS C7.136). Charles Drake, son of Richard Drake, former minister of Radwinter in Essex, refers in a letter to “perusing” his father’s papers, which presumably included Drake’s fifty-page journal covering his life from birth to 1658. Yet, possibly unenthusiastic about raking over his father’s particularly checkered past, including an assault by his Essex parishioners and an appearance before the Committee for Religion at Westminster, Charles Drake chose to reveal to Walker only the dates of his father’s sequestration (WMS C3.288).

The children of loyalist clergy sufferers often found any attempt to revisit past experiences acutely painful. The son of Daniel Horsmonden confessed that he had only “with great difficulty, prevayled with my selfe” to write “on this Melancholly subiect, which I have many tymes formerly refused,” hoping that it would “never have been mencion’ d any more, eyther to his honor or his enemies shame” (WMS C3.158). John Brayne wrote that his account of his grandfather Emmanuel Sharpe came “from my Mothers mouth, who being a woman of great moderacion is very unwilling to have those things rak’ d up, . . . and her backwardness in the Relation has been the reason of my not making any Reply to you all this time” (WMS C3.304). Daniel Bailye, son of Andrew Bailye, vicar of Shifnal in Shropshire, apologized for not sending his narrative earlier, “but the thoughts of these troubles hinders me from writing.” He distanced himself from his childhood experience by beginning his narrative in the third person, relating how “they” “turned some cold children out of bed”:

And because they could not find my father (for whom a troop of horse was sent from Stafford . . .) they threatened to put burning matches between my fingers, if I would not tell whe he was, tho I then was not ten years old. (WMS C1.35–36)

47. Bodleian Library, Rawlinson MS D158, diary of Richard Drake, fols. 5–6, 48.
There has been considerable debate over whether psychoanalysis can be used appropriately in the study of history. The authors of Walker narratives are certainly psychologically distinguished from modern subjects by the way they conceive of themselves, not so much as individuals but in relation to the family network.48 But reading these personal accounts, we also find many familiar psychological and emotional patterns. The reactions of these young children, recounted later, are recognizably the products of trauma. Much has been written in recent years on the tactics used by trauma survivors to cope with difficult memories. The desire to forget is, as Judith Herman notes, normative: “The ordinary response to atrocities is to banish them from consciousness.”49

Why, then, did these narrators bother to share their experiences with the wider world? For many sons and daughters of the clergy, it was a question of upholding family pride and honor. “I suppose a sons account of his Fathers sufferings . . . may be liable to exception, and suspected to be partial,” wrote Robert Forster, son of the rector of Allington in Wiltshire (WMS C10.31). Two interlocking motives for most correspondents were to vindicate their ancestors and to serve what they believed to be the unacknowledged truth about the past. The word “truth” crops up repeatedly in Walker narratives; indeed, the correspondents attempted to give their accounts the status of legal evidence. Edward Battie declared that the oral testimony he took from Mrs. Dionysius Venn was “no more than what she professes to make oath if required. The truth and nothing but the truth of what she heard her Husband read often out of the Diary of his Fathers sufferings” (WMS C2.416). There was also a concern that this truth about the past should serve the present, no matter how painful the narrators found the task of relating it. John Turner, whose father, the vicar of Treneglos in Cornwall, had narrowly escaped execution, wrote in 1704:

I cannot say of it as Aneas . . . of his travells to his fellow Trojans: Olim haec meminisse Iuvabit, nay rather that the remembrance is bitter; and will bee a burthen to the ages to come; that the wars of our predecessors may prove warnings to us there posterity: and that the divisions . . . may not any more bring on us the like distractions is . . . the dayly and hearty prayer. (WMS C4.75)50

Sons of the clergy were often clergymen themselves—some, like the Newtes in Devon and the Colliers in Wiltshire, ensconced in long-standing clerical dynasties in one parish. They were thus serving their own interests by bolstering the established memories of sequestration during the civil war.

49. Herman, Trauma and Recovery, 1.
50. Vergil, Aeneid, bk. 1, line 203: “Perhaps in the future even these things will be pleasant to remember.”
church with their memories, and helping the family become even more entrenched as the natural successors in the living into the eighteenth century or even the nineteenth. In demonstrating what they saw as the evil results of radical religious zeal, their efforts were perhaps partially successful. After all, half a century later this was still a predominant view about the conflict: “But it must be confessed that these events furnish us with another instruction . . . no less useful, concerning the madness of the people, and the furies of fanaticism,” wrote David Hume in the mid-eighteenth century.51

The daughters of the sequestered clergy did not necessarily have the same degree of enthusiasm for promoting patrimonial interests or the Anglican Church, and were consequently less constrained by high-church sensibilities. Thomas Washer’s daughter described the parish as “very well serv’d” by the intruding minister after his ejection (WMS C2.313). The conversion of some Anglican clergy to Catholicism during the Interregnum was practically a taboo subject in loyalist narratives, but Mary Quick had no hesitation in acknowledging that her brother Richard Hall, an Exeter minister, converted for a time (WMS C2.316). Many daughters probably contributed only at the request of their parish priests, who had themselves been pressured by their clerical superiors to contribute.

Some daughters hoped that monetary compensation might follow accounts of their losses. “The report is that the queen has given between 16 and 17 thousand pounds . . . to the famalys of the clergy that suffered in the cause of King Charles,” wrote Elizabeth Trosse from Dawlish in 1704, incorrectly understanding the nature of Queen Anne’s Bounty, established in that year: “if there bee any reallity in itt I am sure my present circumstances ar such as need the benifitt of her majesties bounty as . . . any person livinge” (WMS C2.401). Well into the eighteenth century, when petitioning for a pension from the Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy, clergy widows who were daughters or even granddaughters of sequestered clergy would mention it.52

Clergy daughters were sometimes quite fearful about the consequences of telling their stories. Gamaliel Chase’s daughter desired that her name be concealed to avoid the “malice of the factions” (WMS C2.365). Despite this reticence, like many female correspondents she contributed an account richer in incidental detail and psychological truth than many by male correspondents. Likewise, the rector of Chulmleigh in Devon was seemingly overwhelmed by the loquaciousness of his female informants:

This information I have from three of my predecessors daughters, who are now dwelling in Chulmley, and have a great deal more to say of their fathers sufferings: but these are the chief heads of what they informed me. (WMS C2.337).

52. See, for example, London Metropolitan Archives A/CSC/392/4, petition of Mary Chamberlayne, 1717.
Stories cascaded from these women; relating them, they were apparently satisfying a long-suppressed need to testify. Victims of extended periods of trauma, particularly children, cannot easily escape their troubled past, for their memories return unbidden, as flashbacks, often in sensory rather than narrative form. Such memories can be a barrier to achieving emotional recovery, unless they can somehow be revealed to others. But for many years, children of sequestered clergy had little opportunity for testifying in this way. Before 1660, of course, public comment was virtually impossible. Only occasionally did royalist clerical families dare to make political commentary via funeral monuments. The sufferings of Devonshire minister Daniel Berry were seen by his family as having caused his premature death, in 1653, at forty-five. The inscription on his monument in the chancel at Molland reads that he was “first sequestred by the then Rebels, and ever after persecuted til he died.” But relatives usually had to wait until well after the Restoration to record such statements. It was only in 1710 that Cecilia Goad, daughter of Oxfordshire minister William Oldish, who had been shot dead in an ambush by Parliamentary troopers, referred to her father, on a monument to her brother Ambrose, as “barbarously murdered by the Rebels in the Year 1645.” Such inscriptions reflected an acute need for closure over a bitter past, in a new world that was tired of hearing about such misfortunes and offered few other avenues for public expression.

Well before Walker’s time, the loyalist view of the past was already becoming a “sectional” narrative, one that, not being compatible with the hegemonic narrative, never quite acquires “public valency.” Marginalized in public, loyalists’ memories instead thrived in private, as sufferers found comfort from talking to those with similar experiences. These memories formed a kind of secret history, consisting of *anecdota*, or “things unpublished,” spread among sympathetic listeners at county feasts and clerical gatherings, and above all through the family, its very transmission in these ways encouraged by official reticence. It was this secret history that Walker tapped into, as so many hundreds of personal stories poured in. Walker, taking years to produce them, was in danger of becoming a laughingstock, and was forced to omit from publication those he received later.

Like other survivors of trauma, the sons and daughters of the ejected clergy did not necessarily tell their stories in the most straightforward way. Many of their accounts, furthermore, reached the public secondhand, after years of likely distortion as memories faded through oral transmission or over time. Violence to women and children was often described with what now seems undue restraint. Formulaic scenes

54. Memorial, St. Mary’s Church, Molland, Devonshire.
and clichéd loyalist terminology feature in dozens of narratives, interesting detail appearing only as cryptic comments or brief asides at the end of a letter, after the main narrative.

Richard Towgood described his account as “some small scraps and fragments of what past here in those wicked times” (WMS C2.132). “Fragmentary” is a word often used by the children of trauma survivors to describe the stories handed down to them. Information is rarely revealed directly, but typically leaks out, as disjointed episodes and small visual cameos or vignettes, like the ejection stories in the Walker archive, which seem to epitomize the horrors experienced. Such fractured communication, often directed to a restricted audience, serves a psychological need for survivors by combining habits of secrecy learned in fear with attempts to reveal the truth. Yet, ironically, such methods also undermine credibility, unless we understand them to be the typical products of traumatic memory.

Accounts written by the sons and daughters of ejected loyalist clergy do not seem to support recent historical interpretations that downplay the impact of the Civil War on English society. The sons and daughters of the loyalist clergy never forgot their childhood experience of the venality and cruelty that so often characterize both civil and religious conflicts. Their accounts demonstrate eloquently why this conflict was remembered as “the troubles.” Nor were they the prisoners of their past. They had learned to manipulate their memories, repressing and expressing them by turns in different public and private settings in order to cope in a world of conflicting interpretations. Contributing to Walker’s enterprise perhaps served a psychological purpose, helping them to “work through” the emotions associated with remembering past injustices. It is rather our historical understanding that has suffered because of the methods they chose. Historians must try to understand the private emotions behind the public mask often demanded by society if we are to comprehend the continuing influence of such memories on later generations.

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