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Chapter IV

Attitudes to Pastoral Work in England, c. 1560-1640.

The career structure and material rewards outlined in the preceding chapters are the aspects of the parish ministry which left records obviously capable of analysis and even of measurement. No doubt they shaped the lives and attitudes of the clergy. To see the parish clergy only in these terms, however, is to exclude the pastorate itself, the service which justified the continuance in a Protestant community of a separate order of church officers. Naturally enough the English clergy of the later 16th and early 17th centuries commonly held that theirs was both an honourable and an arduous office, by virtue of the ministry which they performed. The two went together, according to George Downame. "The honour and charge as they be inseperable, so also proportionable; for such as is the weight of the Burden, such is the height of the Honour; and contrariwise."¹ Before the burden and honour are examined as they appeared in the work of the Durham clergy, it would be helpful to know by what standards their efforts were judged. What expectations did clergy and laity entertain of the personal and professional conduct of the pastor?

i. Contemporary writing on the pastorate.

The most public and formal duties of the minister, those of the liturgy, were laid down in the Prayer Book, although with sufficient ambiguity for both the opponents of vestments

1. G. Downame, 'Of the Dignity and Duty of the Ministry' in G. Hicke, Two Treatises (1711), ii, pp. lxxi-lxxii.

and the followers of Laud to seize upon the inconsistencies of the text. Even ambiguous guidance was lacking for many of the numerous other functions of the parish clergyman and there was little attempt to supply the want. The English Reformation produced no parallel to the academies and hautes ecoles of the reformed churches of France and Switzerland, dedicated to the training of future pastors. A few ventures made on private initiative sought to fill the void; the foundation of Emmanuel College, Cambridge was one such. In the universities as a whole the majority of teachers were still clergy and most of the students would in time take orders. Only a small proportion, however, received any specialist instruction in theology and practical training for a parochial cure was virtually unknown.² What the universities did offer was the personal example and advice of men acknowledged in their own time to be model pastors of whom William Perkins was perhaps the most famous.³ Outside the universities, personal example and the lessons passed on from one generation to the next were all the training which the clergy received. The medieval system of apprenticeship, by which the young man in minor orders assisted the priest in his cure, was perpetuated

2. H. Melan, 'La Recrutement et la Formation des Pasteurs dans les Eglises Reformees du XVIeme Siècle', Miscellanea Historiae Ecclesiasticae, iii. 127-49; O'Day, 'Reformation of the Ministry', 63; M. H. Curtis, Oxford and Cambridge in Transition, 122-5.

3. I. Breward, 'The significance of William Perkins', Jnl. Relig. Hist. iv. 118-19.

by curates drawn from the local grammar schools who served with the beneficed clergy. The Royal Injunctions of 1559 required incumbents of wealthy livings to contribute to the education of a scholar at university or grammar school, "which after they have profited in good learning, may be partners of their patron's cure and charge, as well in preaching, as otherwise in executing their offices" Not only the wealthy clergy acted as teachers and patrons; every assistant curate had just such an opportunity to learn his work.⁴

The value of the lesson, however, depended on the character and ability of the teacher. Where an incumbent was negligent or incapable, the conscientious curate was still in need of advice and guidance. Practical and particular directions might be found in diocesan visitation articles or addresses at synods, but these would not supply the total need.^{4A} How far could the ordinand have supplemented his scanty training himself from contemporary published comment on the church and the ministry? While analyses of the theology of the priesthood and laments over clerical ignorance and immorality were plentiful, discussion of the practical work of the ministry remained remarkably scarce. Often the only counterbalance offered to a denunciation of clerical sins was a list or paraphrase of biblical texts understood to refer to the

4. P.Heath, The English Parish Clergy on the Eve of the Reformation, 19-26, 35-6; Visitation Articles and Injunctions, ed. W. H. Frere and W. M. Kennedy, iii. 13.

4A.See below.

ministry which celebrated the clergy as "watchmen", "shepherds", "ambassadors", "the salt of the earth", "leaven", etc. The rarity of more detailed discussion is all the more surprising in view of the popularity of handbooks of good advice on the work of other professions and offices. If the householder, the parish constable, the justice of the peace were all offered guidance, why not the clergyman?

In both the previous and the succeeding period the parish clergy did not lack for advice. For the literate clergy of the later Middle Ages directions on the practicalities of priestly life were available in works such as John Myrc's Instructions for Parish Priests or, for those whose Latin was better, the Oculus Sacerdotis of William of Pagula. They could be supplemented by the more specialised summae and manuals for confessors which offered guidance in the most demanding and skilled of pastoral duties where the scope for personal initiative was greatest.⁵ How many pre-reformation clergy actually consulted such works is open to question. Far more of their 17th century successors must have had some acquaintance, however slight, with the voluminous comment on their role and

5. Heath, English Parish Clergy, 1-4. Summae and confessors' manuals are discussed by T. N. Tentler, Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation, and L. E. Boyle, 'The summa for confessors as a genre', in C. Trinkaus and H. A. Oberman eds., The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion (Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought, x), 126-30.

work which appeared in print after 1640. The 1640s and 1650s gave radical laymen an opportunity to attack the clerical monopolies of preaching and administration of the sacraments and the corresponding claim to tithes. In response, the clergy and their supporters produced a spate of writings in defence of their order.⁶ To strengthen their position, many called for a reassessment of pastoral duties and greater diligence in their performance than ever before. The insecurity bred in the Church of England by the Civil War and Interregnum and by the persistence of non-conformity after the Restoration prompted a continuing concern with the work of the parish clergy. For the first time members of the hierarchy expressed that concern in lengthy charges to their clergy. Bishops laid down precise and detailed rules governing the behaviour of their diocesan clergy and their relations with parishioners; those addressed by Jeremy Taylor to the clergy of Down and Connor and by Simon Patrick to the ministers of Ely are good examples of their kind. By the late 17th and early 18th centuries "the functions and labours of clergymen" were a common and even popular theme.⁷

6. R. L. Greaves, 'The ordination controversy and the spirit of reform in England', Jnl. Ecc. Hist. xxi. 228-41; M. James, 'The political importance of the tithe controversy in the English Revolution', History, new ser. xxvi. 1-18; R. O'Day, 'Immanuel Bourne; a defence of the ministerial order', Jnl. Ecc. Hist. xxvii. 101-14.

7. J. R. H. Moorman, The Curate of Souls, 3-26; S. Patrick, Works (1858), viii. 601-26. The quotation is from Gilbert Burnet's 'Discourse of the Pastoral Care' of 1692, reprinted in Moorman, *op. cit.* 81-105.

The subject had not, of course, been entirely neglected in the intervening period. Under Edward VI the ignorance and negligence of so many ministers commanded the attention of preachers like Latimer and Gilpin who thus reiterated the grievances of earlier reformers.⁸ The theme was taken up by Protestant critics of the Elizabethan church; the corresponding calls for a godly and learned ministry, however, scarcely constituted a clear programme of pastoral activity upon which the individual clergyman could model his actions. The critics were aware, even so, of the need for a more positive approach. The case histories collected for the work of propaganda known as the Seconde Parte of a Register illustrate the attempts of puritan clergy to put into practice an ideal of the Protestant pastorate based upon constant preaching and religious exercise which would bind together minister and people with the strongest of ties.⁹ The rules governing clerical conduct were most commonly described in the context of controversy over the structure and government of the English church. Although the contending systems of church organisation are of marginal relevance to the work of the minister in his parish, both the criticisms of the establishment and the responses of its defenders could be revealing. Whitgift set down his views on the work of the ministry during the debate over the Admonition to Parliament and the protracted controversy over episcopacy prompted Hooker's discussion of the subject.¹⁰ More comment

8. H. Latimer, Sermons and Remains (Parker Soc.), ii. 28-38, 120-1; B. Gilpin, 'A sermon preached before King Edward VI, 1552', in Gilpin, Life of Gilpin, 276-7.

9. A. Peel ed., The Seconde Parte of a Register, e.g. i. 71-2, 108-15, 136-7; ii. 28-35, 234-8.

10. J. Whitgift, Works (Parker Soc.), passim; R. Hooker, Works, ed. J. Keble, ii. 79-185, 208-9, 326-30, 463-70, 566-92, 601-60.

on the duties of the parish clergy accompanied the new conflicts of the 17th century. Both the challenge to tithes and the renewed emphasis placed by Arminians and Laudians on the ceremonies and sacraments of the church had serious implications for the role of the minister.

Even without the pressure of criticism and controversy, it was necessary for the established church to lay down at least minimum standards for the work of the lower clergy. Much of what was to be accepted as the minister's duty was implicit in the Prayer Book and the Royal Injunctions of 1559. Official requirements later showed a greater concern with the pastoral activities of the parochial incumbent or curate. The canons of 1571, the model for many diocesan and provincial injunctions in succeeding years, dealt in some detail with the religious life of the parish, dwelling especially on the twin themes of instruction and discipline. Thirty years later, certain provisions of the 1603 canons - such as that giving implicit approval to private confession, and the stress on ministerial responsibilities in the disciplinary process - demanded of the minister more positive action and a readiness to take the initiative.¹¹

At the same time, independent commentators were showing a greater awareness of the importance of the pastorate. From the 1590s, the "burthen of the ministrie", and the "charge of the cleargie" became increasingly popular subjects for published sermons, many of them first delivered at episcopal or metra-

11. Canons of 1571 (Ch. Hist. Soc. xl), 48-60. Although these were not authoritative they were widely used in the late 16th century as the basis of provincial and diocesan regulations. Canons 113, 119, of 1603.

politan visitations before audiences of local clergy and churchwardens.¹² The majority broke little new ground, confining themselves to the old exhortations to morality and conscientiousness. A new development was the appearance of what might be termed 'handbooks', treatises dealing at some length with the practical duties and problems of the parish clergy. The first such work which has been traced was A Preparation to the most holie Ministrie, by Pierre Gerard, translated from the French and published in 1598. Gerard's work was chiefly concerned with the minister's personal conduct and with preaching. More substantial and comprehensive treatments of the subject appeared in 1605 and 1607; William Perkins's Of the Calling of the Ministerie and Richard Bernard's The Faithfull Shepheard: or The Shepherds Faithfulness. In the preface to Perkins's work, William Crashawe explained that it consisted of two treatises, compiled from lectures given in Cambridge in the 1590s. The main concern is with the theology of the ministry - the role of the minister in the scheme of salvation, the nature of a true call to the ministry - and the confessed aim is to encourage men who have experienced such a call to respond to it; the minister's duty to his parishioners is only considered as it affects his own spiritual state. Bernard's The Faithfull Shepheard was far more consciously concerned with the practicalities of the pastorate. Although the author was a radical critic of the

12. e.g. J. Home, The Burthen of the Ministerie (1592);

R. Tryer, 'The charge of the cleargie', in Five Godly Sermons (1602); G. Phillips, The Good Shepherdes Duties (1597). The literature of the 16th and early 17th cent-

uries on the pastorate is somewhat sketchily reviewed by J.T. McNeill, History of the Cure of Souls, 218-33, 263-7.

establishment, and at one time a near-separatist, such views left little mark on this particular work. The comment and advice could have come from any Protestant divine convinced of the necessity of preaching and religious instruction and experienced in the ways and varieties of parishioners.¹³

This promising start to what might have become an extensive literature on the pastorate was not immediately followed by other discussions of any length, although sermons and short tracts on the subject continued to appear in greater numbers than before. The next 'handbook' was not published until 1652, although probably written during the early 1630s. George Herbert's The Country Parson is the most wideranging of all the contemporary discussions of ministerial duty; in the scope of the clerical activities given detailed discussion it is as atypical of its time as was the author.¹⁴ On the other hand, in many cases Herbert was probably making explicit comment on duties which to others were so commonplace that they needed no such careful examination.

Herbert's assessment of pastoral responsibilities was accepted by many contemporaries whose life and work were recorded at the time. The revival of interest in clerical biography in the 17th century was part of a general interest in the 'godly life' as portrayed in funeral sermons and in hagiographical sketches.¹⁵ It may also be seen in the context

13. D.N.B.; on Perkins see also Breward, 'Significance of William Perkins', 118-25.

14. G. Herbert, Works, ed. G. H. Palmer (1905), i. 202-323.

15. P. Collinson, 'A magazine of religious patterns', S.C.H. xiv. 223-49.

of a greater concern with the work of the clergy. One of the first biographies to be published, after the histories narrated by Foxe, was of particular interest to any historian of Durham. George Carleton's life of Bernard Gilpin was first published in Latin in 1628 and issued in English in the following year.¹⁶ The function of biography was didactic as well as informative; to contemporaries (and to the historian) it presented another image of the ideal pastor.

The upsurge of interest in the pastorate and the official advocacy of a more active role for the clergy are perhaps to be related to the general condition of the parish clergy. In the country as a whole an all-graduate ministry was becoming an increasingly likely prospect by the first decade of the 17th century, although the situation varied from diocese to diocese.¹⁷ Although the educational standard amongst ordinands was higher than ever before most still lacked any other formal preparation for their professional duties. Assured of a better educated clergy, the church authorities felt able or were persuaded to make greater demands upon ministers serving in the parishes. At the same time there was a growing realisation that a degree in arts did not, on its own, equip a man to fulfil those demands. Some commentators suggested that a learned man could become a good pastor only through the practice of his craft; "..... he must be no green plant, but hard timber, well seasoned with knowledge and experience"¹⁸ Others

16. The place of Carleton's 'Life of Gilpin' in the history of biography is discussed by D. Stauffer, English Biography before 1700, 68-71.

17. M. H. Curtis, 'The alienation of the intellectuals', Past and Present, xxi. 32-3; see Chap. I above.

18. L. Wright, A Patterne for Pastors (1589), 47. Cf. Herbert, 'Country Parson', 283-5.

reinterpreted the traditional conjunction of godliness and learning. The effectiveness of a ministry was thus seen to depend upon the spiritual state of the minister according to the Calvinist analysis of conversion and faith. Gabriel Price confessed that before he returned to the study of St. Paul, he was

"drowned in the opinion of learning, resolved that where learning is, there is the light of true understanding whereupon I am now moved to say, it is not the wisdom of flesh and blood that can judge of the spirit, or learning, but God enlightening, that directeth the understanding to the right object."¹⁹

The analyses are different, but the implication is the same; learning, although desirable, was not the sole qualification which fitted a man to perform all that was required of the "faithfull shepheard". Works such as those of Perkins, Bernard, and Herbert were designed to help ministers appreciate these requirements and the manner in which they were best fulfilled.

ii. The work of the ministry.

The Protestant minister was first and foremost a teacher. Rejecting the sacramental doctrine of Roman Catholicism, the Protestant churches emphasised instead the instructive and expository duties of the minister who set before his people the hope and means of salvation.

19. G. Price, The Laver of the Heart (1616), 27. Price may have been vicar of Hart, 1607-c. 1613.

"That there hath been from the beginning a Calling of men to deale betwixt God and man in the things of God, the course of the holy storie makes it plaine As such a Calling was of old, and must continue till time shall be no more, so the speciall intendment was to to teach" ²⁰

The clergy were repeatedly described as the messengers of God sent "to perform the function of his ambassadors in the world". Similar analogies were common; the minister is the "light" or "sun" of the world who drives away the darkness of ignorance or the schoolmaster who trains his scholars, the lay people, in spiritual learning according to the "grammar" of the Bible.²¹ There were, of course, differences about the most effective methods of instruction but English divines of all shades of opinion agreed that this was the chief of clerical duties.²² The continued calls for an educated clergy derived their force from this understanding of the function of the ministry. For the pastor learning was

"the staffe of life, the shepherds staffe, without which he can neither support himselfe, nor rule others without it, he can no more determine anything, than hee that is blinde can judge of others " ²³

20. S. Hieron, The Dignitie of Preaching (1615), 3.

21. J. Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. H. Beveridge (1846), iii. 57; T. Oxley, The Shepherd (1608), sig. B4; R. Baxter, 'The Reformed Pastor', Works, ed. W. Orme, xiv. 19.

22. A view put forward not only by critics of the church but also by Richard Hooker, Works, ii. 79-146 and the Laudian Jasper Fisher, The Priests Duty and Dignity (1636), 3.

23. Oxley, The Shepherd, sig. B4.

For the great majority of commentators, puritans and others, the chief and almost the sole acceptable means of instruction was the sermon.

"In the Preaching of the Word, as the Duty of the Ministry, so also the Dignity doth principally consist; this being the chief Work of the Ministry, for which double Honour is especially due unto the Minister The Profit [is] that by the Preaching of the Word, Men are brought to Salvation, and all the degrees thereof. The Necessity [is] that without it ordinarily Men cannot attain to Salvation".²⁴

In consequence much of what was written about the ministry related only to the office of the preacher. The sermon sometimes absorbed the whole pastoral function, becoming the vehicle for every kind of spiritual guidance. Through preaching the purposes of God were revealed, the sins of the community and the individual were reproved, and souls 'humbled' in the first step towards a puritan conversion. The sermon was the minister's instrument to prepare his congregation for communion, exhort them to a more godly life, and comfort them in spiritual and material distress.²⁵ Lamentations over the shortage of preaching clergy and exhortations to those who were able but negligent to greater diligence sometimes gave

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24. G. Downname, 'Dignity of the Ministry', p. lxxx. In this discussion puritans are taken to include most Protestant critics of the government and structure of the established church. It is unnecessary here to review all that has been written on views of preaching in this period. What follows is largely based on P. Seaver, The Puritan Lectureships, 20-54 and passim; J. W. Blench, Preaching in England in the late 15th and 16th centuries, 169-208; C. Hill, Society and Puritanism, 31-77.
25. T. Hooker, The Soules Preparation (1632), 67-81; J. Brinsley, The Preacher's Charge and the People's Duty (1631), 51; S. Gibson, A Sermon of Ecclesiastical Benediction (1619), 23-4.

way to detailed advice on the art and content of preaching. Richard Bernard, for example, included in his treatise a catalogue of "what Arts and tongues [are] first to be learned, what kinde of Authors to be read and books necessarie in the beginning", thus making the book, in its author's opinion,

"very profitable both for younge Students, who intend the studie of Theologie as also for such Ministers as yet have not attained to a more distinct order to studie, write, meditate and to preach methodically, both for their better course in delivering the Word, and the peoples understanding in hearing and memorie in retaining the same." ²⁶

More advice was available on the style and delivery of the sermon. Some writers confined themselves to commendation of a plain style, criticising those who took pride in the erudition and elegance of their sermons. Elsewhere, there were descriptions and illustrations of the proper division of a text, and even rules for the regulation of voice, facial expression, and gesture.²⁷

26. Bernard, Faithfull Shepheard, title page.

27. e.g.s of such comment and rules are J. Stockewood, A very fruiteful Sermon (1579); S. Crooke, The Ministerial Husbandry (1615); P. Gerard, A Preparation to the Ministerie (1598), trans. N. Becket; cf. Blench, Preaching in England, 101.

As a means of instruction, however, preaching was by no means unrivalled, nor was it always effective. A church which could require a monthly sermon in every parish at best, and which had many clergy unable or unlicensed to preach could not allow exaltation of the sermon and of the preaching office to go unchallenged. Supporters of the Elizabethan church establishment claimed that the reading of the Homilies and the performance of the liturgy were valid alternatives to the sermon for the teaching of the laity. The same claims were made with even greater conviction in the 17th century by the followers of Laud. Another popular argument was that the exponents of preaching as the "ordinary means of salvation" were exalting hearing above action; "God reckoneth not so much of auditors as factors, of those that heare his word, as of those that keepe his word."²⁸ More important in modifying attitudes towards the value of the sermon was the awareness that even regular preaching could leave laymen uninstructed in the fundamentals of Christianity. There was to be clear proof of this in the mid 17th century; after the Interregnum had brought a period of almost unrestrained preaching Richard Baxter confessed that members of his flock remained in a state of woeful incomprehension.

"I am duly forced to admire how lamentably ignorant many of our people are, that have seemed diligent hearers of me these ten or twelve years, while I

28. J. Howson, A Second Sermon preached at Paules Crosse (1598), 42. See also Whitgift, Works, i. 337; E. Reeve, The Communion Catechism expounded (1635), sig. C1.

spoke as plainly as I was able to speak. Some know not that each person in the Trinity is God: nor that Christ is God and man; nor that he took his human nature into heaven; nor many the like necessary principle of our faith." 29

What was needed therefore was a method of teaching by which the minister could explain first principles in a manner suited to the limited abilities of his flock and then check how far his teaching had been understood. One such method, as traditional as preaching, lay immediately to hand. As the best means of overcoming this barrier of ignorance, Baxter and others advocated catechising. Richard Bernard recommended that on entering a new cure the minister was first to assess the temper and abilities of his congregation. If they were "ignorant and willing to be taught", he advised that

"they must be firstly Catechised and taught the grounds and principles of Religion, the Creed, the Lords praier, the ten Commandments, and the doctrine of the Sacraments: with this milke they must be fedde, or els never looke that they shall be able to receive any strong meat." 30

The formal provision of the Church of England for catechising was more plentiful and precise than for preaching. The most straightforward, as well as one of the shortest, catechisms available during this period was that included in the Prayer Book itself. Only in 1604, under puritan pressure, was it extended to include discussion of the sacraments; previously

29. Baxter, 'Reformed Pastor', p. xix.

30. Bernard, Faithfull Shepherd, 8.

it had dealt only with the three basic texts of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments.³¹ More comprehensive were the three catechisms of Alexander Nowell, first issued in the 1570s and frequently republished thereafter, which replaced Ponet's Short Catechism of 1553 as standard and officially approved summaries of orthodox doctrine.³² It was far easier to limit the subject matter of the catechist teaching from an officially approved text than that of the preacher and the enthusiasm of the hierarchy for catechism owed something to its susceptibility to regulation.³³

Like many others, the bishops of the Elizabethan and early Stuart church also recognised that the catechism was a valuable pastoral weapon against ignorance and superstition. Official requirements on catechising were most extensive in the later 16th century, when it was seen most clearly as an aspect of the pastorate rather than as a safe alternative to sermons by unreliable preachers. Whereas in 1559 the incumbent or his curate was expected to catechise the young people of the parish before evening prayer on every second Sunday or holy day, the canons of 1571 made catechising a weekly institution, a requirement repeated in 1603.³⁴ In 1571, it was

31. C. J. Cuming, A History of the Anglican Liturgy, 137-40.

32. Ibid. 115, 131; F. E. Brightman, The English Rite, i, pp. clxxvii-clxxviii.

33. Catechising was eventually substituted for preaching on Sunday afternoons in the interests of conformity. E. Cardwell, Documentary Annals, ii. 146-51; Hill, Society and Puritanism, 69-70.

34. Visitation Articles, ed. Frere and Kennedy, iii. 22; Canons of 1571 (Ch. Hist. Soc. xl), 56; Canon 59 of 1603.

also ordered that the exercise should continue for two hours immediately after noon, making it an independent and lengthy undertaking compared with the half hour of instruction stipulated by earlier and later regulations. Traditionally the catachumens were the young and those in dependent positions. Most of the regulations of this period speak of children, servants, and apprentices between the ages of six or seven and twenty being compelled to attend.³⁵ In 1571 provision was made for the clergy to catechise "all their flocke of what age or degree soever, not onely maydens and children, but also the elder, if neede be" and a register of attendance was to be kept. Even if their seniors were not themselves to be examined, they might benefit from the children's instruction. In his articles of 1577 for the province of York, Sandys emphasised that such proceedings should be "open", implying the freedom of members of the congregation to be present. In 1590 Archbishop Piers was more specific; fathers and heads of households were themselves to bring thir children and servants to be catechised.³⁶

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35. Barnes's monitions for the diocese of Durham of 1577 are an interesting exception; there it was suggested that maximum age for catechism was thirty. S.S. xxii. 14-15. In the 17th century examination of adults on the catechism was resented, especially when revived by Arminian clergy. J.White, The First Century of Scandalous Malignant Priests (1643), 40.
36. W. M. Kennedy, Elizabethan Episcopal Administration, ii. 93-4; iii. 261. The parishioners of William Bedell, rector of Great Horningsheath (Suff.), paid tribute to the effectiveness of public catechism conducted by a skilled practitioner; they "would profess that they accounted his catechising every whit as profitable as his teaching", W. Bedell, Life of William Bedell (Camd. Soc. new ser. iv), 20.

Catechisms also had a wider use. Especially in the years immediately following the settlement, clergy as well as laity needed fairly elementary instruction. During the 1560s there were various plans for the composition of a catechism more substantial than that of the Prayer Book "for the erudition of simple curates". This was in part the purpose of Nowell's Catechism of 1570 which, according to the preface by the translator, Thomas Norton, sought to combine the instruction of both clergy and laity;

"Now surely there are no greater means of advancing true religion and rooting out of errors than these two, that is to say, catechism or good instruction of youth, and good information of ecclesiastical ministers in sound truth, and the proofs thereof, howsoever they may lack some full furniture of other learning." ³⁷

By guiding the catechist as well as the pupil, Nowell's work went some way to bridge the gap between the catechism as understood by Cranmer in preparing the version included in the Prayer Book and the lengthy exposition and definition of doctrine which commonly went under that name in the continental Protestant churches. The latter was the sense in which the term was used by Richard Bernard in the mid 17th century when he recommended to the inexperienced, although not ill-educated, minister a "catechisme containing the doctrine of the Church and principles of Religion" such as Calvin's Institutes.³⁸

37. Cardwell, Doc. Annals, i. 265-6; Visitation Articles, ed. Frere and Kennedy, iii. 61; A. Nowell, Catechism (Parker Soc.), 109.

38. Cuming, Anglican Liturgy, 86; Bernard, Faithfull Shepherd, 40.

In common usage, however, the catechism remained the summary of doctrine cast in the form of question and answer which was seen as the peculiarly valuable instrument of a Protestant teaching ministry. Although the method existed before the Reformation, the term itself was first widely used in the 16th century and its popularisation and the selection of the texts and subjects upon which most Protestant catechisms were based were ascribed to Luther. The ancestry of the catechism was cited as a strong argument for its use, for example by Thomas Fuller; for "by this Catechising the Gospel first got ground of Popery."³⁹ The combination of ostentatious Protestantism and comprehensibility no doubt gave the catechism its popularity. The length, complexity, and intended audience of the many published catechisms varied greatly. Some authors, like Nowell, sought to serve the continuing need of the laity, if not the clergy, for personal instruction. Others, such as Edward Dering, the co-author of one of the most widely read of Elizabethan catechisms, saw it as a purely temporary measure, filling the vacuum which would exist until England had an adequate supply of preaching clergy.⁴⁰

Dering's view of the secondary importance of catechising was naturally not shared by writers such as Bernard and later

39. T. Fuller, The Holy State and the Prophan State, ed.

J. Nichols, 40. Cf. F. L. Cross, Dictionary of the Christian Church, 246.

40. E. Dering, A Briefe and Necessary Instruction (1572), sig. A4-6. On Dering's attitude see P. Collinson, A Mirror of Elizabethan Puritanism, 9-10.

Baxter who returned to the catechism aware of the specific need to prepare the ground if preaching was ultimately to be effective. With that in mind, a number of 17th century writers made catechising the subject of more than just a passing commendation, developing and explaining their own techniques of teaching. Richard Bernard criticised those who taught the catechism only "after a discoursing manner", an interesting comment in view of the later practice of some puritan ministers who avoided the prohibition on Sunday afternoon sermons of 1622, by 'expounding' the catechism. Bernard considered congregational participation essential, otherwise the exercise would be profitless. The minister was first to make sure that the people had learned and could recite the text of the catechism word for word.

"After come to the meaning, and enquire an answer of them, how they understand this or that in one question, and so in another; but goe not beyond their conceits; staie somewhat for an answer, but not too long; if one know not, aske another; if any but stammer at it helpe him, and encourage him by commendinge his willingnesse; if none can anser a question shew it thy selfe plainly, how they might have conceived it; and then aske it some one againe, and praise him that understands it, and ansers after thy telling of him."

The advice continued in the same vein , with hints on the best way of administering rebuke, stimulating the competitive spirit, and obtaining the respect and affection of the 'pupils'. Finally there was a warning;

"If thou beest proud and cannot stoupe to their capacitie, or impatient to heare an ingorant answer, or disdainfull to be familiar; few will come to thee willingly, and none but by force; and these will profit little by thee."

The whole section is thus a practical manual for the catechist, designed to help him encourage both the able and the slow, and to correct the wilfully ignorant. The same concerns prompted George Herbert to draw up a scheme for catechising which he likened to a Socratic dialogue, with questions based on texts of varying degrees of difficulty adapted to the abilities of individual parisoners and so framed as to suggest their answers.⁴¹

As advocated by Baxter catechising was more than a means of instructing those who had failed to profit from his sermons. It was to be a private rather than a public exercise, the occasion for regular visits to every family in the congregation by the parish clergy. Doctrinal instruction was only one of the purposes of these visits and not the most important. They were occasions for the minister to fulfill his duties as

"a known counsellor for their souls, as the lawyer is for their estates, and the physician for their bodies; so that each man that is in doubts and straits should bring his case to him and desire resolution."⁴²

What had begun as public examination in the fundamentals of the Christian faith was thus to become an opportunity for 'conference', for investigation of the spiritual life of the individual, and for pastoral direction.

41. Bernard, Faithfull Shepheard, 8-10; Herbert, 'Country Parson', 265-9.

42. Baxter, 'Reformed Pastor', 96.

The role of counsellor demanded that the minister have an intimate knowledge of and close relationship with his flock. The necessity for such a relationship was not universally accepted in the later 16th century. Such an understanding of clerical duty provided yet another argument against absenteeism; in order to gain an adequate knowledge of his people,

"it is fit for the Pastor to be resident on his charge, to converse familiarly with his people, seeing and observing them, and to have help also of the house of Clio; that so he may heere from others (but in this point bee not light of belefe) what by himselfe alone hee can not come to understand." 43

Thomas Cartwright expressed the same view with respect to the preacher's ability to adapt himself to his audience. In response Whitgift claimed that an able preacher would be effective before any audience; for all congregations consisted of varying elements, each of which would find something of use in a good sermon. Again in rebuttal of Cartwright's emphasis on the need for a resident minister who could provide constant pastoral oversight, he laid an unusual stress on the independence and initiative of the layman. Armed with the Bible, the lay Christian who had been well instructed in the faith might himself fight off all spiritual foes. If he were assailed by doubts or distress, "the Scriptures are also publicly read in every man's house .. as Chrysostom calleth

43. Bernard, Faithfull Shepheard, 73.

them, they be an apothecary his shop, where every man may find remedy for his disease ..."⁴⁴

Hooker similarly set limits upon the necessity for personal supervision by the minister. In discussing the proposal that suspected Roman Catholics be subject to rigorous examination before being admitted to communion in the established church, he argued that its advocates were "imposing upon the Church a burden to enter further into men's hearts and to make a deeper search of their consciences than any law of God or reason of man enforceth."⁴⁵ The implication is clear; if the privacy of conscience even of Catholics is to be respected, the minister has little justification for probing the spiritual lives of respectable Protestants. Such a view came very close to removing the minister's responsibility for more than the outward conduct of his flock; certainly it diminished his active part in securing the spiritual welfare of the members.

Hooker's arguments won few, if any, followers amongst clerical writers of the early seventeenth century. Both supporters and critics of the established church came to share an exalted view of the ministerial responsibility for individual souls, adding pastoral oversight and supervision to the public duties of the clergy in preaching, administration of the sacraments, and performance of the liturgy. The problem remained of giving institutional form to the 'counsel of souls'. There the Protestant clergy of the later 16th and 17th centuries in England were at a marked disadvantage by

44. Whitgift, Works, i. 514-16.

45. Hooker, Works, ii. 477-9.

comparison with their late medieval predecessors. Before the reformation, the yearly confession required of every member of the church had provided the clergy with a regular opportunity for the oversight, instruction, and correction of their parishioners. The custom had been jettisoned along with the traditional teaching on the forgiveness of sins, and its loss was later to be sorely felt. The search for a substitute for confession, a new vehicle for pastoral supervision, was a preoccupation of many of the English Protestant writers of this period, whose consideration of the pastorate went beyond exhortations to virtue and diligence.

Although the rubric of the communion service made some allowance for confession to a minister, a simple revival of Roman Catholic usage was naturally out of the question. Condemnation of the old practice was part of the tradition of the reformed English church. Bishop Jewel, for example, somewhat grudgingly allowed that Christians might find comfort in confession to their brethren, but

"that the Priests should hear the private confessions of the people, and listen to their whisperings; that every man should be bound to their auricular confession, it is no commandment of God" 46

46. J. Jewel, Works (Parker Soc.), ii. 1113-14; cf. Bullinger who saw private conference as an office of the priesthood shared by all believers, in contrast with the public works of the ministry. "The priesthood common to all is spiritual, and is occupied in common duties of godliness ... Whereupon one may and ought to instruct and admonish another privately and while he so doeth, he executeth a priestly office" Decades (Parker Soc.), 290.

The reasons for the hostility were twofold. In the first place, the doctrine of the keys, which gave the priest the power of absolution was unacceptable. The minister of the Protestant church was merely the messenger who announced the divine promise of forgiveness. There were, in addition, strong pastoral and psychological objections to the traditional practice. Compulsory confession of all remembered sins was considered to be a "tyrannous" design for the "torture" of conscience. The requirement of a full confession, it was said,

"maketh notably to the disturbing of the peace of Conscience, in time of extremitie, considering that it is impossible, either to understand or remember all, many being hidden and unknowne. And the minde beinge in this case informed, that forgiveness dependeth upon such an enumeration, may thus be brought into doubt and distrust, and will not be able to rest by faith in the sole mercie of God, the onely soveraigne medicine of the soule. Againe, the griefe of the mind, dothe not alwaies arise from all the sinnes that a man hath committed, neither dothe the Lord set before the sinners eies whatsoever evill hath ben done by him; but some one or more particulars; and to be eased of them, will be woorke enough, thou he doth not exhibite unto the Confessor, a Catalogue of all the rest."

The same objections, the doctrine of absolution, the compulsory and complete nature of the confession were urged repeatedly by Protestants of all shades of opinion. On the unacceptability of Catholic practice, therefore, there was a very

large measure of agreement.⁴⁷

Nevertheless, many summaries of the objections to the use of confession occur in the context of expressions of regret for the complete loss of the institution, and recommendations for its revival. Apparently few ministers took advantage of the permission to hear confessions which was implicit in the Prayer Book and made explicit in the Canons of 1603.⁴⁸ While careful to disassociate themselves from the unacceptable elements of Catholic practice, it was argued by divines of such diverse persuasions as Thomas Hooker and John Cosin that confession to a minister or priest was a valuable and even necessary institution.⁴⁹ Confession to a

47. W. Perkins, The Whole Treatise of Cases of Conscience (1608), epistle dedicatory, 4. Similar views were expressed by Thomas Cartwright, Cartwrightiana ed. A. Peel and L. H. Carlson, 103-5; Hooker, Soules Preparation, 228-31; F. White, quoted in P. E. More and F. L. Cross, Anglicanism, 514-15. This was again in the Protestant tradition; Luther's comments on the mental suffering imposed by the Roman Catholic practice of confession are quoted by T. N. Tentler, 'The summa for confessors as an instrument of social control', in Trinkaus and Oberman eds., The Pursuit of Holiness, 124-5.

48. Canon 119 of 1603.

49. Hooker, Soules Preparation, 227-31; Baxter, 'Reformed Pastor', 254-5; J. Cosin, Works (library of Anglo-Catholic Theology), i. 97.

godly neighbour, as allowed by Jewel, still met with approval but it was better made to a minister of the church. It was part of his office to hear confessions, whether as the Arminian purveyor of the sacrament or as the divine messenger described by Cartwright.

"The Curate..... is appointed of God to be heardman of thy soul hee is called an appointed of God to preach unto thee and to all other his Parishioners, both privately and apertly, secretly and openlye, the Gospell of Christ to comforte thy soule when need is."

In addition, the clergyman had the necessary skills to deal with the problems arising from or even prompting confession.

"For they in all likelihood, of all other men, in respect of their places and gifts are the fittest and best able to instruct, correct, comfort and enforme the weake and wounded conscience." 50

Few advocates of confession gave much indication of how the duty was to be performed. Most seem to have assumed that it was not the confessors who were in need of instruction on the question but the potential penitents or seekers of comfort. Complaints of the failure of the laity to consult their "ghostly fathers" were followed by exhortations to turn to them in all matters spiritual;

"..... hast thou any matter of faith to be resolved, any case of conscience to be cleared, any temptation to be disabled, any suite in heaven to be ended, any petition to Christe to be preferred, any soule businesse? Repaire to thy lawfull Pastor" 51

50. Cartwrightiana, ed. Peel and Carlson, 98; Perkins, Cases of Conscience, 5.

51. Fisher, The Priests Duty, 34-6.

Application to the minister for help in matters of sin and individual salvation thus merged into a more general recourse to him for advice on all questions of religion. A specific example was given by James Balmford, once a popular lecturer in Newcastle, who wrote a treatise warning his parishioners at St Olave's, Southwark of the dangers of visiting those sick of the plague. The work took the form of a dialogue between the Preacher and his Parishioner, and the latter's words at the beginning of the discussion are significant.

"Now because I am under your ministerie, and you have publikely willed us to resort to you for satisfaction if we either understood not, nor approve anything by you delivered: I am bold to come and crave your satisfaction accordingly....."

George Herbert saw no need to wait for the laymen to be in a state of doubt or distress before offering advice in the context of personal conference. Although those who were in a "military state", engaged in warfare against temptation, would require all the Country Parson's skilled assistance, those in a "peacable state" would also be in need of prompting to vigilance "and not to let go the raines as soon as the horse goes easie".⁵²

On the other hand, the fullest appreciation of the potential of confession was shown by writers who recommended it chiefly to those who felt the need of comfort or counsel. Cartwright gave three circumstances in which confession might provide a remedy; it could be the means of instruction to the

52. J. Balmford, A Shorte Dialogue concerning the Plagues Infection (1603), 3; Herbert, 'Country Parson', 310-12.

ignorant, counsel for those suffering temptations which they felt unable to combat alone, and comfort for those "that are tormented in their Consciencies, and are not fully perswaded yt their sinnes are forgiven them, by reason whereof they are halfe in desperation".⁵³ The most detailed discussions of the function of confession appeared when it became part of the lore of 'cases of conscience'. Although many late 16th century puritan clergy were noted and practised 'pysicians of the soul', not until the early 17th century was the subject extensively explored in print in England.⁵⁴ Even though William Perkins's pioneer work The Whole Treatise of Cases of Conscience was published in 1608, discussions of Protestant 'casuistry', both puritan and anglican, only reached their most refined form in the middle of the century. The growing interest in such compilations may, however, be taken as a further indication of concern with the pastorate; once again only when church and clergy came under pressure in the years of the Civil War and Interregnum was the growth of concern accelerated.

The most detailed account of the value of confession for the comfort of consciences given before the Civil War is naturally to be found in the works of Perkins. Indeed, the first proposition of the Treatise of Cases of Conscience was that "in the troubles of conscience, it is meete and convenient, that there should alwaies be used a private confession." By

53. Cartwrightiana, ed. Peel and Carlson, 92-8.

54. The history of so-called puritan casuistry is described by W. Haller, The Rise of Puritanism, 1-48; Collinson, 'A magazine of religious patterns', 233-4; T. Wood, English Casuistical Divinity during the 17th Century, 32-8; G. L. Mosse, The Holy Pretence, 35-80; E. Rose, Cases of Conscience, 185-200.

the very act of "opening the cause", the distressed man will find comfort; and on the basis of this information the minister may proceed to apply the remedy for his spiritual ills. It is first necessary to be assured that the subject is "humbled", aware of and sorrowing for sin, and so brought to faith and repentance. In that frame of mind and soul he will be ready to receive the "application" of the divine promise of mercy and life. Perkins provided the confessor or counsellor with detailed advice on every part of the process, exhorting him not to be discouraged by the difficulty of the task.⁵⁵ The detail may in many ways be compared with that offered by a medieval handbook such as Myrc's Instructions; the principal differences were that the information sought by Perkins's minister concerns not the facts of sins committed but the spiritual and psychological state of the individual, and that once this had been established, a large part of his task, the "comforting", remained. The whole was a far more skilled and demanding exercise than that envisaged by the Injunctions of 1559 which required all clergy to learn and have ready "comfortable" passages of Scripture to persuade their parishioners from "the vice of damnable despair".⁵⁶

Although the particular uses for which it was recommended might differ slightly, unanimity of opinion on the value of confession was preserved until the 1630s, when it was re-

55. Perkins, Cases of Conscience, 5, 88-103.

56. J. Myrc, Instructions for Parish Priests (E.E.T.S. orig. ser. ~~xxx~~i), 24-64; Visitation Articles, ed. Frere and Kennedy, iii. 14.

endowed by the most extreme Arminian clergy with some of the attributes of the Roman Catholic practice. Emphasis was once again placed upon compulsion and priestly absolution rather than upon expert examination and direction of those voluntarily seeking aid.⁵⁷ Although immediately divisive, the call for a return to compulsory confession highlighted a problem which concerned a number of writers on the subject. Given the value of confession and conference, how were the laity to be persuaded to seek ministerial assistance? Many writers, as we have seen, limited themselves to exhortation as the only means of achieving this. In most parishes there would have been a few laymen who did not need even that spur; throughout the Reformation the godly and the scrupulous had sought out divines by letter or in person and their successors followed their example. For those who looked less readily for clerical advice, it was necessary either to apply some form of compulsion or for the clergy to take the initiative and seek out the laity. Although they shared his concern about the possible ineffectiveness of public preaching, remarkably few writers followed up Calvin's statement that it was the duty of pastors "to exhort and admonish from house to house, whenever their hearers have not profited sufficiently by general teaching" by recommending a programme of systematic

57. The most extreme example of such opinions in print was A. Sparrow, A Sermon concerning Confession (1637), on whom see G. B. Tatham, The Puritans in Power, 98-9, 268-71. Examples of the practice of confession in the 1630s were given by R. Baillie, A Large Supplement of Canterburian Self-Conviction (1641), 61-5, 77-8; White, First Century, 8, 16, 20, 38-40.

parish visiting. Before Baxter conceived of catechising in this form, the only explicit recommendation of such an undertaking was made by George Herbert; on weekday afternoons, the Country Parson was "to visite in person now one quarter of his Parish, now another." The merit of the system in Herbert's eyes was that the clergyman came upon his people unexpectedly, "wallowing in the midst of their affairs" and so was able to assess the influence of his teaching on their daily lives.⁵⁸

Less consideration was perhaps given to such schemes because the Church of England did possess a rudimentary system for the examination of parishioners by the clergy. The 1559 injunctions and all succeeding official pronouncements stipulated that all communicants should have a knowledge of the fundamentals of the Christian religion. Usually they were required to know certain central texts, including the Ten Commandments, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. Obviously the rule was closely connected with catechising and with preparation for confirmation. In the early years of Elizabeth's reign, there was no means of ensuring that communicants had this minimum of knowledge once they had passed the age of catechism. In 1571, however, Archbishop Grindal's injunctions for the province of York instituted a scheme for the examination of all prospective communicants. The clergy were to warn their parishioners to attend on a Sunday or holy day before the communion was due to be administered,

"so that so many of them as intend to
receive not only signify unto you their names,
to the intent ye may keep a register of all

58. Calvin, Institutes, iv. 249; Herbert, 'Country Parson', 249-51.

Such persons as from time to time shall receive, but also to be by you examined, whether they can say by heart the Ten Commandments, the Articles of Faith, the Lord's Prayer and the Catechism, according after the diversity of their ages is required, and such of them as either cannot or will not recite the same by heart unto you ye shall repel and put back from the Holy Communion until they be able and willing to learn and can by heart recite the same unto you."

The provisions were repeated in other injunctions during the 1570s but the scheme was apparently dropped after that date.⁵⁹ It was presumably discontinued because it invited abuse by those dissatisfied with the disciplinary system of the established church; The Seconde Parte of a Register records the intervention of Bishop Scambler of Peterborough to prevent a puritan minister demanding more than a bare knowledge of the set texts before admitting parishioners to communion.⁶⁰ The right and duty of examination, however, was never lost although official emphasis upon it diminished and the opportunity thus remained for personal and individual

59. If the numbers were too great for the clergy to cope with themselves they were to associate the churchwardens in the examination. Visitation Articles, ed. Frere and Kennedy, iii. 276-7; cf. Sandys's articles for the province of York, 1578, Kennedy, Elizabethan Episcopal Administration, ii. 94-5; Barnes's monitions for Durham, S.S. xxii. 19-20.

60. Seconde Parte of a Register, ed. Peel, 291-2.

conference between the minister and every parishioner.

Confession, conference, and the examination officially required by the church were all instruments for the correction as well as the comfort of the laity and thus disciplinary in the widest sense. The reproof of sin was always seen as an essential part of the minister's charge. The manner in which the institutional church should perform its duty of imposing discipline was, on the other hand, the subject of widely differing opinions. None of those who discussed the work of the clergy in any but a purely polemical spirit doubted that there was room for the correction of offenders within the parish. The official role of the minister in this process remained largely passive during the 16th century. Action against offenders was the responsibility of the churchwardens. According to the canons of 1571 they were first to offer a "brotherly and friendly" warning to their fellow parishioner and only if it was ignored was the culprit brought before the minister, who delivered a sharper and presumably more authoritative admonition. If persuasion failed entirely, the churchwardens were to add the offender's name to their list for presentment to the relevant ecclesiastical court. In 1603, as was mentioned above, the minister's responsibility for discipline was extended; he was to be sufficiently aware of the state of his parish to be able to supplement the churchwarden's presentments, should

they be lax in their duties. The pattern was thus set for succeeding decades, when the responsibility was increasingly shared between minister and churchwardens, at least in official eyes.⁶¹

Before placing a case in the hands of the extra-parochial authorities, there were certain sanctions which a minister could lawfully employ of his own accord. After due warning he could exclude from the communion the immoral and the contentious as well as the ignorant, on the authority of the preface to the communion service. Successive articles and injunctions set a test of knowledge similar to that for communion for those wishing to be married or stand as godparents; if the performance was unsatisfactory, the services and privileges could also be withheld by the minister. The relationship between these sanctions and the formal presentation of offenders was never made entirely clear. Such ambiguities paved the way for independent attempts to establish congregational discipline by ministers who were not satisfied with the corrective machinery of the established church. The suppression of these by the Elizabethan authorities and the concern to prevent excessive ministerial independence led to a certain tension in official legislation for parochial discipline. The canons of 1603² did not remove the ambiguities of the Elizabethan system but they did include the proviso that the minister was to account to his ordinary for the use of

61. Canons of 1571 (Ch. Hist. Soc. xl), 66-8; Canon 113 of 1603; D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 67. Visitation articles of Archdeacon Clerke, 1636; S.S. lli. 107. Cosin's visitation articles for the archdeaconry of the East Riding, 1627.

sanctions against parishioners in case of any complaint.⁶²

Unless directly concerned with the debates over discipline, most of the writers who discussed the work of the ministry gave only a passing mention to the correction of vice, perhaps because the subject was so controversial. Again, only Herbert suggested additions to the official system which would give his ideal parson greater scope for action within the parish before the offender was handed over to the higher authorities. His suggestions were based on a positive system of rewards for the virtuous and the obedient; minor material benefits such as additional hospitality, and "easing" in the payment of tithe. While merit won such benefits, misconduct was to lose them;

"The Parson's punishing of sin and vice is rather by withdrawing his bounty and courtesie from the partie offending, or by private and publicke reproof, as the case requires, then by causing him to be presented, or otherwise complained of." ⁶³

The authority of the parish clergyman was very limited in so far as it rested upon material sanctions even with Herbert's additions. Implicit in Herbert's scheme, however, was the belief that the moral authority of the clergyman was sufficient to make it work. While he was perhaps more impractical than most in some of his claims, Herbert was by no means alone in calling upon the laity to take heed of the minister as God's deputy. It was the most obvious and compelling argument for offering obedience to the rulings of the

62. Visitation Articles, ed. Frere and Kennedy, iii. 16, 267, 277, 291; Canon 27 of 1603.

63. Herbert, 'Country Parson', 243, 263, 281.

clergy, acceptance to their teachings, and reverence to their persons, and one which was cited throughout the period. For the sake of the special service offered by ministers to the community, - assuaging the wrath of God with their prayers, conveying the word of God to the congregation, and taking upon themselves the awesome burden of responsibility for the health of souls, for which they would ultimately be called to account Thomas Becon insisted that the layman take care

"honourably and reverently both to think and to speak of them, namely for the ministry sake, which they use at the appointment of God to give them outward honour and reverence with our body, as to put off our caps, to bow the knee unto them, to give them the upper hand in all places, to give them audience when they speak" 64

Although the Church of England accepted the Protestant doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, the ministers of the Church still found it possible to see themselves as a class apart, not just in human affairs, but also in their relation to things divine. Becon was joined by Perkins and by Arminians such as Fisher and Laurence in claiming for the clergy the special protection of God in their earthly pursuits, although only the latter set the clergy physically "nearer" to God than the laity. George Downname, whose comments were quoted at the beginning of the chapter, even went so far as to assert that "as the Ministers Charge is greater than others in this life; so having discharged his Duty, he

64. T. Becon, The Catechism (Parker Soc.), 330-1.

shall have a greater Weight of Glory in the Life to come."⁶⁵

Claims to authority and respect were not based only upon the theological role of the minister, whether as the "conduit of grace" whose special character was imparted at ordination or as the preaching ambassador of God. The rulings and advice given by the clergy were also to be obeyed as the products of experience and expertise. Like the doctor and the lawyer, with whom he was constantly compared, the minister was a skilled professional, knowing far better than the patient or the litigant the best course to be followed in every case. This attitude, as we have seen, was especially evident in discussion of the duties of the clergy in counsel, the function most closely analogous to that of the doctor or lawyer. Such claims naturally made very considerable demands of the minister. "It is meant that hee should have somewhat in him, who must openly in the congregation make such an offer" as the invitation to counsel or comfort extended by the preface to the communion service.⁶⁶ Not only was the minister to have the academic learning necessary for this task but also a wide spiritual experience of his own to draw upon. The latter was of course difficult to assess and thus stress was once again laid upon the need for a highly educated clergy. The authority of the minister as expert depended not just upon his being learned but on the extent to which his learning outstripped that of his congregation. By the end of the period, some writers were sugg-

65. Perkins, The Calling of the Ministry, 69-71; Fisher, The Priests Duty, 44; T. Laurence, Two Sermons (1634), 3-4, 20-4; Downame, 'The Dignitie of the Ministrie', p. xciii.

66. Hieron, The Dignitie of Preaching, 5.

esting that there was no need for the laity to emulate the clergy's knowledge, even if they had the ability to do so, for "..... the Orbe of his [The priest's] comprehension may be larger than the Speare of their capacitie." It was only a short step to Richard Baxter's acknowledged practice in the 1650s of maintaining the distance between himself and his audience in order to bolster his authority.

"..... I did usually put in something in my sermon which was above their own discovery, and which they had not known before; and this I did that they might be kept humble and still perceive their ignorance.... For when preachers tell their people of no more than they know, and do not show that they excel them in knowledge and easily overtop them in abilities, the people will be tempted to turn preachers themselves, and think that they have learnt all that the minister can teach them and are as wise as they; and they will be apt to contemn their teachers and wrangel with all their doctrines, and set their wits against them, and hear them as censures and not disciples....." 67

67. Fisher, The Priests Duty, 24-5; R. Baxter, Autobiography, ed. J. M. Lloyd Thomas, 82. It has been suggested that Arminianism appealed to the "less socially assured" and less able clergy because it exalted the authority of the priesthood by stressing the sacramental and ceremonial duties rather than preaching which demanded greater learning and talent. N. R. N. Tyacke, 'Arminianism in England in religion and politics from 1604 to 1640' (Oxf. Univ. D. Phil. thesis, 1972), 251-2. Not all Arminians based their claims to status purely on the fact of priesthood, however; cf. Fisher, cited above.

Although the clergy commonly claimed obedience as religious specialists, it was felt that their words should carry weight not just in matters of church practice and scriptural interpretation. Since all human actions had a moral dimension and thus an importance for salvation, the minister as the divine representative on earth could justify an interest in and seek to exercise authority over all aspects of the life of his parish and parishioners. The breadth of the subject matter covered by compilations of "case divinity" reflected this. While the first two parts of Perkins's Treatise of Cases of Conscience discussed the salvation of the individual and matters of religious practice, the third was devoted to man in society, guiding the reader in the pursuit of the fully godly life. The claim to a universal authority was, however, most explicitly made by the Arminian and Laudian clergy of the 17th century. Thomas Jackson, vicar of Newcastle from 1623 to 1627, for example, lamented the unwillingness of laymen to accept clerical criticism of conduct, if there was any material gain to be made,

"as if the power of God's Spirit, or the authority of his Ministers, did consist only in Words, and required no other Obedience, than a formal speculative Assent unto their general Doctrine, not a full resignation of mens wills, or a hearty submission of affections, unto such Rules as they shall presecrbe, for the preservation of a good and upright Conscience in particular Actions or entercourse of Humane Affairs."

George Herbert was similarly convinced of the necessity and force of ministerial advice, for

"everyone hath not digested when it is a sin to take something for money lent, or when not; when it is a fault to discover another's fault or when not; when the affections of the soul in desiring and procuring increase of means or honour, be a sin of covetousnes or ambition, and when not; when the appetites of the body in eating, drinking, sleep and the pleasure that comes with sleep, be sins of gluttony, drunkenness, sloath, lust and when not"⁶⁸

In all but the most extreme Arminian statements of clerical authority and superiority over the laity there was, however, an implicit limitation. Beyond a certain ill-defined and arguable point, these claims were seen to verge on the "popish". The obedience offered by Roman Catholics to their priests was commonly caricatured by English Protestant writers and the attempt to re-establish a similar relationship was a good stick with which to beat opponents, be they Elizabethan presbyterians seeking a 'pope in every parish' or Laudian clergy who added this to their other innovations. William Crashaw, editing Perkins's Of the Calling of the Ministry, was equally conscious that there were some members of the English church who "by avoyding this Scilla have falne into Charibdis by taking too much dignity and authority from our Ministerie and by laying to much poverty, contempt and baseness upon it." The same concern was expressed by the Laudian,

68. T. Jackson, Works (1672), i. 219; Herbert, 'Country Parson', 219.

Jaspar Fisher, who saw the need of the church to find a "due mean" of clerical authority between "the Romanist" who "will yeeld to his Prelate absolute submission of conscience without examination or appeale" and the "Anti-Romanist" who "will only obey his Pastor no further than he speaks apparent Word of God"⁶⁹ Calls for moderation and explicitly for the creation of a via media were rare, however. For most writers, puritans, Laudians and the undifferentiated majority, the crucial fact was the failure of laymen and of society in general to accord the clergy the honour and obedience which their office and persons deserved.

One of the explanations most commonly offered for the contempt in which the clergy were held was that the character and behaviour of many ministers did little to secure the esteem of the laity. As public figures, their sins could not escape notice and inevitably brought their office into disrepute; "you cannot miscarry, but the world will ring of it", Baxter was to warn his colleagues. Virtue was not demanded of the clergy solely to save the reputation of the profession; it was a part of the teaching role. According to the Injunctions of 1559, the parish clergy should "excell all others in purity of life, and should be examples to the people to live well and Christianly". The requirement was paraphrased by Joseph Hall who wrote to his brother on the latter's ordination;

"Know first, that, in this place, there will be more holiness required of you than in the ordinary station of a Christian: for, whereas before you were but as a common line, now God [has] set you for a copy of

69. Perkins, The Calling of the Ministry, epistle dedicatory; Fisher, The Priests Duty, 30-1.

sanctification unto others." 70

Critics of excessive emphasis on preaching commonly argued that clerical conduct could help or hinder the work of the ministry but the argument was not theirs alone. It was often said that people were naturally more inclined to follow an evil example than good teaching, while the teaching lacked credibility if it came from one who constantly offended against the moral code which he preached. A good life would win the affection of the congregation and so predispose them to accept clerical instruction; otherwise,

"how shall wee perswade others to fight against sinne, unlesse wee can commend unto them the same fight, which they see or heare to bee in us? how shall wee presse to kill our Lords Enemies in other, if wee nourish them in our owne bosomes" 71

The rules governing Christian behaviour were assumed to be sufficiently well established to need no comment in discussions of clerical duty. Aware of the peculiar demands made upon the ministry by exhortations to an extraordinary sanctity of life, however, some writers went on to consider the particular applications of these rules to clerical conduct.

One way in which virtue could be protected was by the isolation of the minister from the sources of contamination. William Perkins, for example, advised the minister "not too loosely and lavishly to bestow himself on all companies.....," although he was not to cut himself off from all contact with his people. Otherwise, he would inevitably "be more or lesse

70. Baxter, 'Reformed Pastor', 64; Visitation Articles, ed. Frere and Kennedy, iii. 11; J. Hall, Works, ed. P. Hall, vi. 220

71. Crooke, The Ministerial Husbandry, sig. A3. Cf. Bernard, Faithfull Shepheard, 93; Hooker, Works, ii. 154; Cosin, Works, i. 92; R. Tedder, A Sermon preached at Wimondham (1637). 20; Oxley, The Shepheard, sig. D1.

touched with those crimes which are the common faults of his people." The congregation were therefore to respect his relative unsociability, for"..... if they would have comfort and honour by their Minister, let them be careful to what recreation they draw or drive him" Such recommendations could reinforce the tendency of many puritans to see their ministry as one to the godly only. What that could mean in practice is illustrated in the diary of Richard Rogers, lecturer at Wethersfield in Essex. In 1589 he acknowledged the temptation to cut himself off from the society of those whose behaviour displeased him.

"I was greeved at them, not tellinge them of it
through conceighted greef, not praying for them
through pitie, but keeping from them and haveing
no societie nor fellowship with them." 72

The incident caused Rogers to undertake a general review of his conduct towards those whom he counted as neighbours and to resolve on a more active approach to them in future. Clearly he felt that he had failed in his pastoral duties by leaving them to continue in their old ways and in all probability most of his colleagues would have agreed. No other writer stated as explicitly as Perkins the desirability of isolation from the ungodly; the general emphasis upon the duty to reprove vice and the importance of experience in exhorting and advising every variety of parishioner implied quite a different approach.

72. Perkins, The Calling of the Ministry, 34-6; Two Elizabethan Puritan Diaries, ed. M. M. Knappen, 87-8; P. Collinson, The Elizabethan Puritan Movement, 374-82.

More attention was given to the positive practice of godliness by ministers of the church. Their virtue was first to be manifest in the conduct of their families and households. Like the man himself, his home was to be a model for the parish and one which would be closely scrutinised. Hall reminded his brother that

"..... the world will look you should be the grave guide of a well-ordered family. For this is proper to us, that the vices of our charge reflect upon us; the sins of others are our reproach. If another man's children miscarry, the parent is pitied; if a minister's censured; yea not our servant is faulty without our blemish. In all these occasions, a misery incident to us alone, our grief is our shame."⁷³

The clerical family was therefore to set standards for the household performance of religious duties and worship and the instruction of children and servants.

Like every other parent, the clergyman had a duty to provide for his children's future. The writers of the 17th century such as Fuller, Herbert, and Baxter were concerned that the sons of the clergy should be brought up to some trade or profession which would not disgrace their fathers' calling. On the other hand, no faithful minister, according to Baxter, would leave his family prosperous.⁷⁴ The paradox illustrates the ambiguity of attitudes to the wider question of the material wealth of the clergy. The inadequacy of clerical revenues was the subject of more comment than any other aspect of

73. Hall, Works, vi. 221.

74. Baxter, 'Reformed Pastor', 201; Fuller, Holy and Prophane State, 87-9; Herbert, 'Country Parson', 335.

clerical life except preaching. It was a standard argument that the income of the clergy should be sufficient for them to devote themselves whole-heartedly to their ministry, although few went as far as Richard Eburne who condemned as entirely improper involvement in any other occupation, even respected and closely allied professions as teaching and medicine, whatever the financial needs of the clergyman.⁷⁵ His ideal was apparently a minister totally unconcerned with material rewards. Rigorists maintained that temporal or material considerations should not even enter into the choice of the ministry as a career.

"Begin not for profit, for fear of povertie, nor for ease, because thou are loth to labour, neither for honour to be had in estimation. The chief ends, let them be first in thine intention: Seeke God and not thy selfe"

Writers of a more practical cast of mind recognised the limitations of human nature; ".... men are flesh and bloud, and in that respect must be allured, & wonne to embrace this vocation, by some arguments, which may perswade flesh and bloud"⁷⁶ The lack of just such "arguments" was cited to explain the shortage of able ministers in the late 16th century. The best scholars, it was said, were being drawn into the legal and medical professions by the promise of quicker and better rewards for their long years of preparation and study.⁷⁷

75. R. Eburne, The Maintenance of the Ministerie (1609), 103.

76. Bernard, Faithfull Shepheard, 6; Perkins, The Calling of the Ministry, sig. B2.

77. J. Howson, A Sermon preached at Paules Crosse (1597), 34-5; cf. the earlier comments of William Day, provost of Eton, quoted by R. O'Day, 'Reformation of the Ministry', 57.

A similar uncertainty was evident in the rare comments on the collection and defence of clerical income. The most detailed discussion was that by Fuller, whose advice attempted to combine pastoral concern and care for the rights of the church.⁷⁸ Default in the payment of tithe or other dues was to cause the minister to grieve rather for the sin of the defaulter than for his own loss. If, however, the question were one of principal, threatening the interest of future incumbents, "then he proceeds fairly and speedily to a trial, that he may not vex and weary others, but right himself." Here again, the ancient tension between contempt for the things of the world and the necessities of human life, especially in an established and endowed church, made itself felt. The conflict was no more open to resolution than at any other time and most commentators could do no more than advocate a compromise between the ideal and the practical. Only eccentrics such as Baxter and Herbert saw the revival of clerical celibacy as a way of easing the problem.⁷⁹

7 . Fuller, Holy and Prophan State, 78.

79. Baxter, 'Reformed Pastor', 201; Herbert, 'Country Parson', 231-3. Herbert recommended celibacy not only as a means for the parson to free himself from worldly cares and thus give his full attention to his cure but also for his spiritual well-being.

The model life of the minister was not, of course, to be restricted to the conduct of his household and personal affairs but also to include the performance of all the traditional Christian works of charity. For a number of writers, charity had a more than exemplary importance; it was especially required of the minister, who had a responsibility greater than that of the layman for the wellbeing, both spiritual and physical, of his neighbours. Of all duties, charity in its more limited sense, the relief of the poor, was the most frequently discussed. The clerical obligation to the poor had a long history and it was reaffirmed by the Royal Injunctions of 1559 with the traditional justification that "the goods of the church are called the goods of the poor". Accepted by a popular writer like Thomas Becon at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, the necessity of clerical 'hospitality' became a standard argument in the case for the maintenance and improvement of clerical revenues. John Howson, the future bishop of Durham, put the case in its political dimension;

"..... seeing hospitality is the best renew which is left to comfort and relieve the poorer sort, which abound at this time in this Commonwealth, they are very iniurious to this State, who make not only the superfluitie of the wealth of the Cleargie, which are bona pauperum, the goods of the poore, but the verie necessarie maintenance of the Preachers themselves, which are bona Christi, the goods of Christ, the goods of Gentlemen or Nobilitie" 80

80. Visitation Articles, ed. Frere and Kennedy, iii. 11; Becon, Catechism, 326; Howson, Sermon at Paules Crosse, 36-7.

Most of the comment on hospitality was made in the context of clerical finances and self-interest no doubt played some part in the continuing popularity of the duty with the clergy. James Balmford apparently had little support when he claimed that it was only in so far as they were to be model Christians that the clergy were bound to charity more strictly than the laity. On the other hand, before the Civil War, no-one argued as Baxter was later to do that in discharging this duty the minister must stretch his resources to the uttermost, setting at risk his own wellbeing and that of his family.⁸¹

Balmford was writing in 1603 and could perhaps have justified his views, had they been worked out in any detail, by reference to the recent statutory provision for the poor which, it might be hoped, would lessen the need for the church's activities. Earlier legislation had, in contrast, given the parish clergy a part to play in the collection of the secular poor rate but that was discontinued in 1571.⁸² It is indicative of the superficial nature of most of the comment on ministerial charity that no reference was made to the developing statutory framework for poor relief and the accommodation

1. Balmford, A Shorte Dialogue, 23; Baxter, 'Reformed Pastor', 200.

2. 5 Eliz. I, c. 3; 14 Eliz. I, c. 5; E. M. Leonard, The Early History of English Poor Relief, 58-76, 133-5, gives a brief account of the legislation of the late 16th and early 17th centuries. The clergy had a continuing statutory involvement with the control of the poor as licensing agents for those wishing to move from their parish of residence. 5 Eliz. I, c. 4.

of traditional duties to the new system. Only George Herbert, whose discussion of the social role of the clergymen was in every respect more comprehensive than that of any of his contemporaries, explicitly related his duties to the poor law. Rather than making outright or regular gifts of money or food, he recommended that the clergyman should attempt to find some employment for the needy which would ensure them a living wage. If his own efforts were unsuccessful, the machinery of the law for the purpose should be employed. In addition, if the parish itself was unable to raise sufficient funds to maintain its own poor, he was to increase his contribution to the poor rate to help them. In keeping with both the law and with contemporary attitudes, the country parson was also to be discriminating in his charity. The hospitality of his house was to be offered to his parishioners according to their rank and charitable gifts were to be made to the poor where absolutely necessary. The parson's first duty was as always to his own parish and strangers who sought assistance at his hands were to be strictly examined on their provenance and religious knowledge before help was forthcoming.⁸³

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3. Herbert, 'Country Parson', 244-66. The recommendation that the clergy increase their contribution to the poor rate to help the parish is a further illustration of Herbert's idealism; at much the same time, Thomas Fuller complained that the clergy carried a double burden, being "deeply rated" in addition to having to provide hospitality. Fuller, Holy and Prophan State, 219. On contemporary attitudes to the poor, see Hill, Society and Puritanism, 251-87.

Like relief of the poor, visiting the sick was a charitable work traditionally assigned to the clergy. In the late medieval period it had been directly connected with the priestly office by the administration of extreme unction. Although that sacrament did not survive the reformation, visitation of the sick remained an office of the Prayer Book. The canons of 1603^f freed the licensed preacher from the obligation to use a set form of words, requiring him to offer instruction and comfort to those dangerously ill "as he shall thinke most needfull and convenient".⁸⁴ On the rare occasions that writers on the pastorate gave the duty more than passing praise, their advice was usually only that the minister must attend on the sick whether or not they call for his presence. The sickness of a parishioner, at least according to Baxter, was an opportunity for the minister. When the individual was least able to offer resistance, he could be brought to acknowledge his sins and promise reform. If the sufferer recovered, he was to be reminded of these promises; if not, the minister would have discharged the responsibility which he bore for every soul entrusted to his care.⁸⁵

84. Cuming, Anglican Liturgy, 26; Canon 67 of 1603.

5. Baxter, 'Reformed Pastor', 104; Fuller, Holy and Prophane State, 78; Jewel, Works, 1137. Herbert recommended that the Country Parson should offer medical as well as spiritual aid, either relying on his own or his wife's knowledge of herbal remedies or employing "some young practitioner" to care for the sick of the parish. Herbert, 'Country Parson', 275-8.

A more controversial issue was the extent to which the duty was binding upon the minister where there was danger of infection, and especially in cases of plague. In 1603 it was made clear that the church authorities did not require the clergy to expose themselves to serious risk. For Balmford, sick visiting was a duty, like hospitality, to which the minister was only "exmplarily bound" except in cases of spiritual despair, for precisely that reason. His argument was that only in his public duties (and for Balmford that meant preaching) was the minister truly fulfilling his office. Anything which endangered the discharge of that duty to the whole congregation in the interest of an individual was to be avoided, including responsibilities of secondary importance like sick-visiting.⁸⁶ Another Newcastle lecturer, Robert Jenison, writing like Balmford from direct experience of the effects of plague amongst his congregation, was less certain in his opinion.

"How farre publicke persons, especially Ministers, who take themselves charged with cure of souls, whether from God alone or from man also, may withdraw themselves in case of grievous and raging Pestilence, I rather leave to their owne consciences to determine."

In staying, could he trust to God's protection while fulfilling his duty as a minister or would this be interpreted as presuming upon divine favour? Guided by the "judgement, yea importunitie also, of many godly and unpartial Christians (and so, I take, by direction from God)" Jenison decided to stay; a fair indication it may be presumed, of what he would have thought of Balmford's approach.⁸⁷

86. Balmford, A Shorte Dialogue, 18-26.

87. R. Jenison, Newcastle's Call to her Neighbour Townes and Cities (1636), 222.

One final work of Christian charity merits consideration here, although it was one much less often mentioned as a clerical duty; that of reconciliation, the work of the peace-maker. The comparative scarcity of comment is partly explained by the nature of the work. While equally a traditional responsibility of the church, the means by which reconciliation was to be achieved were less obvious and less mechanical than the practice of sick visiting or poor relief.⁸⁸ The most important regulation of the Church of England on the subject was negative in intent; the Prayer Book rubric required the parish clergyman to exclude from the communion those who were at variance, so ensuring the peace of the rest of the congregation but doing little to bring the contending parties together. Positive measures were limited to repeated injunctions to the clergy to live peaceably themselves and to teach their people due obedience to the authorities of church and state. Contemporary Lives of eminent puritan ministers reveal that the responsibility of the clergyman for advancing concord was not in fact either rejected in theory or neglected in practice.⁸⁹ It was, however, by the supporters of the established church that most attention was given to the special contribution which the clergy could make especially in the 17th century. Some even suggested that the parochial incumbent or curate should seek to keep his congregation from litigation by

8. The role of the clergy as peacemakers is briefly discussed by K. Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic 87-8, 182-3.

89. S. Clarke, A Generall Martyrologie (1677), 13, 125. The examples are those of Richard Greenham and Arthur Hildersham. Peace-making is less frequently mentioned in the lives collected by Clarke than counselling or poor relief.

offering justice according to a higher law with himself as judge and arbitrator.

"To consult the Divine before the Attorney, would end many unchristian controversies; at least it would make us know orderly, what case and cause that is which cannot be regulated by Scripture." 90

In order to avoid any charge of partiality or incompetence, Herbert suggested that on such occasions the parson should associate himself with "three or four of the ablest of the parish".⁹¹ Even if the clergyman did not act alone, the power of arbitration could only enhance his authority. The most positive recommendations for the minister in his role as peacemaker reflect as much the desire that he should be consulted as the universal expert, qualified by his knowledge of Scripture, as the necessity of harmony within the church.

What then would be the result of the ministry of a "faithful shepherd", one who sought to perform all these duties to the best of his considerable ability? Such diligence was seen by contemporaries both as evidence of and a means to establish a proper relationship between pastor and people, based upon mutual affection. Although in the 16th century, the ideal had been described most consistently and clearly by critics of the establishment in the context of the congregational calling of ministers and in condemnation of the evils of pluralism and non-residence, the love which should bind together minister and congregation later became a commonplace

90. Fisher, The Priests Duty, 27. Cf. Cosin, Works, i. 9; Jackson, Works, i. 219-20.

91. Herbert, 'Country Parson', 229, 274, 319.

of writing on the ministry. Though the deductions might be questioned, the basic premise was one with which it was difficult to disagree. Thomas Oxley was unlikely to meet with anything but approval when, in a sermon before his colleagues in Durham in 1609, he quoted as the distinguishing marks of the true minister love, learning, and prudence in counsel.⁹² In practical terms, it was recognised that such a relationship would ease the minister's task; Fuller recommended that the clergyman seek "the general love and good will of his parish", for "the good conceit of the physician is half a cure". He also warned, however, that the people's love was not to be sought at the cost of personal integrity. "If pious loving and painful labouring in his calling will not win their affections, he counts it gain to lose them" Protestant ministers were perhaps all the more aware of the value of affection between clergy because they saw that there lay one of the strengths of the church of Rome. Preaching at Paul's Cross in 1616, Gabriel Price made the point that

"..... nothing more hindreth the growth of the Gospell, than the alienation of affection, betweene Minister and People. This our learned adversaries the Papists know, and therefore glory of their own religion to be onely true; because of the unity and love that is between Priests and Papists; and have wherewith to crie out of us; that Protestants bee not onley against Papists, but Protestants against Protestants."⁹³

92. Oxley, The Shepheard, passim.

93. Fuller, Holy and Prophane State, 73; Price, Laver of the Heart, 59.

When such a premium was placed upon a close and loving relationship between the pastor and his people, what was to become of the minister who could feel no affection for an unruly and intractable congregation and whose ministry, in his own eyes at least, bore no fruit? The situation could perhaps be avoided by an extension of that isolation from worldly society recommended by Perkins. The same writer warned young ministers not to seek those livings which would bring the best material reward

"But principally to regard what a people they be; and how affected, amongst whom they are to live; if godly and well disposed, or at least taught, tractable and gentle, and willing to be taught, the less to regard other incommodities: but if wicked and prophane, or (which is worse) stubborne, froward, and untractable, then lesse to regard the greatest commodities; and certainly if this point be wel considered of, and how bitter it hath bene in the end to many who have not regarded it, it will appeare, that this is the best encouragement, or discouragement, the greatest commoditie or discommoditie, and the best reason, either to winne a man to a place, or to drawe him from it, how good soever it be otherwayes." 94

Given the existing system of patronage and appointment, few clergy could hope to select their cures on that basis. Even

94. Perkins, The Calling of the Ministry, 33-4.

where the appointment was in practice made by a congregational 'call', allowing minister and people to make some trial of each other, problems could arise.⁹⁵ The very idea of the call presumed that the right pastor had been selected with divine aid to serve the particular needs of the congregation. If his ministry failed to edify them or to make any impression upon the indifferent, logic demanded that the call be considered invalid. Those who sympathised with, even if they did not subscribe to the theory of congregational appointment, might feel that an 'unprofitable' pastorate was a divine judgement, a sign that their efforts would be better directed elsewhere. Like Richard Baxter, and with the same conclusions, they might marvel

"at some ancient, reverend man, that have lived twenty, forty or fifty years with an unprofitable people, where they have seen so little fruit of their labours, that is was scarcely discernible how they can with patience go on! Were it my case, though I durst not leave the vine-yard nor quit my calling, yet I should suspect that it was God's will I should go somewhere else"⁹⁶

Others, however, had nothing but praise for such patience. Faced with an ungodly congregation upon whom the ministry of years had made no impression, the clergyman was to continue his work, trusting in God to put it to future use.

95. Collinson, Elizabethan Puritan Movement, 333-45.

96. Baxter, 'Reformed Pastor', 228.

"..... though they see it not, their people may feel benefit by this ministry the preaching of the word is in some places alike the planting of woods, where, though no profit is received for twenty years together, it comes afterwards. And grant, that God honours thee not to build his temple in thy parish, yet thou mayest, with David, provide metal and materials for Soloman thy successor to build with." 97

These responses to the success or failure of a ministry illustrate the way in which differing views on the proper organisation and structure of the church could be reflected in attitudes to the pastorate. More notable than the inevitable differences is the extent of agreement about the priorities and duties of the parish clergy. Concern with the pastorate meant concern with activities and attitudes commonly expected of all Protestant ministers, (and even, in some cases, from the Roman Catholic priesthood), with duties derived from biblical comment upon the ministry, especially that found in the Pauline Epistles to Titus and Timothy, and prompted by perennial spiritual and material needs.⁹⁸ Those who were

97. Fuller, Holy and Prophan State, 77-8; cf. Crooke, The Ministerial Husbandry, 85.

98. A similar point is made by H. C. Porter, Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge, 216. Richard Greenham is cited as an example of the puritan pastors trained at Cambridge in the late 16th century whose rural ministry was in the same pastoral tradition as that of Lancelot Andrewes and George Herbert in the 17th.

later to be called puritans were the first to look with care at the religious life of the individual congregation after the Reformation. When controversy was set aside, the most important of their ideals found general acceptance; the need for the minister's conduct to be grounded upon love for his parishioners, the primarily teaching role of the ministry, and the importance of pastoral oversight. The anglican George Herbert was in full agreement with the puritan stress on the priority of a minister's service to his own cure; the Country Parson was to set his parish even above his duty to his fellow ministers, to whom he was bound by close ties of brotherhood.⁹⁹ Differences arose chiefly from the tendency of puritans and others to absorb the entire pastoral function into teaching and preaching, making the sermon the sole vehicle of instruction and pastoral counsel. The practical duties of charity, and especially of reconciliation, generally received greater emphasis in the writings of confessed supporters of the establishment, especially the Laudians of the 1620s and 1630s.¹⁰⁰ The contrast is not to be overdrawn. Explicit statements of the secondary nature of charitable duties were very rare and by the time Richard Baxter came to describe his "reformed pastor", good works had been restored to a

99. Herbert, 'Country Parson', 261.

100. J. S. McGee, The Godly Man in Stuart England, puts forward the thesis that puritans and anglicans were distinguished by the importance they attached to the two tables of the Mosaic Law. At its simplest, the distinction is between the puritan stress on duties owed to God and the anglican concern with obligations to fellow men.

central place in the work of the ministry. Even in an earlier period, men such as Greenham and Crooke had been distinguished for their practical charity, as the Lives recorded by Clarke and others testify.¹⁰¹

Perhaps the most outstanding features of all these discussions of the ministry is the importance attached by writers of all shades of opinion to pastoral supervision of every member of the flock. Implicit in this was the claim that the clergy were peculiarly qualified to offer authoritative advice on every aspect of human affairs, advice which was necessary for the achievement of a godly life. The claim was followed to its conclusion by Herbert, in his account of the parson's "completeness"; he was to be all things to his parishioners, "not onely a Pastor, but a Lawyer also and a Physician", excluding all alternative professional guidance.¹⁰² It was an extreme representation of a not uncommon ideal; if the ideal was shared by the clergy who served in the parishes of England, here was a further support to their growing professionalism and a further irritant to lay contemporaries who were at the same time making claims to greater independence in the ordering of their spiritual lives.¹⁰³

101. S. Clarke, Lives of Ten Eminent Divines (1662) and A Generall Martyrologie, passim.

102. Herbert, 'Country Parson', 274-5.

103. R. O'Day, 'Clerical patronage and recruitment', 311-92; H. L. Schwarz, 'Some thoughts on the development of a lay religious consciousness in pre-Civil War England', S.C.H. viii. 171-8.

Chapter V

The Work of the Clergy. I. Preaching, Teaching, and Charity.

Turning from the theory of the ministry to its practice, in this and the following chapters some account will be given of the way in which the clergy of Durham performed their various duties and of the importance of their activities in the communities to which they were appointed. Inevitably, some of their labours went unrecorded; references to sick-visiting, for example, are few and far between. First to be considered are some of the services offered by the clergy in caring for the minds and bodies of their parishioners which are reasonably well documented; religious and secular instruction and the relief of those in material need.

i. Preachers and catechists.

Preaching by the parish clergy was controlled by the detailed, although not always consistent, regulations of the Royal Injunctions and successive series of canons. Under Elizabeth, every parish was to have at least four sermons a year; if the incumbent or curate was unable to provide them himself, he was to obtain the services of a visiting preacher. In response to both the rising standards of clerical education and vocal criticism of the lack of preaching, the minimum was raised to one sermon a month in 160⁴₃. In the 1560s any clergyman

who felt himself able to do so was free to deliver sermons in his own parish, although he needed a licence to preach elsewhere. From 1571, however, whatever the place and occasion of the sermon, every preacher was required to have a licence from the relevant authority; the bishop for preaching within a diocese, the archbishop for an entire province, and one of the universities or the Crown for the country as a whole. While in some dioceses ministers were still allowed to preach in their own cures without licences in the 17th century, the ruling made it possible for the authorities to keep a tight rein u on preachers and preaching whenever they wished.¹ The supply of preaching clergy in the parishes was thus limited by the d mands of both ability and conformity. Initially the former was the more important. An educated and a preaching minister were commonly equated by contemporaries. The reality f the equation in Durham is difficult to assess in default of detailed surveys of clerical capabilities. Occasional references to the number and identity of preachers do, however, illustrate the situation at certain dates within the period.

In 157 Bishop Barnes assigned preaching duties within the diocese to 28 parish clergy.² At first sight, Durham thus appears to have been unusually well supplied with preachers.

1. Barratt, 'Condition of the Parish Clergy', 111-17, 122-30, and references there given.
2. S.S. xxi. 81-91. The list includes all clergy known to have preached, e.g. at visitations, funerals etc.

Approximately one third of all those holding parochial benefices were named, a marked contrast with the diocese of Lincoln where at much the same time only about 15% of incumbents were qualified to preach.³ If all those listed by Barnes had made their services available each Sunday, there should have been no difficulty in fulfilling the minimum requirement for every parish; it might even have been possible to achieve the official ideal of monthly sermons. On the other hand, the preachers were a restricted and privileged group, many of whom already had commitments beyond their parishes. Amongst them were the archdeacons of Northumberland and Durham and seven prebendaries. Two more joined the ranks of the senior clergy within a year; Thomas Burton became spiritual chancellor of the diocese and Henry Naunton was appointed to the fourth stall in the cathedral. Of the remainder, only one or two were not pluralists. Influence and ability thus went together and it is hardly surprising that there was a marked contrast between the number of preachers in Durham and Northumberland. Half of the 40 incumbents of endowed livings in Durham were listed by the bishop but only of the 44 in Northumberland, including the archdeacon and the vicar of Newcastle. Since the best livings were concentrated in the southern archdeaconry, there also the preachers were to be found.

3. C. W. Foster, The State of the Church in the Reigns of Elizabeth and James I, (Lincoln Rec. Soc. xxiii), pp. lvii, 45 ; Barratt, 'Condition of the Parish Clergy', 95-9.

Also during Barnes's episcopate, an increasing number of junior clergy were allowed to undertake preaching duties of a very limited kind. At each general chapter those who had profited sufficiently from their studies were licensed to preach once a month or once a quarter, "having certain Books appointed from whose Doctrines they should not swarve, but for the most part translate." The books were usually works by respected continental authors like Melancthon or Bullinger and the resulting sermons can have differed little from the reading of a homily, except that the curate used his own words and the exercise may thus have qualified as one of the necessary minimum of sermons. Thomas Jackson, a native of county Durham, vicar of Newcastle from 1623 to 1630, and rector of Winston from 1625 to 1631, commended the way in which the system of examination and promotion had functioned in his youth. His praise, however, was directed towards its value in ensuring conformity; Barnes and his contemporaries were more concerned with the encouragement of preaching than with its restriction.⁴

By the turn of the century there were 63 preachers in the diocese according to the survey compiled by Whitgift for the information of James I.⁵ Although the total may include a few clergy who did not hold parochial cures, the number of

4. T. Jackson, 'On the Inordinate Liberty of Prophesying', Works (144), iii. 273; S.S. xxii. 21.

5. R. Usher, Reconstruction of the English Church, i. 241. The reliability of the figures has been questioned but there is no means of checking them for the diocese of Durham. Cf. Barratt, 'Condition of the Parish Clergy', 100-5.

preachers in the parishes had probably doubled in the preceding twenty five years. The ratio of one preaching minister for every two parishes was similar to the average for the country as a whole and in the northern province Durham stood second to York. No distinction was made in the survey between the two archdeaconries but contemporary comment suggests that Durham had benefitted unduly and that the supply of preachers in Northumberland was, if anything, worse than it had been in the 1570s. In 1595 John Ferne, secretary to the Council of the North, reported to Lord Burghley that "there is no religion in that county, for all Northumberland hath but four preachers." Other estimates at the end of the 16th century were similar and the blame was inevitably laid upon the extent of impropriation.⁶ Some improvement took place over the next few years but there was still cause for complaint about the quality as well as the quantity of preaching. In 1616 the sheriff of Northumberland acknowledged that although

"there is a greate defect of teachers, and many of them of the worst sort, yet to speake truly it is better of late supplied than formerly it had beene, for there be now some 12 or thereabouts of preaching ministers in the whole shire." ⁷

6. Hist. MSS. Com. 9, Hatfield, v, p. 493. Cf. Cal. Border Papers, 1595-1603, O. Sir William Bowes to Id. Burghley, 28 Nov. 1595; S.P. 12/284/56. 'Remedies for the peace of Northumberland', June 1602; J. Strype, Life of Whitgift (1 22), ii. 313. The estimates probably exclude Newcastle but may include Hexham.

7. S.S. lxviii. 434.

As educational standards among the clergy continued to improve in the 17th century, the supply of preachers followed suit. In the ten years of his episcopate, Neile granted eight preaching licences, two for the diocese as a whole, the rest for single parishes.⁸ Most of those licensed were curates in the archdeaconry of Durham, who often obtained permission to serve a parish and to preach there at the same time. No mention is made of the majority of the senior clergy; presumably they applied for licences from a higher authority than the bishop. By 1640 many unbeneficed clergy were preachers.⁹

The proportion of the parish clergy able and licensed to preach in the years immediately preceding the civil war is difficult to assess. Much surviving comment on the state of religion in the north was made by critics of the church who were concerned not just that there should be preachers, but that they should be 'true' preachers. The description, perhaps by John Fenwick, of Northumberland as a county where there was scarcely a minister who was not either superstitious or one who preached only at his own pleasure sheds more light on prejudices of the writer than upon the provision of a preaching clergy.¹⁰

. D.R. I.4, passim; the licences are also recorded in Borth. Inst. Hist. Res., R IV Be. 2 (subscription book of Archbp. Neile), ff. 6 -95. A photocopy of the subscription book is in the Durham Univ. Dept. of Palaeography and Diplomatic, South Rd. Office.

9. e.g. William Milbourne of Brancepeth, see above p.30 ; Patrick Watt, cur. and 'lecturer' at South Shields in the 1630s. E. Savage, 'Thomas Wandles and Patrick Wait', Arch. Ael. 3rd ser. vii. 12-14.

10. ? J.Fenwick, The Downefall of the Hierarchy (1641), 24-5.

Nevertheless, the situation in Northumberland still demanded explanations. If episcopal negligence was not responsible, as some critics alleged, then the fault lay with impropiators and patrons concerned only with their own profits. Of Durham, in contrast, it was claimed that "there is no County in England (of so small an extent) which hath so many able and sound Preachers, and these also who make a conscience of the faithfull discharge of their duties in preaching as that County Palatine hath." ¹¹ Even in Durham, the more remote parishes were still ill-served, especially those on the northern and western borders of the county. In a famous petition, sponsored before Parliament by George Lilburne, mayor of Sunderland, the parishioners of Muggleswick claimed that they and their neighbours in the surrounding parishes were "a people who have been destitute of a preaching minister; yea ever since any of us that are now breathing were borne, to our soules great grief and dreadfull hazard of destruction " ¹²

Alth u h the increase in preaching failed to keep pace with a growing demand, parishes without a resident preaching minister were not entirely starved of sermons. Licensed preachers visited neighbouring parishes from time to time to provide both the minimum of sermons and also some variety in churches where there was already a preacher. In the early 17th century the congregation of the church of St. Nicholas in the city of Durham heard as many as fifteen sermons from visiting preachers in a single year, in addition to those of the incumbent. There was a

11. A Vindication of the Bishop of Durham, (1641), 7-8.

12. A Most Lamentable Information of Muggleswick (1640).

plentiful supply of preachers for churches in the cathedral city. Amongst those who appeared at St Nicholas were members of the chapter, the divinity lecturer from the cathedral, and the archdeacon of Durham who preached at visitations. In addition, there were local curates and incumbents and clergy passing through the city on their way to take up appointments elsewhere in the diocese or simply visiting the area. In 1609 Henry Johnson, chaplain to Lord Ogle, gave two sermons at St Nicholas's, breaking his journey northwards to take up the Ogle living of Bothal. During the previous year a certain Mr. Brown of Cambridge, who cannot be otherwise identified, had also preached twice.¹³ In parishes outside the city the pattern was similar, except that the cathedral clergy were rarely involved. In the 1630s the churchwardens of Darlington and Kirk Merrington recorded payments to local curates and incumbents of between 12d. and 20d. for a sermon. Larger sums were given to a number of 'poor' preachers who passed through the parishes. The churchwardens of Merrington gave 5s. to Mr. Mount, a "poore minister", in 1635 and 7s. to another "poor minister" in 1639, on each occasion in return for a sermon. Since in these cases the parish was paying, the sermons may have been additions to the minimum which the incumbent was bound to provide.¹⁴

The diocesan authorities also gave official encouragement to the provision of additional preachers and occasions of

13. D.C.R.O. EP/Du SN 2, p. 87. In 1609 the cur. of St. Nicholas's was John Todd, a minor canon and successively sacrist and precentor of the cathedral. It is not known whether he was a preacher. P.K. D. and C. Mun., Treas. Bks. 18-23; D.R. VIII.1, ff. 4-226.

14. D.C.R.O. EP/Da SC 35, pp. 30, 98, 99; EP/Mer 34, ff. 18, 20, 24, 27.

preaching. The bishops naturally looked for assistance first to the senior clergy, the most able and reliable in the diocese. The prebendaries were bound by the cathedral statutes to undertake such duties. The dean and canons were each to deliver two sermons a year in the diocese, as well as to preach in the cathedral itself.¹⁵ When the bishop surrounded himself with learned chaplains and appointed them to prebends he thus performed a service to the whole diocese.¹⁶ Contemporaries and professional rivals might criticise or even ridicule the preaching style and capacity of individuals but some prebendaries, like Francis Bunny, became known and admired for their sermons and sought after as preachers at funerals and other occasions.¹⁷

In assigning preaching duties throughout the diocese to a select group of clergy, Barnes extended the obligation beyond the confines of the chapter. The idea was not a new one; similar suggestions had been made for the diocese of York in the 1560s, and in putting the scheme into practice in 1578 Barnes

1. S. cxliiii. 109.

1. Cf. the praise of Neile by Peter Heylyn, quoted by A. Foster, 'The functions of a bishop: the career of Richard Neile, 1562-1640' in Continuity and Change, R. O'Day and F. Heal eds., 41; that of Morton by R. Baddiley, Life of Morton (1669), 83-5.

17. Thomas Eades, an Oxford friend of Toby Matthew, accompanied him on his journey to Durham in 1583 to take up the deanery. A noted preacher, Eades was scathing in his comments on the abilities of the prebendaries, praising only Henry Naunton, whom he characterised as "the Tully of the North", and Francis Bunny, the "wisest and most learned" of the whole chapter. H. Gee, 'A 16th century journey to Durham', Arch.Ael. 3rd ser. xiii. 106-11; D.R. Prob. 1579/80. Will of Humphrey Hancock.

acted in concert with Archbishop Sandys, as he did in making provision for the education of the lower clergy.¹⁸ On the bishop's orders, 300 sermons were to be given in twelve months, 212 in Durham and 88 in Northumberland. The preachers were to be Barnes himself, the dean of Durham, and twenty eight parish clergy, including most of the senior clergy of the diocese. Each was to give a set number of sermons, usually between 4 and 12, in several parishes. Most were to visit churches in the vicinity of their own cures, although Adam Holiday, a prebendary and rector of Bishop Wearmouth, was to preach at Holy Island, Norham, Tynemouth, and Newcastle, as well as in a number of parishes in county Durham. The dates of the sermons were not specified, except when they were to be given at general chapters in local centres such as Alnwick, Morpeth, and Corbridge. First on the list for most preachers was a sermon at Bishop Auckland, presumably to secure the bishop's approval as well as for his pleasure. Barnes himself was to deliver 24 sermons, all in the archdeaconry of Durham and almost half of them in the parish of St Andrew Auckland, to compensate for the generally poor service of that church and its chapelries.

Apart from the record of sermons given at general chapters there is no evidence of how the scheme worked or whether it was considered worth renewing after 157.¹⁹ So comprehensive and highly organised a method of supplementing parish preaching may

18. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1566-79, 65. Order of the Council in the North, 9 Nov. 1568; B.L. Lansd. MS. 27, no. 12. Archbp. Sandys to Burghley, 16 Apr. 157; S.S. xxii. 81-91.

19. D.R. II.1, passim.

have proved superfluous. None of Barnes's successors attempted anything similar, although they showed no lack of interest in preaching and preachers. Most conspicuously concerned was Toby Matthew, who set the lower clergy an example of diligence, as dean and bishop of Durham, which few may have had the energy to follow. His so-called diary is little more than a record of the preaching engagements which dominated his life.²⁰ He preached almost every Sunday and on many holy days, apologising for his apparent neglect when in 1604 he delivered fewer sermons than usual,

"because my house was infected by the Plague and als that I was required to be present upon Sundrie Sabbaoths at the Translation of the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury; the several consecrations of the Bishops of St Asa h, Man and Gloucester, whereat the Household Chaplains preached; besides my often Attendance required at Court, before his Majestie and the LLs. about the Union."

He gave 721 sermons in his twelve years as dean and a further 550 in eleven years as bishop of Durham. Apart from those given at court or in London, most were delivered in county Durham. Only when engaged in negotiations with the Scots, episcopal visitations, or attendance upon the Council of the North, did he venture into Northumberland and then rarely beyond the main centres of Newcastle, Morpeth, Alnwick, and Berwick.

20. York Min. Lib., MS. A.18. 18th cent. transcript of Matthew's diary; J. B. Gavin, 'An Elizabethan Bishop of Durham; Tobias Matthew 1595-1606', (McGill Univ. Ph. D. thesis, 1972), 324-33.

In Durham his most frequent visits were to parishes with which he had some personal connections; Billingham where he had the impropriation as dean, or the parishes close to the episcopal seats at Auckland and Stockton. Many of the churches in which he preached were in dependencies or wholly impropriate parishes but he did not restrict his efforts to areas which were particularly ill-served. As one of the few deans also to hold a parochial living, he preached seventy times in five years in his own church of Bishop Wearmouth, a demonstration of what conscientiousness might do to lessen the effects of pluralism and non-residence.

Matthew naturally did all in his power to ensure that every parish had at least the minimum of quarterly and monthly sermons. During his episcopate, incumbents who were negligent in preaching were frequently prosecuted in the church courts. Records survive of a series of visitations of Northumberland undertaken by the chancellor and his deputies between 1595 and 1618.²¹ In the first years, which were also the first years of Matthew's episcopate, action was taken against ten incumbents in eleven parishes for failing to provide sufficient sermons. The offenders were by no means the poorest or least educated clergy or in the most remote or intractable parishes. They included, for example, the rector of Simonburn, Robert Simpson M.A., whose negligence was blamed upon his holding a second living (although an adjacent one) at Haltwhistle. None of the cases involved wholly impropriate parishes where the lay farmer was responsible for the provision of preaching although these were most frequently the subject of comment and complaint outside the courts. The ecclesiastical authorities were perhaps less willing or knew

21. D.R. II.4, 5, 6, 7. No parallel records survive for Durham.

themselves less able to coerce laymen into recognising such duties. Prosecutions even of incumbents became much less common after 1606, when Matthew was translated to York. The records of the chancellor's visitations became increasingly concerned with probate to the exclusion of all other types of business and action may have been taken in other courts of which no records survive. The drive to ensure minimum parochial standards of preaching and of other aspects of worship and instruction, including catechising and the provision of books and ornaments, may, however, have lost impetus under Bishop James as the number of preachers in the north-east increased and the problem became less urgent and the omissions less scandalous.

Matthew used his influence to bring more preachers into the diocese, both by direct patronage and by putting pressure on her, and also gave his blessing to preaching institutions outside the parochial framework. Under his aegis the plague year of 163 was marked by a series of public fasts in the towns of south and west Durham from Stanhope to Darlington. At the fasts the bishop and one or two local clergy took it in turns to preach on a suitable text; on September 2th successive sermons were given at Darlington by Matthew, Richard Thomlinson, vicar of Darlington, and Ralph Tunstall, prebendary and rector of Long Newton, on the Epistle to Titus.²² While the fast was an extraordinary measure for times of crisis, Matthew obviously hoped that exercises held at Barnard Castle and Darlington would prove more lasting institutions. Their exact nature is

22. York Min. Libr., MS. A.18, p. 72.

not clear but they were probably similar to the combination lectures which were a regular part of religious life in East Anglia, in the Midlands, and in some parts of the north, at which local clergy took it in turn to preach in a market town, usually on the day of the market itself.²³

The bishop clearly considered that he was assisting in the restoration of an older institution. In the summer of 1604 he was preaching at Darlington, "*ubi quantum posui suasi ex rcitii Divini Renovationem.*"²⁴ The earliest reference to an exercise within the diocese occurs in 1575, when Bishop Pilkington instructed his archdeacons to be diligent in discovering and reporting those who "do not come to ye church or not communicate and come to here godly exercyses of religi n" The term may have indicated no more than the usual catechising, preaching, and homily reading of the parish minister but it is possible that they were closer to the 'pr phe yings' held elsewhere at the time. Pilkington's letter indicates that the meetings, if that is what they were, had episc pal ap roval but of their form and degree of formali y n thing is kn wn. If exercises of that kind did exist, th y may subsequently have been absorbed into the elaborate

23. P. Collinson, 'Lectures by combination; structures and characteristics of church life in 17th century England', Bull. Inst. Hist. Res. xlviii. 182-213. Collinson notes the existence of the exercise at Barnard Castle connecting it with those at Richmond and Northallerton, *ibid.* 93. He does not, however, mention that at Darlington, which may have been a fourth centre. Alternatively there may have been a separate Durham circuit.

24. York Min. Libr., MS. A. 18, p. 80.

system of synods and general chapters set up by Barnes in 1577.²⁵

25. P.K. D. and C. Mun., Act Bk. of Archd. Pilkington, f. 245; P. Collinson, The Elizabethan Puritan Movement, 168-76; S.S. xxii. 20-3. The synods were a traditional part of clerical life and continued to be held until the Civil War. The general chapter attended by the churchwardens and clergy was apparently an innovation in Durham as in York. The later history of the chapter is difficult to trace as there is a break in the visitation records in which they are noted from Barnes's death until 1595. Possibly they were the predecessors of the visitations by the chancellor and his deputies mentioned above. Whether the exercises to which Matthew referred had any connection with the chapter is uncertain. Elsewhere similar institutions developed into meetings at which clergy and laity came together for biblical exposition and discussion. Although the Durham chapters were also held at local centres and began with a sermon and prayers, there were essential differences from the exercise as commonly found in the north in the later 16th century. Lay attendance was compulsory, not voluntary, and restricted to the churchwardens and their assistants. There is no positive evidence that the churchwardens attended the sessions at which the clergy were examined and if they did not do so their experience at the general chapter can have differed little from that of a routine visitation. The exercises of which Matthew spoke may, therefore, have been less formal additional meetings of clergy and laity during Hutton's episcopate or before, all record^{of such} is now lost.

By the mid 1630s all traces of such officially sanctioned supplementary preaching had disappeared, much to the regret of Bishop Morton. Preachers were so few, he reported, that "there is not any lecture in all the diocese, by want of any combination or concurrency of ministers to perform it."²⁶ Morton would have welcomed regular lectures and did all he could to promote preaching by parish clergy and others. The chaplains who accompanied him to Durham and the other able clergy to whom he gave preferment no doubt supported him. He was, however, sometimes hampered by the necessity of enforcing conformity as understood by the government and the archbishops, who showed no hesitation in intervening in the affairs of the diocese.²⁷ Although his own chaplains were men of uniform orthodoxy, Morton's firm Calvinism inclined him to favour preachers who were less acceptable to the secular and ecclesiastical authorities of the 1630s. Recognising the peculiar needs of Northumberland, the bishop was said to have "placed and maintained severall lectures out of his owne purse in some

26. S.P. 16/412/45. Morton's report of the state of the diocese, 15 Feb. 1639. Three years earlier his comment had been similar; "We can hardly procure a sufficient number of competent Ministers to preache a lecture in our market townes, by reason of ~~ye~~^{the} paucitie of able Ministers".

S.P. 16/345/ 5. If Durham was as well supplied with preachers during these years as was claimed, the clergy may have been unwilling rather than unable to undertake additional preaching duties. Both James and Neile enquired at visitations whether exercises were held and whether these were properly approved but the response is not recorded. D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 67.

27. In December 1639, Morton complained to Secretary Windebanke that reports of disorders in the diocese were made immediately to the higher authorities and not to him. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1639-40, 134.

needfull places of that County." ²⁸ Only one can now be identified. Anthony Lapthorne was appointed and licensed to preach at Ovingham about 1635. His subsequent career illustrates the difficulties faced by Morton in balancing the needs of his diocese, his personal inclinations and the demands of his superiors.

Lapthorne had already had a chequered career, when he first came to the notice of Morton, at that time bishop of Coventry and Lichfield.²⁹ Although he had lost a benefice in Gloucestershire for nonconformity, he found influential patrons and the earl of Pembroke recommended him to the bishop. On promising to conform, he was placed at Cannock, (Staffs.), and his ministry there was so effective that the "prophan and barbarous" parish became "as religious and orderly as any other". After a further brush with the authorities in 1634, Lapthorne travelled north to seek Morton's help once again,

"in presumption that, owing to the experience I had of his former paines, I would compassionate his exigence, as accordingly I did, yet not before he showed me how he was allowed after censure by the high commission, to preach any where excepting in or about London, whom therefore I placed in the most barbarous place within Northumberland, where there had been almost no preaching for 40 years before, allowing him £40 yearly from

2 . A Vindication of the Bishop of Durham, 8.

29. Foster; R. Baxter, Autobiography, ed. J. M. Lloyd Thomas, 24.

myself, wherein also he has not been unprofitable,
and that I did for the good of souls, upon necessity,
not knowing any that could be more laborious than
he" ³⁰

Unfortunately the bishop's protégé did not restrict his preaching to Ovingham but also visited some of the least well served parishes of Durham, including Ebchester, Muggleswick, and Barnard Castle, where his teaching on controversial points of church practice and doctrine brought him into trouble with the ecclesiastical commission in the diocese. His career at Ovingham eventually came to an end in 1639 when Morton was informed by the Secretary of State, Windebanke, that both Lapthorne and the former prebendary Peter Smart were suspected of treasonable connections with the Scots.³¹ A year later one of the Arminian prebendaries of Durham, Eleazar Duncan, rector of Haughton-le-Skerne, claimed that he had been responsible for Lapthorne's dismissal from the diocese. Meanwhile, the bishop's regret at the loss of so able a preacher had changed to a careful declaration of his unwillingness to countenance any views or practices which did not conform to those of the established church.³²

30. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1638-9, 434. Bp. Morton to Secretary Windebanke, 7 Feb. 1639.

31. S.S. xxxiv. 190-3.

32. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1639-40, 541. Eleazar Duncan to Thomas Triplett; 174. Morton to Windebanke, 23 Dec. 1639.

Other clergy serving in the parishes recognised and sought to supply the need for additional preaching, especially in the outlying parts of the diocese. Of all such enterprises the most famous were Bernard Gilpin's yearly missions to the people of Tynedale and Redesdale.³³ According to his biographer he was the only preacher of his time to penetrate those areas; although that may be a slight exaggeration, the incumbents of Elsdon and Rothbury, the two major churches of the dales, were not always diligent in the performance of their duties.³⁴ Gilpin usually travelled north during the winter, arriving in the dales at Christmas, "because then there came many holydays together; and the people would be usually assemble upon the holydayes, whereas at other times they neither come together so easily or so often." The effectiveness of his preaching in bringing the dalesmen to an informed appreciation of the teachings of the Elizabethan church is questionable. He himself came to be seen as a figure of peculiar spiritual power to be treated with superstitious reverence, rather than as a Protestant teacher and minister. Complaints of the barbarity and irreligion of the upland parishes were still to be heard in the 17th century.³⁵ Conscientious clergy like Gilpin also went well beyond the canonical requirements in instructing the congregations in their own parishes. At Bishop Wearmouth in the 1630s John

33. Carleton, 'Life of Gilpin', 400-2.

34. e.g. William Talentire of Rothbury, on whom see pp. 95-6.

35. C. S. Collingwood, Memoirs of Bernard Gilpin, 178-80; S. M. Keeling, 'The Church and Religion in the Anglo-Scottish Borders, 1534-72', (Durham Univ. Ph. D. thesis, 1975), 311-12.

Johnson, the rector, and his curate gave two sermons every Wednesday, in addition to those on Sundays and holy days. Johnson commented that little spare time remained, with fasts and communions also to be prepared and administered, but he snatched an opportunity to write to Isaac Basire and ask whether the practice conformed with the episcopal model at Auckland.³⁶

Increasingly, however, the laity came to take the initiative in the organisation and financing of preaching additional to that provided in the normal course of parochial duties. Supplementary preaching was most common in the major towns and town governments took the lead in providing preachers and lectureships. In the city of Durham any shortage of sermons in the parishes was apparently supplied by the cathedral; when the customary morning sermons there were ended by the Arminian chapter in 1631 there was considerable ill-feeling among the citizens.³⁷ Preaching was similarly plentiful in Newcastle where the tradition of Protestant evangelism established during Knox's ministry in the north-east was maintained with the encouragement and financial help of the town council.³⁸ The corporation first employed a preacher in 1589. At the suggestion of the earl of Huntingdon they invited John Udall,

36. D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 9, no. 34. N.d.

37. Cal. S.P. Com. 1629-31, 541. Bp. Howson to Bp. Laud, 17 Mar. 1631.

38. Religious life in Newcastle and its relation to the politics of the town are described by R. Howell, Newcastle upon Tyne and the Puritan Revolution, especially pp. 71-118, on which the following account is largely based. Clergy and preachers are named in S.S. 1. 262-329.

recently deprived of the vicarage of Kingston upon Thames, to take up residence in the town. He stayed for a year, until his arrest for complicity in the publication of the Marprelate tracts.³⁹ After so radical a beginning the council stood in no further need of aristocratic prompting. From the 1590s they employed a series of preachers, often men of nonconformist inclinations. The full series of appointments cannot be traced but it is clear that there was more than one preacher at a time and that there was no attempt to exclude those who also held established livings.⁴⁰ In 1596 the vicar, Richard Holdsworth, another protégé of Huntingdon, had an additional income from the council as a preacher and a number of curates received similar payments. The stipend at that time was usually £40 p.a., paid quarterly. Later the level of pay fluctuated with the popularity of the preacher and the financial circumstances of the town.⁴¹ In 1606 the parish-

39. C. Cross, The Puritan Earl, 266; D.N.B.; Udall's The combat be wixt Christ and the Devil (1590) was written at Newcastle and dedicated to Huntingdon.
40. J. Fenwick, Christ Ruling in the midst of his Enemies (1643) named some of the preachers. In addition to Knox and Udall, there were "Reverend Balmford, whom in like manner thou [Newcastle] expelled, though thou couldst not touch his life, thou pricked his sides (as well as Christs) in his hearers, with the reproach of Balmfordian Faction and Schisme", and "Alder, Jennison, Morton, all godly Ministers, expelled by thee"
41. On one occasion the level of pay was reduced both as an economy measure and to dissuade the mercenary from seeking the appointment; S.P. 16/540/556, no. 5. John Blakiston to William Morton the younger, 27 Nov. 1632.

ioners of St. Nicholas's made a new departure by engaging their own afternoon lecturer at a stipend similar to that offered by the corporation for the morning sermon but the distinction between parochial and corporation appointments was not maintained. In 1622 the afternoon preacher received a yearly stipend of £60 from the 'town' and a further £10 from a fund left by a benevolent citizen.⁴²

The preaching appointments were by then lectureships in the commonly accepted sense and the holders were bound to give weekly sermons at specified times. Until the Civil War, two lectureships were officially recognised in Newcastle, although in the 1630s there were further occasions and opportunities for preaching. At the end of the decade William Morton, son of the former vicar of Newcastle and archdeacon of Durham, was maintained as an unofficial lecturer by the more radical merchants and town councillors who gathered for repetitions of his sermons and looked to him for spiritual guidance.⁴³ Another preaching institution was established when the corporation of Master Pilots obtained a licence from the bishop to have sermons in their chapel at Trinity House on election days "and other such solome daies of meeting as by occasion is observed." Appointment to all such positions was in the hands of the laymen who paid the preachers' stipends. They decided whether to employ one of the clergy resident in the town or to bring in a stranger from outside whose opinions better suited their tastes. The bishop could

42. S.S. 1. 297, 300; Bodl. MS. Tanner 73, f. 136. Jenison to Ward, 29 Mar. 1622.

43. On Morton, see Howell, *op. cit.* 89-94 and the references there given.

only influence the choice when the preacher needed a licence from his diocesan or where there was conflict between the rightful patrons, as there was over the appointment to Trinity House.⁴⁴

In a third major town, Berwick, the corporation did not become actively involved in the appointment and support of preachers until the 17th century. Because of its strategic importance and the problems of ordering religious life in a garrison town, the central government had previously taken the responsibility upon itself. In the early years of Elizabeth's reign, ambitious schemes were proposed for the establishment of a preaching ministry of two or three clergy within the parish. When these failed a compromise was adopted by which the vicar, usually himself a preacher, and a preaching assistant were maintained by a levy on the wages of the garrison.⁴⁵ In the late 17th century the vicar received an additional £50 p.a. and his assistant a stipend of £20. When the size of the garrison was reduced in 1576, the Crown stepped in to keep the stipends at an acceptable level and at its dissolution the whole sum was replaced by a royal pension. The corporation of Berwick, fearing to lose the ministry of the assistant, also raised a contribution to his stipend, the sum varying from year to year and thus for the first time acquired direct

44. 'Letter of the corporation of Master Pilots etc., 1636', F. J. W. Harding ed., Arch. Ael. 4th ser. xxxii. 320-2; S.P. 16/540/556, no. 5. John Blakiston to William Morton the younger, 27 Nov. 1632.

45. Keeling, 'Church and Religion in the Anglo-Scottish Borders', 109-14.

influence over one of the parish clergy. Eventually the Crown pensions were both allocated to the vicar and the preacher became an employee of the corporation alone.⁴⁶ For some time he remained entirely dependent upon their generosity. In 1629 the corporation approached the Mercers' Company of London hoping for the endowment of a lectureship from funds donated by one of their members for the promotion of preaching. At length the negotiations were successful and the mayor and aldermen appointed a 'Fishborne lecturer', bound to serve no other cure while holding the lectureship, in return for which he received an income from impropriated tithes in Northumberland purchased by the Mercers. The corporation continued to make a small contribution in cash and kind but made no attempt to keep up their former level of payment, which had proved increasingly burdensome with the economic decline of the town.⁴⁷

The town council of Alnwick was also responsible for the creation of a lectureship. After long deliberation, the burgesses refounded the ancient grammar school in 1613, promising to add a further £16 from the town revenues to the £4 p.a. allowed to the master under the chantry certificate. In the following year Robert Stephenson was appointed master of the school for three years at a stipend of £23 p.a. In

46. J. Scott, Hist. Berwick, 353-4, 454, 462; Cal. Border Papers, i. 36; Hist. MSS. Com. 9, Hatfield, xv, p. 351. Mayor and Burgesses of Berwick to James I, und. ? 1603.

47. Scott, Hist. Berwick, 354-6; another Fishborn lecture was established in the diocese of Carlisle, Hist. MSS. Com. 73, City of Exeter, pp. 195-6.

addition to his teaching duties he was to

"use and exercise monthlie and everye monthe once duringe the said tearme of thre yeares abovesaid, the exercise of preaching and teaching in the pulpit within the church of Alnwick upon Sundaies monthly, for the more better edifying exhorting and teaching or instructing of

burgesses and comonalty of the Towne of Alnwick."

If Stephenson accepted any other cure in Northumberland, he was to keep his appointment but at a reduced salary. In 1616 he became curate of Alnwick itself and resigned his place at the grammar school. His successors at the school continued to combine the offices of master and preacher.⁴⁸

The only other endowed lectureship in the diocese was established not by a town council but by the parishioners of Lanchester, led by the local gentry. The principle of corporata action, however, was the same. The parishioners sought Bishop Morton's approval of their chosen lecturer, which he naturally gave with alacrity. Soon afterwards, in September 1635, he was less pleased. He wrote again to the parishioners warning them not to neglect their duly appointed and approved lecturer, Mr Leach, for a certain Mr Thompson, "a man altogether unknowne unto me and one who usurpes my licence in the office of preaching." Thompson was only to preach in the parish if he obtained Morton's "speciall licence and approbacion".⁴⁹ This he may have done, since he continued

48. G. Tate, Hist. Alnwick, ii. 84-5.

49. Durham Univ. Libr., Mickleton and Spearman MS. 26.1. Bp. Morton to cur. and parishioners of Lanchester, 21 Sept. 1635.

to serve there at least until 1637. The people of Lanchester retained the services of the preacher they preferred, regardless of the original candidate and of the bishop.⁵⁰

In more remote areas, influential individuals rather than representatives of the community took independent action to secure more preaching. Anthonly Lapthorne, for example, benefitted not only from the bishop's generosity but also from that of a wealthy parishioner, who left £50 to the churchwardens of Ovingham in 1634, "to be bestowed in land as soone as conveniently maie be by them for and towards the maintenance of a preaching minister."⁵¹ The evangelisation of Barnard Castle, a market town, but a dependent chapelry of the parish of Gainford, was sponsored by Lady Bowes, widow of the head of one of the greatest of Durham families. At her husband's death in 1614 her chaplain travelled north from her Cheshire estates to preach the funeral sermon and reported his concern at finding the chapelry without a minister. A great patroness of preachers, particularly nonconformists, she followed his recommendation and despatched Richard Rothwell to serve there. He survived brushes with Bishop Neile and with local gentlemen who came to "carr and get somewhat to accuse him" and in spite of his own illness, described by his biographer as "a vertigo capitis", he had considerable success in his ministry, drawing an audience from as far afield as Newcastle, York, and even London. In later years, Barnard Castle was to welcome other nonconforming preachers, including

50. D.R. Miscell. Depos. 1636-7, ff. 17, 86.

51. S.. cxlii. 253.

Lapthorne, a further tribute to Rothwell's work.⁵²

Rather similar was the situation in Belsay, a chapelry of the parish of Bolam. The lay sponsors were the Middleton family, owners of Belsay Castle. There is no record of any officially sanctioned service of the chapel after 1563; at the visitations of 1578 and 1579 it was said to be vacant.⁵³ Even so, it did not fall completely out of use. Between 1618 and 1620 a certain Christopher Clerke ministered there, drawing his congregation from the surrounding parishes, until he was silenced as an unlicensed preacher.⁵⁴ Later the "private chapel" of Mr Middleton of Belsay, either that which had been used by Clerke or a chapel within the castle, provided

52. Surtees, Hist. Durham, iv. 102; S. Gower, 'Life of Richard Rothwell', in The history of the worthy martyr John Bradford etc. (1787), 172-5, 177-8. Lady Bowes's chaplain was said to have refused the position himself because "he durst not venture on so surly a people". Yet the town had been one of the centres of Bp. Matthew's revived exercise and the parishioners were sufficient judges of preaching to 'call' Rothwell after trial. Although the chapelry was officially served only by a curate and the succession of ministers cannot be traced, at some time there had been a ministry which had given the parishioners a more than adequate grounding in the more radical forms of Protestantism. One of those responsible may have been Michael Walker, who occurs as minister and curate between 1587 and 1614. In 1604 he was in dispute with the licensed curate of the town and his will, dated 1614, specified that he was to be buried without "vain and superstitious ceremonies". S.S. cxii.132; D.R. VIII.1, f. 181; D.R. Prob. 1614.

53. B.L. Harl. MS. 594, f. 193; S.S. xxii. 78, 100.

54. D.R. VIII.2, ff. 77-81, 148-57.

a pulpit for preachers passing through or touring the diocese, especially those whose views were unacceptable to the authorities.⁵⁵

As the records of St Nicholas's in Durham and other parishes show, the itinerant minister was a constant feature of church life, at least in the 17th century. As the secular and ecclesiastical authorities increased their vigilance in the 1630s, the activities of some unattached preachers become better documented. They found support and protection from gentlemen and congregations who had acquired a taste for sermons bordering on the unorthodox. One centre for radical preaching was Heddon on the Wall, visited by Lapthorne and by Thomas Shepherd, the future pastor of Cambridge, Massachusetts, when he was forced out of the diocese of York by Archbishop Neile. Between 1630 and 1635 one Cornelius Glover, "of noe certaine ab de" preached what amounted to sedition in the eyes of the authorities there.⁵⁶ Even in the less remote and better served parishes of Durham, signs of nonconformity were found amongst preachers who had no formal appointment. Encouraged by Prebendary Duncan, Morton expelled from the diocese John Vincent, a minister who had preached at Darlington without surplice and hood.⁵⁷ Some years later, the puritans of the growing town of Sunderland patronised the sermons of a visiting preacher at Monkwearmouth, ignoring the stronger claims

55. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1639-40, 324. Archbp. Neile to Secretary Windebanke, 11 Jan. 1640; 384-5. Yeldard Alvey to Archbp. Neile, 27 Jan. 1640.

56. S.S. xxxiv. 8, 110-11, 190-3; R. Marchant, The Puritans and the Church Courts in the Diocese of York, 1560-1642, 123, 277- .

57. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1636-7, 409. Archbp. Neile to Archbp. Laud, Jan. 1637. Vincent later became rec. Sedgfield, 1644-6. D.N.B. sub Nathaniel Vincent.

of Johnson of Bishop Wearmouth to their attention.⁵⁸

In many places where laymen were the sponsors of preaching the service offered by the church was inadequate; in towns, and above all in Newcastle, where the parochial structure could not support a sufficient number of able clergy and in rural parishes or chapelries, where impropriation or geographical isolation resulted in the impoverishment or even complete absence of the ministry. The preachers patronised by laymen were often out of sympathy with the doctrines and practices advocated by the governors of the church. Certain parishes and towns thus acquired a tradition of nonconformity and religious radicalism and there were inevitably tensions between beneficed incumbents and duly licensed curates and preachers and lecturers who seemed to usurp their rights and responsibilities. Yeldard Alvey, vicar of Newcastle from 1631 to c. 1644, gave every encouragement to the actions of the authorities against Robert Jenison and William Morton.⁵⁹ Similarly in Berwick, Gilbert Durie's concern to recover the endowment of his vicarage was closely linked with the need to strengthen his position in relation to the town lecturer.⁶⁰ Naturally there was resentment when Rothwell and Clerke drew people away from the parish churches. It would be wrong, however, to see the growth and flourishing

58. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1639-40, 519. Thomas Triplett to Archbp. Laud, 4 Mar. 1640.

59. R. Howell, 'The career of Dr. Robert Jenison; a 17th century Puritan in Newcastle', Jnl. Presbyt. Hist. Soc. of Eng. xiii. 14-25.

60. See pp. 168-70 .

of preaching only in terms of conflict. Parish clergy and preachers, whoever their patrons, were not inevitably opposed. In the first decades of the 17th century the lecturers and vicars of both Berwick and Newcastle acted in close accord. Gilbert Durie was nominated to the preacher's place at Berwick by the earl of Dunbar and had worked "with good successe" with Richard Smith, the vicar and another of Dunbar's proteges, before succeeding him in the benefice.⁶¹ Nor was it true that preaching, even outside the parochial framework, was always dangerous or opposed to the established church. Bishops Matthew and Morton worked with laymen to promote preaching, aware of the areas of particular need in the diocese. Although disagreements between incumbents and unbeneficed preachers did take place earlier, conflict only became chronic in the late 1620s and 1630s when the major disputes in Newcastle found echoes in Berwick, Sunderland, and even Lanchester. The controversies were between preachers of different theological persuasions rather than rivalries between those within and outside the traditional structure of ecclesiastical appointment. There was a succession of 'loyal' lecturers in Newcastle during the 1630s, although their position was not a comfortable one.⁶² The disputes are merely the best documented part of a much wider story. Far more

61. Bodl. MS. Tanner 73, f. 136. Robert Jenison to Samuel Ward, 29 Mar. 1622; Tanner 144, f. 122. 'A project for reducing the church of Berwick to due Conformitie'.

62. e.g. Thomas Stevenson, vic. Stamfordham, who eventually resigned his lectureship because of the hostility of some Newcastle laymen. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1639-40, 385. Stevenson to Bp. Morton, 27 Jan. 1640.

important in assessing the work of the parish clergy as a whole was the continuing, although unquantifiable, improvement of service in the parishes, as even unbeneficed clergy became able and willing to preach, becoming valued assistants in the instruction of the people.

About the substance of the preaching it is rarely possible to do more than speculate. Only a handful of sermons given in the diocese have survived, mostly, of course, those which found their way into print. By definition, those were atypical. The Durham clergyman did not publish his routine Sunday sermon but a discourse which had been prepared and polished for an audience of greater sophistication than his parishioners. The sermon by Thomas Oxley of Bamburgh, frequently quoted in the preceding chapter, is a good example. His only published work, it was originally delivered at the diocesan synod in Durham cathedral. Oxley made the usual disclaimer that he would not have considered publication had it not been for the approval of his hearers and the response of his colleagues and of the archdeacon of Durham may have encouraged him to venture into print.⁶³ Francis Bunny, a noted preacher and author of several theological treatises, published only two sermons both of which had been given in the cathedral, presumably in the course of his duties as a prebendary, rather than before his Ryton parishioners.⁶⁴ Even in the 1620s and 1630s under the spur of controversy, men of such standing as Thomas Jackson and Robert Jenison,

63. T. Oxley, The Shepheard (1609), dedication.

64. F. Bunny, An Exposition of the 28 Verse of the Third Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans (1616).

the opposing vicar and lecturer at Newcastle, rarely published the sermons they gave week by week. Most of Jenison's work was published after 1640 and previously unprinted sermons by Jackson formed a substantial part of his collected Works, issued in 1673.⁶⁵

Where the subject of a sermon is known, more often than not the preacher was engaged in controversy. Polemic was particularly suited to publication and controversial teaching was liable to be reported to the diocesan authorities and so to appear in the court records. Typical of the late 16th and early 17th centuries was the sermon directed against Roman Catholicism. In a diocese where recusancy was strong, the Durham clergy felt the church they served to be especially threatened by the obstinate papistry of the laity and by the missions of Jesuits and seminary priests. The moderate response was a careful defence of Protestant theology, such as Bunny's Exposition of the 28 Verse of the Third Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, a comparison of the doctrine of justification by faith with that of works and merit. Perhaps more typical was the vehemence of Thomas Ingmethorpe, master of Durham grammar school (c.1612) and rector of Stainton le Street (c.159-163). Two published sermons by Ingmethorpe are known; no mention is made of the circumstances in which they were first given and it is possible that the parishioners of Stainton were the original audience. In both he

65. Jackson, Works, passim. The only sermon by Jenison to be published before 1640 was The Citie's Safetie; a treatise on psalm 127 (1630).

denounced Catholicism as antichristian and its adherents as politically dangerous to England, God's chosen Protestant land. A Sermon upon the Words of St Paul pursued the political implications of religious allegiance in the context of the royal supremacy. Although Ingmethorpe showed a considerable acquaintance with the Fathers and with classical and contemporary authors, his style is a curious mixture of the bizarre and the familiar, emphasising the crudity of his attack on the papists.⁶⁶

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66. D.N.B.; T. Ingmethorpe, Sermon on part of the second Chapter of the first Epistle of St. John (1609); A Sermon upon the Words of St. Paul (1619). The latter was dedicated to Toby Matthew, archbishop of York. As an example of Ingmethorpe's style the following may be taken as typical. He accused the Jesuits of seeking to "inveigle youth; to blind the ignorant; to gull the simple; to cunnie-catch the wealthie; to disloyallize and traytorifie subjects; to brew and broch strata-gems; to continue trecherie; to plot treasons and conspiracies against princes; to undermine Kingdoms; to kindle warres; to raise commotion; to sowe sedition; to hatch mutinie and rebellion under the hood of religion; to disturbe the peace and quiet of the Commonwealthe; to proclaime the extravagant and transcendent authoritie of the Pope; to propogate the kingdome and enlarge the territories of Antichrist; to crie alarum and bid battell and defiance against the truth; to distresse and as much as in them lieth to extirpate and roote out the Gospell; in a word, to exployt all feares, play all the casts of Machiavel" Sermon on St. John, sig. B4. Matthew himself set an example of anti-Catholic preaching; 'Two Sermons of Dr. Tobie Matthew', Christian Observer, Oct.-Dec. 1847, pp. 603-790.

Debates within the Elizabethan church left little mark on the surviving sermons of Durham clergy but later conflicts provided matter for the preachers, in spite of the official attempts to restrict preaching on subjects "fitter for the schools and universities than for simple auditories".⁶⁷ Perhaps the most controversial sermon given in the diocese in the whole period was Peter Smart's denunciation of the ceremonies introduced by his colleagues of the chapter, delivered in the cathedral on 27th July 1628.⁶⁸ In the 1630s some parishes heard equally vitriolic attacks on the established church. Those who heard Anthony Lapthorne preach were well able to remember his words. At Muggleswick, he was reported to have declared "Away with the dumb dogges and blinde guides, for they did leade the people into destruction and into the ditch of hell." At Barnard Castle

"speakeing of the honor due unto Christ, he did quote 2 cap. 10 vers. Epistle to the Philipians, viz., that at the name of Jesus every knee should bowe, of thinges in heaven &c., and did explaine that the same was not meante of our corporeall knees and that it was sinne and idolatrie to doe it: and, further inlargeing himselfe, did give theis reasones and say that if a man came into his in, and the oastler be rubeing his horse heales, if he should name Jesus, the oastler must leave

67. E. Cardwell, Documentary Annals, ii. 146-51.

68. S.S. xxxiv, App. A contains much material relating to Smart's sermon, his prosecution, and later rehabilitation. The sermon was published in Edinburgh in 1628 under the title The Vanitie or Downefall of Superstitious Popish Ceremonies.

rubeing his horse to bowe his knee; or if anie come to vissitt one lyeing sick in there bedd, and if yow should name Jesus, the sick party must needes rise furth of bedd to bowe his knee."

On other occasions he spoke of the "abhominacion" of Sunday work and of the inevitable damnation of the relapsed sinner.⁶⁹

The people of Newcastle were treated to a more subtle and lengthy explanation of the theological differences within the church in the two decades before the Civil War. In the late 1620s Thomas Jackson developed and explained the teachings of the Arminians from his pulpit in St Nicholas's. His thesis that the divine will was for universal salvation was contended by Robert Jenison, lecturing at All Saints. After some initial hesitation by Jenison, concerned about his ability to handle the subject and the vulnerable position in which he placed himself by defying the prohibition on public controversy between preachers, the debate reached a climax in 1631. The Arminian case was then in the hands of Yeldard Alvey, Jackson's successor in the vicarage, and John Snaipe, vicar of Stannington and a candidate for the lectureship at St Nicholas's recently vacated by Alvey. On Palm Sunday and the Thursday of Holy Week they gave sermons "pleading for universal grace". Jenison replied on Good Friday with his own understanding of "Christ's intent in dying" and the nature of Christ's love for his people. The mayor and aldermen formed

69. S.S. xxxiv. 190-1.

an interested and partisan audience as the discussion continued during Easter week. The alternation of argument and response did much to define the positions of the Newcastle clergy and also no doubt of the theologically literate laity, setting the scene for the continuing disputes of the next ten years.⁷⁰

The exposition of doctrine by learned and partisan ministers was scarcely the standard fare served in the parishes of Durham. All preaching, however, was intended to instruct the people in "right religion". More typical of the general level of instruction was surely a sermon given by Robert Burrell, curate of Gainford (1612-1645), which was noted down in the commonplace book of George Freville, a local gentleman. Taking as his text the epistle of James, chap. 2, v. 5, "So speake you and do you as they that shalbe judged by the law of liberty", Burrell set before his hearers the contrast between "the law of love and the law of feare"; the former draws the "true children of God" to obedience to the divine will, the latter takes effect against those who are not "allured by ye comfortable promises of ye Gospell". The argument was conveyed with clarity and simplicity, backed by biblical illustrations but without reference to learned or ancient authorities.⁷¹

Another common theme was the call to repentance and godliness. The sermons preached at the fasts of 1603 were probably not unlike Jenison's lectures during the plague years of the 1620s, in which he warned the people of Newcastle, and indeed of England, that the present troubles were signs of

70. Bodl. MS. Tanner 71, f. 30. Jenison to Samuel Ward, 29 Jan. 1629; f. 136. Same to same, 21 Apr. 1632; f. 143. Same to same, 12 July 1632; Cambridge Univ. Libr. MS. Dd. xl. 49; Howell, 'Career of Dr. Robert Jenison', 18-20.

71. Venn; B.L. Egerton MS. 2877, f. 65.

divine anger, a judgement upon their sins for which the only remedies were humiliation, penitence, and reformation.⁷² For a less sophisticated audience exposition of the Commandments provided a familiar context in which to place both moral exhortation and elementary instruction. Depressed by the lack of obvious result from his ministry, Francis Bunny returned to the "grounds and Principles of Religion" in order to make his teaching from the Mosaic Law comprehensible to the "simple and ignorant".⁷³ John Cosin took the same text for the same reason in a series of sermons to his congregation at Brancepeth in 1632 and 1633. Working his way through every phrase, he took the opportunity to attack the common vices of his parishioners and to set before them rules of Christian conduct. Thus in discussing the first commandment he deplored the continuing adherence to "traditional and superstitious practices" of many of the common people, "who as ye say, will do as your fore-elders did, though they deified their fancies, and made more account of an old beldame's charm and a wizard's divining then of all the oracles and laws of God whatsoever." The sermons followed a set form; a general explanation of the subject of the day was followed by the bidding prayer, the exposition of the text, and its application to daily life. The concern for the instruction of "the ruder sort and simple" was perhaps ostentatious but the awareness of the particular needs of his parishioners was genuine.⁷⁴

72. Jenison, The Citie's Safetie.

73. F. Bunny, A Guide unto Godlinesse (1617).

74. J. Cosin, Works (Libr. Anglo-Catholic Theology), i. 131-89.

Elementary instruction of such a kind was not very far removed from the catechism. In Durham as elsewhere requirements for catechising were most extensive in the 1570s; in 1577 Barnes enjoined every curate or incumbent to examine and instruct the youth of the parish for an hour after evening service.⁷⁵ According to records of visitations, the parish clergy were more diligent in catechising than in the provision of sermons, a contrast with the situation across the Pennines in Lancashire where neglect of catechising was a common offence even amongst the more radical of the Elizabethan clergy.⁷⁶ Few Durham clergy were prosecuted for such faults; most of those who were neglected other duties, preaching, hospitality, the upkeep of their houses and churches, and residence itself.⁷⁷ Where the clergy were conscientious catechising became part of the religious life of the parish. In one chapelry the churchwardens were expected to assist the curate at catechism in the early 17th century. More usually they were responsible only for ensuring the attendance of the catechumens.⁷⁸ Those to be catechised were not always the young nor were they necessarily bound to appear only because of ignorance. Catechising

75. S.S. xxii. 15-16. The original MS. is torn and it is not clear whether catechising was to take place every week or every fortnight. As archd. of the East Riding, Cosin advocated one hour's catechising every Sunday, although he allowed the canonical minimum of half an hour. S.S. lii. 115-16.

76. C. Haigh, 'Puritan evangelism in the reign of Elizabeth I', E.H.R. xcii. 35-6.

77. D.R. II.4, f. 17; D.R. II.5, ff. 13-14, 80, 123; D.R. II.6, f. 5.

78. D.R. VIII.1, ff. 207, 241.

was, for example, part of the routine of the poor brethren of Sherburn Hospital.⁷⁹ Learning, or perhaps re-learning, the catechism was also occasionally used as a penance, imposed by the church courts. It humiliated the offender by reducing him or her to the status of the young and ignorant who formed the majority of those examined and gave the minister an opportunity to drive home the moral law which had been broken.⁸⁰

Lay indifference to catechising was a greater problem than clerical negligence. Numerous cases came before the courts throughout the period of laymen who absented themselves from or failed to send their children to catechism. Recusancy and simple negligence were the major sources of trouble, although here were sometimes signs of a positive hostility which had no obvious connection with Catholicism. In an attempt to reach those who sought to avoid public examination, as well as to reinforce the lessons learned from the minister's instruction, Bishop Morton arranged for children and servants who were able to read to receive printed copies of the Prayer Book catechism. "Many thousands of Catechisms" were distributed at the bishop's own expense in the late 1630s but he had to admit that there was little hope of bringing the children of recusants to be catechised.⁸¹

While some resisted the attempts of the church to provide instruction, the great majority conformed to its requirements and benefitted from their ministers' teaching. Looking back to the late 16th century, Thomas Jackson expressed his gratitude to the curate of Witton le Wear who had prepared him for confirmation according to the Prayer Book catechism;

79. G. Allen, Collectanea (1769), 215.

80. D.R. II.4, f. 33.

81. Baddiley, Life of Morton, 89; S.P. 16/412/45. Bp. Morton's certificate of state of diocese, 15 Feb. 1639; D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 67.

"from whose lips (though but a meer Grammer Scholer and one that new better how to read an Homilie or to understand Hemingius or other Latine Postills then to make a Sermon in English) I learned more good lessons then I did from many popular Sermons: and to this day remember more, than men at this time of greater years shall find in many late applauded Catechisms."

Jackson was as much concerned with present faults as with past excellence. In his view, a major cause of the dissension in the church in the 1630s and 1640s was the diversity of catechisms in use.⁸² The minister was free to select from the multiplicity of published catechisms whichever he felt to be sound in doctrine and best suited to the needs of his flock. Alternately, he could compose his own, as did John Morehouse, curate and preacher at Newcastle in the 1590s. There is no evidence that it was ever published; like Robert Burrell's sermon it was noted in George Freville's commonplace book. Morehouse was Freville's cousin and perhaps gave him the text for his private use. A series of thirty two questions and answers, it set out in simple language doctrines of salvation, faith, good works, and the sacraments more distinctly Calvinist than those of the Prayer Book catechism but at no greater length and in a very similar form.⁸³ Although Jackson objected to private catechisms when they contradicted his own views, he was himself charged with occasioning dispute by the use of a catechism of his own composing. He was alleged to examine the young people of his parish on it every Sunday. Copies were distributed in Newcastle, perhaps in manuscript, and Jenison promised

82. Jackson, Works, iii. 272-3.

83. B.L. Egerton MS. 2877, f. 83.

one of these to Samuel Ward, should he wish to see what erroneous doctrines were being taught.⁸⁴

None of the diocesan clergy are known to have published a catechism.⁸⁵ The experience of a pastoral ministry did, however, prompt two of the most articulate and scholarly of their number, Francis Bunney and Robert Jenison, to write and publish works designed for laymen, offering not only doctrinal instruction but also direction for the spiritual life and social conduct of the individual. Bunney's treatise on the Commandments mentioned

84. Bodl. MS. Tanner 72, f. 260. Jenison to Ward, 20 Mar. 1627.

5. After leaving Newcastle, James Bamford published A Shorte Catechisme (1607), perhaps a compilation from others' works. It may have been printed earlier and thus available during his ministry in the north. The dedication contains a defence of the variety of catechisms to which he had added. As a single, approved grammar has proved a valuable educational tool, "I grant that one generall and well conceived Catechisme doth most edifie, in respect of publike use; But I am assured that, as sundry Grammars, so sundry Catechismes doe much good in private studie and use. For the same method of teaching which seemeth to some plausible and pleasant, plaine and profitable, doth not seeme so to other; And one Catechisme doth more cleerely lay open some points of Christian faith than another, yea handleth some necessary point, which another doth altogether omit. Againe, it helpeth much to the confirmation of faith, when it is seene, that howsoever sundry men in sundry ages and countries, publish sundry Catechismes, or make sundry confessions yet they hold the same Head, beleve the same Christ, iustifie the same Wisedome, and professe the same Truth." John Cosin's Collection of Private Devotions has been excluded from this discussion of works of spiritual guidance because it was designed for a very different audience; cf. J. Cosin, A Collection of Private Devotions, ed. P.G. Stanwood with D. O'Connor.

above, A Guide to Godliness, was based upon his sermons but was closer in form to a catechism. The discussion took the form of question and answer and examined each Commandment and the ways in which it may be broken. The resultant analysis of sin and of man's duty to God and his neighbour was based on Scripture alone without any reference to the ancient and modern writers whose authority buttressed the arguments of some of Bunney's other works. The same reliance on Scripture was evident in an earlier work, An exposition of the Lord's Praier, similarly written for the use of the less knowledgeable and the less able. The element of doctrinal exposition was stronger than in A Guide to Godliness but the chief concern was with the nature of prayer and the proper approach of the creature to his Creator.⁸⁶

Two of Jenison's works stand in a similar tradition. The Directions for receiving the Lords Supper were, like Bunney's Guide, originally prepared for the guidance of his own flock. Jenison elaborated upon notes which he himself had taken from Samuel Ward, which had been circulated amongst his family and friends. Once again, the work was designed for the "younger and ruder sort" who could find there rules for preparation for the communion, subjects for meditation at its administration, and standards for the spiritual state of the recipient. Great emphasis was placed upon self-examination, both before and after communion and the same emphasis is found in the second

86. An exposition of the Lords praier (1602), dedicated to Frances, wife of Toby Matthew.

of Jenison's works of spiritual direction, The Christian's Apparelling by Christ. The Directions were in part a preparation for that much longer and more complex work which was published in the following year. The theme was the condition of the elect soul and the marks by which election might be recognised. Self-examination was the means to recognition not only of election but also of the hypocrisy which Jenison saw as the greatest enemy of his ministry.⁸⁷

The guidance offered in such treatises was very different from the instruction which Jackson had received from the local curate. Equally, the "ruder and younger sort", who profited from Jenison's Directions can have had little in common with the adherents of semi-magical practices whom Cosin described in similar terms. The diversity of matter and audience illustrates the concern which some parish clergy brought to their duty of instruction and, more particularly, of their care to fit the teaching to the pupils. The parishes which had such ministers were fortunate. Even in 1640 parts of Northumberland and the remote corners of Durham were still dependent on the services of visiting preachers. Wishing to encourage and improve on such undertakings, Bishop Morton found himself on the horns of a dilemma, torn between the conflicting claims of conformity and pastoral care. In the major towns, the imposition of a new and stricter orthodoxy had different implications. The supply of preachers was abundant by comparison with country districts but for some congregations preaching alone was no longer enough; it had to be preaching of a certain acceptable kind.

87. Directions for receiving the Lords Supper (1624); The Christian's Apparelling by Christ (1625); Bodl. MS. Tanner 73, f. 437. Jenison to Ward, 11 May 1624.

ii. The education of youth

By long tradition the church had a special part to play in education; the clergy were men of learning by profession, the regulation of teachers was entrusted to the bishops, and the conduct of schools was governed by canon law.⁸⁸ In Durham the church maintained its own schools, attached to the cathedral, and also took an active part in the expansion of educational facilities which gathered momentum after the Reformation. The number of endowed schools in the diocese doubled, from six to twelve, between 1570 and 1620.⁸⁹ Secular initiative lay behind many foundations or re-establishments; in Northumberland town councils were the chief movers for new schools. In county Durham, however, the honours were evenly divided between local gentry and clergy. The lower clergy took the lead and Bishops Pilkington and Morton, celebrated patrons of education, followed their example.

Of all clerical foundations of the period, the most famous was one of the earliest, the Kepier School at Houghton le Spring. The joint founders were Bernard Gilpin, rector of Houghton, and John Heath, a Londoner who had purchased estates in the county.

8. Cf. J. Simon, Education and Society in Tudor England. The most complete survey of education in the diocese is a typescript report by a Durham University Institute of Education Research Fellow, J. G. A. Pocock, 'Records of the history of education in Durham and Northumberland, 1500-1800' in Durham Univ. Libr. See also the comments of M. James, Family, Lineage and Civil Society, 96-102.

89. Appendix C.

Amongst Heath's purchases were the lands and revenues of the dissolved hospital of Kepier, on the outskirts of the city of Durham, which provided the principal endowment and the name for the school. Part of the endowment was given by Heath, part was bought from him by Gilpin. The school was granted a charter in 1574 and Gilpin continued to add to the endowment until his death in 1582. His various contributions cost him at least £300 and perhaps as much as £500, large sums even for the rector of Houghton. The title to property made over to the school by Gilpin during his life was not entirely certain at the time of his death and in his will he left £20 to be used by the bishop to finance a new incorporation and any defence of its rights which might prove necessary. If the foundation could not be preserved, the revenues were to be put to good use by the gentlemen and twenty four of the parish, perhaps by employing a schoolmaster.

Gilpin took an active interest in the work of the school. A number of the pupils lived at the rectory in Houghton le Spring; sons of gentry families, relatives of the rector himself, and "many poore mens sonnes, upon whom he bestowed both meate and drinke and cloth and education." He selected the most able pupils for his personal tuition and later sponsored their university careers. Half of the residue of his estate was bequeathed to nine Oxford students, to be divided according to their needs at the discretion of his executors; they were probably all former pupils. Gilpin's immediate purpose was to train candidates for the ministry, but the fulfilment of his intention was not the rector's only reward. Gilpin clearly enjoyed his close connections with the school and care for it

and its pupils became a regular part of his parish ministry.⁹⁰

Other clergy followed his example on a more modest scale. After thirty years as rector of Sedgfield, Robert Swift, once chancellor of the diocese, established a school in the parish for "learneing and Instructing Poore Children in ye Principles of ye Christian Religion, and ye Rudiments of Grammar by ye Parish Clerke there." The school survived until the late 17th century when it was refounded by one of Swift's successors but little is known of its conduct during that time. Instruction was probably free to the children of the poor and Swift may have left an endowment to augment the clerk's stipend. John Fairless died parish clerk and schoolmaster in 163 and some indication of the subject matter of his teaching is given by the contents of his library, valued at £2 6s. 8d. A part from books brought back from Cambridge by Fairless's son, he owned four English and Latin Bibles, including Beza's translation of the New Testament, and a number of catechisms which were to be given to his godchildren.⁹¹ Swift's influence may also have been at work in the more substantial foundation at Bishop Auckland; in 1604, two years after his death, his widow gave an annuity of £10 to establish the grammar school there.⁹²

90. Digest of Endowed Charities of Durham (Gateshead and Sunderland) H.C. 351, pp. 41-3 (1904), lxix. ii. ; Carleton, 'Life of Gilpin', 402-3; S.S. xxxviii. 83-94; R. W. Ramsey, 'Kepier School and its Library', Arch. Ael. 3rd. ser. iii. 306-33.

91. D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 13.1; D.R. Prob. 1638.

92. Endowed Charities of Durham, i. 1-2.

At Norton the vicar joined forces with leading parishioners to set up a school. During the 1570s a lease of property in the parish was obtained from the bishop for an annual rent of £2 1s. 11d. on condition that the profits should be used to provide a schoolmaster. It was recorded that James Rand, the vicar, had acted as "a meane to the L. Bishop to grant and confirme the close etc. to the inhabitants of Norton." Rand may have led the move to establish a parish school, negotiating the lease as the proper representative of his people, or he may simply have been asked to act as a suitable mediator between the bishop and his tenants at Norton. By the early 17th century the vicar was closely associated with the foundation and held the lease in trust for his parishioners.⁹³

Rather surprisingly there is little evidence of clerical benefactions to education other than by the foundation of schools. One or two wealthy individuals heeded the injunction to contribute to the maintenance of a university scholar. William Birche of Stanhope also left small sums to the poorest scholars "of Latyne speeche" at school in Durham, Houghton le Spring, or Manchester (his place of birth) and bequests to students at the universities. He directed that his grammar books were to be given to pupils at a grammar school and those of his

93. Ibid. ii. 171; the first lease cited in the report dates from 1595. Evidence given before the consistory court in 1599 shows that the school was in existence considerably earlier. Rand said in evidence that the lease had been obtained 25 years previously. As he became vicar in 1578, it is likely that the school was set up in the first year or two of his incumbency. D.R. V.12, ff. 32-3.

English books not specifically bequeathed elsewhere to be distributed among the "men and children of Stanhop parish and Durham that can reid."⁹⁴ Francis Bunny's bequest to the university of Oxford in 1617 was the last benefaction by a parish clergyman to education which has been traced before 1640, although Bishop Neile may later have contributed to the grammar school at Bishop Auckland as Bishop Morton certainly did.⁹⁵ All but one of the benefactors mentioned above were or had been senior clergy; James Rand was not appointed to the chapter until 1603. Clergy who held only parish livings showed no interest in the provision of education except for their own families, at least on the evidence of their wills. The difference of attitude between higher and lower clergy is difficult to explain. Although few could afford to make donations on the same scale as Gilpin or Birche, there was nothing to prevent a clergyman of more modest means leaving a small sum or a few books to the pupils of a local school. The chronological difference may be linked with the improvement in the education of the clergy themselves. Once the majority were graduates and the shortage was not of men but of livings, the search for able and well-educated candidates for the ministry lost its urgency. If that was the explanation, it is an interesting comment upon the attitude of the Durham clergy towards the general education of the laity, who were for the moment left to provide for themselves.

94. S.S. xxii, pp. cx-cxiv.

95. Endowed Charities of Durham, i. 1-2.

That laymen proved both able and willing to do. At Newcastle and Alnwick, where the corporations, and at Wolsingham, where a group of substantial parishioners were the founders of schools, clerical influence was largely excluded from the government of schools. Episcopal licences were still necessary for the masters, even so, and occasionally a bishop took the opportunity thus offered to intervene in the affairs of a school. When the burgesses of Morpeth dismissed Brian Henshaw in 1624, a satisfactory replacement as master proved hard to find. One candidate, John Heslehead, was refused a licence and later prohibited by the ecclesiastical commission from teaching within the diocese. Meanwhile Henshaw sued the burgesses for wrongful dismissal. Eventually Bishop Howson granted a licence to Amor Oxley to keep the school until the matter was settled. Only when the case was concluded in the burgesses' favour was Oxley confirmed in his appointment.⁹⁶

Elsewhere, foundation charters and statutes called upon clergy to take a more active part in school government. The grammar school at Durham was directly controlled by the dean and chapter. Regulations for the conduct of masters and pupils, ranging from the number and nature of holidays to the content of the curriculum, were recorded with the acts of the chapter. Should that body relax its vigilance, the school like the cathedral itself was subject to episcopal visitation.⁹⁷

96. E 178/5566; E 134/6 and 7 Chas. I Hil./1.

97. S.S. cxliii. 142-7; V.C.H. Durham, i. 377-9; S.S. xxii. 102-4.

Clerical influence was also maintained at Kepier. The co-founders were also the first governors and thus responsible for the appointment and removal of the master and usher and for drawing up statutes for the school. Gilpin's successors in the rectory were often also governors and those who were not shared with the heirs of John Heath the right to veto the appointment of any governor they considered unsuitable.⁹⁸

Clergy also assisted in the organisation of schools less directly associated with the church. In 1564 Bishop Pilkington and the earl of Westmorland petitioned for letters patent for a grammar school at Darlington and were appointed to authorise statutes for the new foundation.⁹⁹ Elizabeth Jenison founded a grammar school at Heighington in 1601 and naturally looked to the dean and chapter, since the parish lay within the officialty and the chapter often presented canons or minor canon with vicarage. The selection of a site, the appointment of trustees whenever a vacancy should occur in the governing committee, and the nomination of a master were entrusted to the dean and chapter. If they failed to nominate a master within two months, the right lapsed to the bishop who was also visitor of the school. Even the vicar of Heighington was given some responsibility; along with the patron and the master, he was to have a key to the chest in which documents relating to the school were to be kept.¹⁰⁰ As Heighington came under

9 . Endowed Charities of Durham, ii. 41-3.

99. Ibid. i. 192.

100. B.L. Egerton MS. 2877, ff. 72-5.

the influence of the chapter, so Bishop Auckland was under that of the bishop. According to the terms of the school's foundation in 1604, episcopal consent was required to the statutes. The first clerical governor was Thomas Stock, curate of St. Andrew Auckland from 1624 to 1635, who was appointed in 1634. When he left the parish, his place on the school board was taken by Bishop Morton himself. Bishop Auckland was the only school where the degree of clerical involvement in its organisation actually increased during the period.¹⁰¹

Far more clergy made their contribution to education as teachers. The minister was expected to be able to teach others and was given opportunities to do so beyond those implicit in the cure of souls. The canons of 1571 required curates who were unable to preach to instruct the children of their parishes in reading and writing and in their civil and religious duties.¹⁰² In 1577 Barnes extended the obligation to all non-preaching clergy in the diocese and ordered that instruction should be given free of charge. The clergy were also to advise on their pupils' future, guiding the more able to school and ultimately to the ministry and persuading the parents of the "inapte" to "sett them to learne husbandry or other good craftes, that yet they may grewe to be good members to the country and commonweal."¹⁰³ By 1603 the emphasis was on the benefit to the curate rather than to his parishioners. Graduates and other able curates were to have first claim to

101. Endowed Charities of Durham, i. 1-2; D.C.R.O. E/SW/G11.

Minute bk. of governors of Bp. Auckland grammar school.

102. Canons of 1571, (Ch. Hist. Soc. xl), 59-60.

103. S.S. xxii. 18-20.

licences to teach in their parishes and thus to the augmentation of their stipends by school fees. Rules for the granting of licences were also changed. The regulations of the 1570s allowed the clergyman to teach in his own cure without reference to the authorities, although he needed a licence to act as a schoolmaster elsewhere. In 1603 the parish minister lost that right; in 1622, for example, Gilbert Durie, vicar of Berwick, had to obtain a licence to teach in the town.¹⁰⁴

Many of all transient schools of the late 16th century must have gone unrecorded as clergy paid heed to the exhortations of the bishop, although not perhaps heeding his request that they give their services freely. Even after 1603 it is impossible to be certain about the numbers of schoolmasters, clerical or lay. Like licences to curates and preachers, these to teachers are recorded only in the register and subscription book of Bishop Neile. Even that information may not be complete; evidence from other parts of the country suggests¹⁰⁵ that the licensing system was by no means universally effective. The fullest sources of information about teachers in the diocese are therefore the visitation records. On one occasion, at the chancellor's visitation of January and February 1578, schoolmasters were summoned by name with the clergy and church-

104. Canons 78, 79 of 1603; D.R. I.4, p. 49; cf. changes in regulations for preaching described above.

105. W. E. Tate, 'The episcopal licensing of schoolmasters in England', Church Quarterly Review, clvii. 426-30; R. O'Day, 'Church records and the history of education in early modern England, 1558-1642', Hist. of Education, ii. 118-25.

wardens.¹⁰⁶ At other times they were mentioned only when presented for teaching without licence or some other fault. A few have also been identified from wills, from evidence given before the church courts, and from histories of the endowed schools.

From those sources 172 men are known to have taught in schools or privately in the diocese between 1570 and 1640. Just under one third of them, 56 in all, were in orders; 45 are also known to have served as parish clergy. Teaching was thus far from being a clerical monopoly. Although there was no single area of education in which clerical schoolmasters predominated, their contribution seems to have been greater in some types of schooling than in others. No mention has been found of clergy acting as private tutors in the diocese, although no doubt domestic chaplains often undertook to teach their employers' offspring. Very few occur amongst the many unlicensed teachers recorded during the period. Usually such men are known only from a single court appearance or summons. They kept small schools or taught in the houses of local gentry and after one clash with the authorities either obtained licences or moved to resume their unofficial activities elsewhere. One or two curates were prosecuted for teaching without licences¹⁰⁷ but but the great majority of clergy were probably careful to

106. S.S. xxii. 29-62; 21 teachers were cited in Northumberland, 5 in Durham. The unevenness of the figures makes them implausible. Cf. B. Wilson, 'Changes of the Reformation Period in Northumberland and Durham', (Durham Univ. Ph. D. thesis, 1939), 655-60; Keeling, 'Church and Religion in the Anglo-Scottish Borders', 271-2.

107. e.g. Alexander Leighton, cur. South Gosforth, accused of unlicensed teaching in Newcastle in 1605. D.R. II.5, f. 146.

secure official approval before setting up as teachers. It was the only sensible course since they were anyway liable to regular supervision; as a result their activities are scarcely noticed in the surviving records.

Much more is known of clergy who acted as masters in the grammar schools. Of the 56 clerical schoolmasters, 41 were employed at some time in one of the endowed schools of the diocese. None of the schools' statutes went so far as to specify that the master or usher should be in orders but it was often assumed that he would be. The burgesses of Alnwick required no qualifications of the master of the school re-established there in 1613 beyond learning and good conduct, yet from the first the appointment was combined with the town lectureship.¹⁰⁸ According to regulations drawn up for Kepier School in the mid 17th century, the master was to resign on obtaining a spiritual living; no other form of promotion was permitted. Clergy were not invariably appointed, however, even at Kepier. Four or five of the eight masters and ushers known to have taught there were clergy, a proportion in keeping with the average in the other endowed schools, as far as it is known.¹⁰⁹

As at Alnwick, the schoolmaster was often also curate or incumbent of the parish. A number of curates of Houghton-le-Spring were also masters or ushers at Kepier School; the rector could afford more than one curate, so that the loss of an assistant's services during the week was not felt too keenly.

10 . G. Tate, Hist. Alnwick, ii. 2-5.

109. Endowed Charities of Durham, ii. 45.

In Newcastle and in the city of Durham, where schools, churches, and additional ecclesiastical posts were all numerous, schoolmasters and especially ushers were often attached to parish livings.¹¹⁰ Thus Christopher Green, usher at Durham grammar school from 1574 to 1581, also served in the church of St. Nicholas and the chapel of St. Mary Magdalene.¹¹¹ The relatively poor stipendiary vicarage of Darlington attracted able and energetic incumbents partly because the vicar was usually master of the grammar school. Robert Thomlinson, appointed to the two positions in 1598, was not a graduate but Bishop Matthew was not ashamed to preach in his company. His successor, Isaac Lowden, formerly schoolmaster at Northallerton, was the owner of an extensive library, described above.¹¹² Where there was no endowed school, the incumbent or curate might still teach a few children in less formal surroundings. In 1630, a witness in a testamentary case before the consistory court mentioned that he had called at the house of Joseph Wood, vicar of Greatham, "to visite and see his children who learneth there at schoole." With the children living at the vicarage, the organisation and instruction of his pupils must have taken up much of Wood's time. Had it not been for the chance reference, however, the existence of the school would have been entirely unknown.¹¹³

110. Such arrangements contrast with the situation in London, where teaching posts in the public schools, institutions of much greater size and prestige than those at Newcastle or Durham, were well beyond the reach of most curates. H. Owen, 'Parochial Curates in Elizabethan London', Jnl. Eccl. Hist. x68.

111. P.K. D. and C. Mun., Treas. Bks. 10-13; S.S. xxii. 46, 73, 96

112. L.R. 1/1 9, f. 151; D.R. VIII.1, passim; York Min. Libr. MS. A.1, p. 72; D.C.R.O. EP/Da SC 1, pp. 52-66; D.R. Prob.1612. Inventory of Isaac Lowden. See below, App. B.

113. D.R. V.12, f. 95.

When the clergyman undertook to teach outside his parish, his ministry was more likely to suffer disruption. Occasionally where schoolmasters acted as curates in neighbouring parishes it is clear that the ministerial rather than the teaching duties were additional. Thus Brian Henshaw of Morpeth was employed by the vicar of Stannington to read service there on most Sundays. Although he was accused of negligence as schoolmaster, there is no evidence that his duties as a "hireling or stipendiary reader" interfered with his work at Morpeth.¹¹⁴ Where the schoolmaster was also incumbent of another parish, the probable result was neglect of his cure rather than of his school. John Empsall, vicar of Lesbury, has been cited before as an example of the non-resident who failed to fulfil his material and spiritual obligations to the parish. Answering a charge brought against him in 1604 he explained that he was regularly absent from his benefice because he was also employed to keep the school in Alnwick.¹¹⁵ Other incumbents of Northumberland livings could, like Empsall, plead poverty as a justification for finding such employment. The excuse was less valid for the masters of Durham School, many of whom also held benefices in the county. Many were officialty livings, since the schoolmasters were natural candidates for chapter patronage. In consequence, they were not necessarily within easy reach of the city; although one master was also vicar of St Oswald's in Durham, others held cures at Stainton le Street and at Heighington.

114. E 178/5566; E 134/6 and 7 Chas. I Hil./1.

115. L.R. 1/190, f. 140; D.R. II.4, f. 104; D.R. II.5, ff. 11,

For such men, appointment to an established school might be a step towards further preferment in the church, rather than a means to augment an insufficient income. The first master of Kepier School, Robert Copperthwaite, became successively vicar of Ellingham and rector of Bothal and Sheepwash. After serving at Durham for fourteen years, Francis Kay, vicar of Heighington, was presented to a second chapter living at Northallerton. More remarkable was the career of Peter Smart. Headmaster of Durham from 1596 until 1610, he was appointed to a prebend and subsequently to the mastership of Greatham Hospital and the rectory of Boldon by Bishop James, to whom he was chaplain. Kay and Smart were amongst the handful of men who were teachers before they were clergy; both took orders only when they were presented to benefices. A few clergy found employment as teachers in the interval between ordination and obtaining a parochial cure. Those who did so often left the diocese in order to take up a parish appointment. Thomas Miller, for example, received letters dimissory for his ordination from Bishop Neile in 1627 and was appointed to Durham School in the following year. By 1635 he had left Durham for a benefice in Kent, where family connections helped him to a succession of livings.

Teaching may originally have offered an alternative career to men like Kay, Smart, and Miller, although one which they eventually abandoned in favour of the ministry. At least in the 17th century a number of the clerical schoolmasters were probably more committed to teaching than to the parish ministry. At one end of the scale was Richard Johnson, usher at Morpeth grammar school in the 1620s. Then in his fifties, he cannot

be traced in any other appointment in the diocese; either he was unable to find a cure of souls, at least in Durham, or he simply preferred teaching. His stipend as usher was set at £6 13s. 8d.; it had remained unchanged since the continuance warrant was issued for the school in 1548, although the basic rate may have been augmented by pupils' fees. The master's salary had increased over the same period from £13 6s. 8d. to £16 13s. 4d., as the value of property in the town held on the school's behalf improved.¹¹⁶ Wages in other endowed schools were similar except in Newcastle, where in the early 17th century the master could expect a basic payment of between £20 and £25 p.a. and the usher £10 p.a.^{116A} The material rewards of assistant curates and assistant masters were thus not very different but the master of a school could not expect anything like the income from even a moderately well-endowed benefice, even with the addition of his pupils' fees. Nevertheless, the attractions of teaching led men of greater standing than Johnson to make careers entirely within the schools of the diocese, taking spiritual livings only where there was the opportunity to teach or to provide an added income in old age. A notable example was Amor Oxley, son of a parish clerk and schoolmaster of Morpeth of the same name. When he was ordained at Durham in 1630 he had already served as usher in his home town. He was promoted headmaster there in the following year and in 1637 left to become master of the grammar school at Newcastle. Deprived of that appointment during the Civil War, he was restored in 1662 and in his last

116. E 134/3 Chas. I Hil./1.

116A.A. Laws, Schola Novacastrensis, i. 66

years held his only parochial benefice, the vicarage of Kirknewton.

As teaching became an alternative career for a small group of clergy, there also appeared lay schoolmasters whose social and educational standing was very different from that of the teachers of small and transient parish schools. The best example was perhaps Robert Fobery, master of the Newcastle grammar school after its refoundation in 1611.¹¹⁷ The appearance of Fobery and his colleagues rather than any marked change in the balance of lay and clerical teachers is the only sign of secularisation of the profession in Durham.¹¹⁸ There was room for conflict between the two professions; in 1601, for example, the minister of St. Nicholas's, Durham, reported an unlicensed teacher in the parish to the authorities.¹¹⁹ The close links between clergy and schoolmasters are more impressive than their differences, however. In Newcastle teachers and preachers together played an active part in town politics. In the 1590s, for example, when the conflict between the monopolist H stmen, entrenched in power, and the reformers who sought to obtain a share in the town government was raging, Mr. Burroughs "placed schoolmaster by Mr Maddison at the commendation of the late archbishop of York, the late lord president, the bishop of Durham, and the preachers of the town"

117. Venn; Laws, Schola Novacastrensis, i. 65-7. On the social standing of masters of the endowed grammar schools, see James, Family, Lineage and Civil Society, 101-2.

118. On the secularisation of the teaching profession, see K. Charlton, 'The professions in 16th century England', Univ. Birmingham Historical Jnl. xii. 34-41.

119. D.R. VIII.1, f. 56.

was counted amongst the latter party.¹²⁰ The educational background of grammar school and university which drew the clergy together also brought schoolmasters into their circle of acquaintance and interest. In the 1590s two Newcastle curates bequeathed books not only to their colleagues but also to the schoolmaster, Cuthbert Ogle.¹²¹ The relationship could be closer than that of friendship. The same families produced both teachers and clergy. Amor Oxley the younger was the brother of Thomas, curate of Bamburgh and author of The Shepheard, and of Charles, vicar at various times of Chillingham, Ponteland, and Ellingham. Like Amor Oxley the elder, Thomas Falder, vicar of Bolam (1602-1640), sent his sons to Cambridge. On returning to the diocese, the younger Thomas became schoolmaster at Alnwick, where his brother John was also installed as assistant curate before being presented to the vicarage of Shilbottle.¹²²

The work of the clergy as teachers and in the foundation and government of schools was perhaps most valuable in the rural parishes. What little is known of lay teachers outside the established schools does not suggest that the standard was very high; the local incumbent or curate was likely to have far better formal qualifications, especially

120. R. F. Tuck, 'The origins of the Royal Grammar School, Newcastle upon Tyne', Arch. Ael. 4th ser. xlv. 229-71; the conclusions there drawn about the origins of the school are not entirely reliable.

121. D.R. Prob. 1597, Will of John Morehouse; D.R. Prob. 1598. Will of Clement Cockson.

122. Venn; Tate, Hist. Alnwick, ii. 84-5; B.L. Lansd. MS. 445, f. 181.

in the 17th century. Similarly, while in Alnwick, Newcastle, and Morpeth, the corporations took responsibility for the foundation, financing, and, for the most part, the government of schools, in parishes such as Houghton le Spring, Norton, and Heighington, there was still a part for the local clergyman to play. For the clergy themselves, the chief importance of teaching was as an additional occupation, to be combined with their ministry. The rewards were not only material. In large schools and major towns, teaching could bring the clergyman into contact with likeminded men, both clergy and laity. Even in a smaller establishment, the incumbent or curate teaching a few pupils had the opportunity to exercise skills which he had himself been taught at school and university. When Bernard Gilpin reserved the brightest of Kepier's pupils to himself and Amor Oxley made his career in the grammar schools of Morpeth and Newcastle, both must have derived considerable satisfaction from their work, a satisfaction probably shared by their less well known colleagues.

iii. Charity and the relief of the poor.

In addition to the provisions of the secular law, institutional charity was supplied in a more traditional fashion in hospitals and other foundations which survived the Reformation. In 1570 there were seven hospitals in the diocese, as well as almshouses in Durham and Newcastle. All offered shelter to a number of the poor and impotent; some also provided doles of food, clothing, or fuel.¹²³ The least significant was the foundation of St. John the Baptist in Barnard Castle; worth perhaps £20 p.a. in 1593, it housed three elderly women of the chapelry. At the same time Sherburn House was valued at approximately £500 p.a., from which thirty poor brethren were maintained.¹²⁴ There were also hospitals of more moderate value at Greatham and Gateshead. The only similar foundations in the northern archdeaconry, the hospitals of St. Mary the Virgin and St. Mary Magdalen and the Maison Dieu, all had a precarious existence in Newcastle.¹²⁵

In theory the hospitals were clerical strongholds. The masters received presentation, institution, and induction as to any other ecclesiastical living, except at Barnard Castle, which was a donative in the gift of the Crown. Custom or statute dictated that at least five of the seven masters should

123. Wilson, 'Changes of the Reformation Period', 365-435. The clergy were apparently not involved in the administration of the ancient almshouses, of which there is only a sketchy record.

124. E. 134/35 Eliz. I Hil./8; Allen, Collectanea, 199.

125. J. Brand, Hist. and Antiquities of Newcastle upon Tyne, i. 23-8; 82, 425-7.

be in orders; the requirements for the master of St. Mary Magdalen are not known and at Greatham the choice of layman¹²⁶ or priest was left to the discretion of the bishop as patron. Clerical predominance was threatened in the early 17th century when new rules were made for the appointment of masters to the two surviving Newcastle hospitals of St. Mary Magdalen and St. Mary the Virgin. At their refoundation in 1611 it was laid down that the master of each should hold the degree of M.A. at least but nothing was said of his standing as layman or cleric.¹²⁷ Other contemporary rulings worked to strengthen the clergy's hold on the hospitals. At Sherburn, the statutes of 1584 required that the master should be a preacher. At Gateshead, it became the rule for the rector to hold King James's Hospital. Even at St. Mary the Virgin, the master was still obliged to provide a schoolmaster and an annual quota of twelve sermons; the duties could be discharged by a deputy but the master often performed both in person.¹²⁸ In practice the ratio of lay to clerical masters remained much the same throughout the period. The occasions on which laymen were presented to the Newcastle hospitals after 1611 were no more frequent than those on which the statutes confining masterships to the clergy were overridden by dispensation. Between 1570 and 1640 38 men are known to have held one or more of the seven masterships; 28 were clergy, of whom all but 5 also served at some time in the parishes of Durham and Northumberland.

126. 'The hospitals of Greatham, Gateshead, and Barnard Castle', ed. Mr. Brockett, Arch. Ael. 2nd ser. vi. 43.

127. Brand, Hist. Newcastle, i. 82-3, 429-30.

128. Allen, Collectanea, 25-36, 171; F. W. D. Manders, Hist. King James's Hospital, Gateshead, 8-9.

Sometimes laymen were intruded into properly clerical positions by friends or relatives who had purchased a grant of the patronage pro hac vice; thus John Raymes was presented by a relative and close associate, John Swinburne of Wylom to St. Mary the Virgin in 1558.¹²⁹ Even the bishop was occasionally persuaded to make such an appointment, especially to the wealthy mastership of Sherburn, when the Crown became interested in its disposal. In 1608, for example, Thomas Murray, tutor to the king's sons, was presented to the hospital.¹³⁰ More usually Sherburn, Greatham, and Gateshead were reserved by the bishop for episcopal relatives and chaplains or for cathedral clergy and diocesan administrators. Amongst the masters of Greatham were John Barnes, Ferdinand Morecroft, William Neile, John Cosin, and Gabriel Clerke. The mayor and corporation of Newcastle used their patronage of St. Mary Magdalen and St. Mary the Virgin rather similarly to augment the livings of clergy already in the town, especially men in their own employ. The association of the hospital of St. Mary the Virgin with the mastership of the grammar school was established in the 17th century, and from 1614 until his death in 1652 Robert Jenison held St. Mary Magdalen. Other lay patrons were less careful in the appointments they made. No master of the Maison Dieu is mentioned after 1584, presumably through the fault of the Lumley family, who made no presentation but took the property and profits of the hospital into their own hands.¹³¹ At Barnard Castle, the

129. S.S. cxxxvii. 7; Allen, Collectanea, 95, 177; D.R. I.3, f. 19.

130. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1603-10, 340. James I to Bp. Matthew, ? 1606.

131. Brand, Hist. Newcastle, i. 28, 84.

Crown was responsible for bringing a number of strangers into the diocese. The practice was not inherently bad but lack of local knowledge may have added to the confusion which dogged the affairs of the hospital and its masters.¹³²

Sought after as attractive and relatively undemanding livings, the hospitals were rarely considered as independent appointments to which all the master's energy and attention should be devoted. Only at Sherburn was the master forbidden to hold any other living, a rule which was often but not always observed. The welfare of the hospitals depended upon the masters' care in the management of their estates and in the selection and ordering of the inmates. The Reformation had placed the hospitals in an ambiguous position, undermining their standing in public esteem and before the law and with so many masters absent or preoccupied, it is scarcely surprising that their history in the period was a troubled one. Initially the Protestant authorities were concerned by the strength of conservative religious feeling among masters and brethren. In 1564 Pilkington reported that local scholars in exile at Louvain were supported by the hospitals of Newcastle as well as by wealthy relatives in the town and diocese.¹³³ His description perfectly fits the circumstances of John Raymes of St. Mary the Virgin, who was eventually deprived for complicity in the rebellion of 1569, amongst other charges. Accused of neglect of his cure during his absence in Louvain, he replied that he was engaged in legitimate study under licence from the queen but that defence could not outweigh the evidence of his laity, his mismanagement, and above all his Catholicism. Gilbert Lewen, master

132. 'Hospitals of Greatham, etc.', ed. Brockett, 46-8;

E 134/35 Eliz. I Hil./8; C 2/Eliz. I/M 12/36.

133. Miscellany ix (Camden Soc. New Ser. 53), 67.

of St. Mary Magdalen from 1546 to 1582, was probably also abroad during the 1560s, although no proceedings were initiated against him. He was a close associate of Thomas Halliman, master of the Maison Dieu (c. 1559-80), whose loyalty was also suspect.¹³⁴ It was not only the masters whose sympathies lay with the old regime. During Thomas Lever's tenure of Sherburn from 1562 to 1577, many of the brethren were described as "favourers of the old Superstition and too negligent of the Worship of God, according to the Prescription of the reformed Religion."¹³⁵ Lever's enthusiastic Protestantism and his preaching could do little to change their attitudes.

That, however, was a relatively transient problem. The behaviour of the next generation of masters and brethren was not irreproachable but they were never charged with religious disloyalty. More lasting and more harmful were difficulties over the management of the estates and endowments of the hospitals. The legislation for the dissolution of the chantries left the hospitals vulnerable to the charge that they had been founded for superstitious purposes and should therefore have reverted to the Crown. Both Barnard Castle and St. Mary the Virgin were subject to investigation as 'concealed lands' in the late 16th century. Crown grants of other hospitals to laymen who never received institution as masters may have been based on similar allegations. Rarely do any details survive

134. D.R. III.3, f. 178; Borth. Inst. Hist. Res., C.P. G1305; Brand, Hist. Newcastle, i. 83, 589; S.S. cxxxvii. 103; J. Hilton, 'Catholic Recusancy in County Durham, 1559-1625', (Leeds Univ. M. Phil. thesis, 1974), 23.

135. J. Strype, Life of Parker (1821), 275.

of the resolution of the confusion caused by such grants but their existence can scarcely have contributed to the stability or good organisation of the hospitals.¹³⁶

Had the masters of the hospitals taken their duties more seriously, the harm done by such uncertainties might have been less. As things stood, many masters abused their rights and positions. One major cause of trouble was non-residence, inevitable in the case of an exile like Raymes or one who had official business elsewhere, such as Valentine Dale, a lawyer, diplomat, and M.P., who held Sherburn House from 1585 to 1589. Charges of non-residence made against masters were usually accompanied by allegations of misappropriation of funds and of failure to maintain the charitable purposes of the hospitals or to repair and defend their property and rights. In the proceedings for the deprivation of John Kingsmill, another layman, from Greatham in 1578, one witness reported that food and stipends provided for the brethren and staff were "not so much as they have had before tyme for divers of them are abridged both of meate & drinke & other dewes." All the hospitals suffered from mismanagement of some kind, even where non-residence did not compound the offence. At Sherburn, where the profits to be made and lost were greatest, long leases made by earlier masters proved detrimental to their successors. Masters of other hospitals mislaid or removed the documents which limited their own powers and guaranteed the rights of the foundation.¹³⁷

136. 'Hospitals of Greatham, etc.,' ed. Brockett, passim; D. and C. Libr., Raine MS. 30. 8-9.

137. E 134/35 Eliz. I Hil. /8; S.S. cxxxvii. 7-8; Manders, Hist. King James's Hospital, 6; Brand, Hist. Newcastle, i. 429; Allen, Collectanea, 177.

Attempts at general reform were made when five hospitals were refounded in the late 16th century and the early 17th. At Sherburn the work of reform and defence was first undertaken by Thomas Lever but only under his brother and successor Ralph was the crucial step of obtaining a new charter taken.¹³⁸ Greatham was given a new constitution in 1610 and the two Newcastle hospitals and that at Gateshead were refounded in the following year. It is not clear who was responsible for the changes at Greatham, although Bishop James may have had some part in it, since the hospital traditionally had close connections with the bishop. The initiative for the changes at Newcastle and Gateshead came from the mayor and corporation of Newcastle, although only two of the three foundations were under their control.¹³⁹ By that time the Maison Dieu had apparently lost all its charitable functions and the hospital of St John the Baptist at Barnard Castle was probably too small to be worth the cost and effort of obtaining a new charter.¹⁴⁰ Most of the charters cited as reasons for the refoundation recent disorders and uncertainty about the purposes of the hospitals. Precise rules were given for the relief to be offered, usually confirming contemporary practice or expectations. Stress was laid upon the necessity of the master's residence, and on proper oversight of his management. Regular visitations were to take

138. Allen, Collectanea, 131-62.

139. S.S. cxxxvii. 7-8; E 134/35 Eliz. I Hil./8; Brand, Hist. Newcastle, i. 82-3, 429-30, 588-94.

140. The decay of the hospital was noted in 1637; P.K. D. and C. Mun., Dioc. Chan. Vis. 1637, f. 26^v.

place, either by the bishop or by the mayor and corporation, and accounting procedures were tightened up. There were, of course, still problems. Only a few years after the refoundation, Henry Ewbanke was prosecuted for neglect of his duties as master of St. Mary the Virgin. The charges, however, were at least partly political in origin and were concerned mainly with his failure to fulfil the additional duties of preaching and keeping a school.¹⁴¹ By comparison with the sweeping accusations made and proved against Raymes earlier, the incident shows the new system of oversight operating promptly to correct a relatively minor fault.

No master of a charitable foundation in the diocese won applause for his personal virtues of generosity and compassion. At most he might be thought a good administrator or the determined defender of a righteous cause, a reputation to which Ralph Lever laid claim.¹⁴² The collection of revenues and rendering of account and the pursuit of rights through litigation made few demands upon pastoral abilities. In theory, of course, the responsibility was more than an administrative one. Bishop Hutton appointed Robert Bellamy to Sherburn House as "an honest man, a Preacher and a Phisition, ... a man fit to have chardge both of the soules and bodies of the poor, impotent, sicke persons of that hospitall." The effect was rather spoiled, however, when he mentioned that an alternative candidate was unsuitable "because the lyving cheefflie consisteth upon husbandrie and he was a mere Scholar."¹⁴³ Apart from

141. Tuck, 'Origins of the Royal Grammar School', 232, 264.

142. Marcombe, 'Dean and Chapter', 444.

143. B.L. Lansd. MS. 68, no. 23. Hutton to Sir Robert Cecil, 30 Mar. 1590.

the preaching duties of the masters of St. Mary the Virgin and of Sherburn, the statutes made few demands on specifically clerical skills or qualifications. Such care of souls as was involved may not have been undertaken by the masters. In the late 16th century there were still priests on the foundation at Greatham, in keeping with the original plan of a combined chantry and charitable institution. One of the poor brethren's places at Sherburn in the 1580s was occupied by Giles Widdowes, vicar of Sockburn.¹⁴⁴ Sometimes ministers were employed specifically to conduct or aid in liturgical and pastoral duties; there was a chaplain at St. Mary the Virgin in the 1570s, a curate at Sherburn in the 1590s, and at Greatham the vicar of the parish, presented to his living by the hospital, said service there twice a day.¹⁴⁵

The poor record of the clergy in the government of the old hospitals perhaps discouraged contemporaries from entrusting further endowments to their care. Major new foundations were, in any case, different in both purpose and organisation. In 159 for example, Henry Smith bequeathed to the city of Durham leases of several coal mines

"chiefly that some good trade might be devised for the setting of the youth and other idle persons to work, as should be most convenient, whereby some profit might arise to the benefit of the city, and relief of those past work, who had lived honestly upon their trades."¹⁴⁶

144. Borth. Inst. Hist. Res., C.P. G1305, G2019.

145. D. and C. Libr., Raine MS. 30. 8-9; Allen, Collectanea, 215.

146. Endowed Charities of Durham, i. 277-8.

Clerical oversight was less obviously appropriate to projects for the employment of the young or for the loan of money to men hoping to establish themselves in their trades than to foundations entirely devoted to the relief of the sick or the aged. A few testators and benefactors still recognised the minister as a proper person to take responsibility for poor relief but mention was rarely made of his spiritual duties in this connection.¹⁴⁷ The sums left by William Birche of Stanhope to poor craftsmen in Gateshead and prisoners in Durham and Newcastle were to be distributed by pastor, minister, or preacher to the accompaniment of "foode for there sowle" and "godlie counsell"; the rider was at least extraordinary and perhaps unique.¹⁴⁸ More typical of directions for clerical involvement was the bequest of Thomas Brickwell, a captain of Berwick, who in 1586 left £10 to the poor of Darlington and Berwick to be used as Thomas Clerke, the preacher at Berwick, advised.¹⁴⁹ Similarly Gilbert Spence, vicar of Tynemouth, left £5 to the poor of the parish to be distributed by his executors on the advice of the supervisors of his will, three of them clergy, and of "discreet Ministers of the churches of Durham and Tynemouth" who would be able to vouch for the character of the recipients.¹⁵⁰ Clergy were also called upon

147. Evidence of lay charity is taken from ^{*General Charters of Durham*} ~~Ibid.~~ and from wills printed in S.S. ii, xxxviii, cxii, cxlii. The Surtees Society volumes tend to concentrate on the gentry and mercantile classes and the sample is therefore not representative.

148. S.S. xxi, pp. cx-cxiv.

149. Ibid. xxxviii. 129.

150. D.R. Prob. 1609.

occasionally as reliable supervisors or trustees of charitable bequests. The clergy were not involved in any capacity in the three or four small almshouses which were established before 1640. In 1641, however, Thomas Morgan of Frosterley left property in the township to provide housing and maintenance for three elderly women. The finances of the almshouses and the selection of the inmates were the responsibility of Morgan's heirs but the rector of Stanhope, of which parish Frosterley had once been a chapelry, was to oversee the arrangements, to ensure that the trustees fulfilled their obligations and to act as visitor, receiving a small payment for his pains.¹⁵¹ In ten or twelve parishes of county Durham during the period, property or rents yielding an annual income to be used for the relief of the poor were left to the incumbent and churchwardens. The need for security dictated the association of clergy and parish officers. In 1626 Richard Watson, a London minister who had been born in Witton Gilbert, gave £22 for the purchase of land for charitable purposes by the minister and churchwardens

"who are a corporation by law and so capable to receive gifts bestowed towards uses charitable and being a permanent corporation you shall need to do it but once, whereas otherwise by making particular feofes in trust you shall be often troubled." ¹⁵²

The same end was often achieved by entrusting charitable funds to the churchwardens alone, themselves a corporation. The

151. Endowed Charities of Durham, ii. 313.

152. Ibid. 549.

clerical contribution was even less distinctive where minister and churchwardens were jointly required merely to certify the names of the recipients of charity, as for example under the terms of Henry Smith's bequest.

That responsibility was not unlike the statutory obligation of the clergy to register the names of the poor and the vagrant. Apart from such duties, the formal working of the parochial system of relief involved the clergy very little after 1571. Discussions with local justices about the poor rate, its collection, and distribution were left to the churchwardens and overseers of the poor. The only collections for which the clergy occasionally took official responsibility were those made under briefs to aid the victims of particular disasters of fire, plague, and in the 17th century, the war in Germany. The records probably conceal much of the clergy's informal influence, however. At Kirk Merrington, for example, in the 1620s and 1630s the vicar and curate certainly had some say in the distribution of casual charity. They examined the passes or testimonials of poor travellers and recommended those they considered deserving to the churchwardens, who gave them a few pence from the parish poor stock, noting in the accounts that this was done "on the advice of the minister".¹⁵³

With responsibilities for the disposal of others' contributions to charity went the continuing obligation on the clergy themselves to open their doors to all comers, especially the poor and the needy. Following the spirit if not the letter of the Royal Injunctions, which bound all non-resident incumbents of benefices valued at £20 or more to pay one fortieth of

153. D.C.R.O. EP/Mer 34, ff. 19, 27, and passim.

their income to the poor, the authorities only took action to enforce the keeping of hospitality against pluralists and other absentees. This may reflect official policy rather than the conscientiousness of the resident clergy; much the same pattern of enforcement has been found in the distant county of Surrey.¹⁵⁴ There is evidence that some clergy took the duty of hospitality seriously. Pre-eminent amongst them was, of course, Bernard Gilpin, whose gifts to Kipper School and its scholars were only part of a wider munificence. As impressive as the scale of Gilpin's charitable activities is the care and regularity with which they were organised. Food was provided for the poor of the Houghton le Spring every Thursday. To fulfil his obligations to the rest of his scattered parishioners, he kept a table for their refreshment every Sunday from Michaelmas to Easter, while the weather made travelling to the parish church difficult, rather than just at Christmas, the customary time for such entertainment. Due observation was given to social distinctions; according to Carleton, "he had the gentlemen, the husbandmen and the poorer sort in every degree by themselves and as it were ordered in ranks." All this was in addition to casual charity to those who came to his rectory or whom he met on his travels.¹⁵⁵

The forethought and organisation which characterised clerical hospitality in Houghton le Spring contrasts sharply with the practice of another Durham clergyman who was praised for his generosity. It was reported of Dr. Thomas Jackson

154. D.R. II.4, 5, passim; Christophers, 'Surrey Clergy', 265.

155. Carleton, 'Life of Gilpin', 401-2, 440.

of Newcastle that his servant had to ensure that he carried only small sums of money in his pockets, since all he had he would give to the poor in the streets.¹⁵⁶ Whatever the truth of the story, indiscriminate and unconsidered giving was probably the exception rather than the rule.¹⁵⁷ Charity and hospitality, as Herbert observed, could be made to serve wider purposes than the immediate relief of the needy. In December 163 , three houses were destroyed by fire in the parish of Staindrop. Two were the homes of recusants, the third was occupied by a recent convert from Catholicism and his Protestant wife. The vicar, Nathaniel Ward, took the family into his own home and persuaded his congregation to contribute to their needs, appealing to his friend Isaac Basire to do likewise at Egglecliffe. Generosity was essential, he told Basire, to demonstrate that it was not his conversion which had brought disaster upon the unfortunate man and that Protestants were no less to be relied upon in time of need than Catholics.

"I hope, nay I almost feel, that God will graciously give this man such favour in the eyes of other people, that he will not stand in need of assistance from the Papists, nor ever have reasons to regret that he has bid adieu to Egypt and sheltered himself in our holy land." ¹⁵⁸

156. E. Vaughan, 'Life of Dr. Jackson', in Jackson, Works, 1.

157. Casual charity continued on a small scale even amongst the higher clergy. P. H. Horton, 'The administrative, social and economic structure of the Durham bishopric estates, 1500-1640', (Durham Univ. M. Litt. thesis, 1975), 553-4 quotes payments of 2s. to 4s. made on Bp. Matthew's orders to poor met on his travels in the diocese.

158. The Correspondence of Isaac Basire, ed. W. N. Darnell, 28-9.

Far more is known of the posthumous charity of the clergy than about the help given to parishioners from day to day. Of 99 clerical wills dated between 1570 and 1640, 53 included charitable bequests of some kind. In the 1590s and in the second two decades of the 17th century, the proportion of wills with charitable provisions is slightly less than the average, between 40% and 50%. During the remaining decades more than 60% of clerical testators left something to charity.¹⁵⁹ In addition some executors gave small sums to the poor, even though no provision had been made in the will; whether the gifts represented the testators' wishes or the executors' sense of propriety is impossible to say. The sums involved were usually small. Only Gilpin and Bunny made bequests to charity totalling more than £100. Two or three other senior clergy left sums of £20 or £30 but in most cases no more than £3 or £4 was set aside. The average value of bequests changed little during the period; the clergy were thus devoting a smaller proportion of their total wealth to charity at death and what they gave was of less real value, as a result of inflation. On the other hand, the level of the minimum bequest rose. By the 1630s no clergyman who made any provision for charity left less than £1, whereas before it was not uncommon to leave a few shillings only.

The clergy, like the laity, most commonly left bequests to the poor. They usually specified that parishes in which they

159. The figures are consistently higher than those given by Christophers for the Surrey clergy between 1520 and 1620; there, only 46% of the total made charitable provisions in their wills. 'Surrey Clergy', 266.

had served or where they had some personal connection were to benefit. Few made any distinction between the various categories of the poor, but merely stated that the bequest was to be distributed in cash on or shortly after the day of the testator's funeral. Only in the 17th century did Durham clergymen seek to provide assistance for the poor over a longer term. A typical scheme was that of Anthony Airey, curate and schoolmaster of Houghton le Spring, who died in 1628.¹⁶⁰ He left £4 to the churchwardens to be lent at a low rate of interest providing that the profits would in turn be distributed amongst those in need. The clergy showed no more marked disposition than the laity to associate their colleagues in the management of such funds. Like their contemporaries elsewhere clerical testators became more careful in allowing only the deserving to benefit from their generosity. In 1619 Clement Colmore left £3 to the poor of the Yorkshire villages in which he held lands, specifying that the money was to go to "very paup res & not upon idle and clamorous people".¹⁶¹ In the following year, Richard Clement of Dalton ensured that the poor of the parish should have the opportunity of spiritual as well as material benefit by his bequest, by restricting the recipients to those who attended morning service on certain "dole days".¹⁶²

After the poor, highways and churches benefitted most

160. D.R. Prob. 1628.

161. Borth. Inst. Hist. Res., Prob. Reg. 35/435.

162. D.R. Prob. 1621.

frequently from clerical charity. Leonard Pilkington affirmed in his will that it was "a deade of Charitie and a comendable worke before God toe repaire the highwayes, that the people may travaill saifly without daunger." ¹⁶³ Like those to the poor, the sums left for the repair of roads and bridges remained fairly constant throughout the period. By contrast, the parish church and even the benefice became less popular as objects of charity. Between 1570 and 1600, six clerical wills included bequests to the church or to future incumbents. They occur in only four wills from the following forty years. The motives dictating such gifts were ambiguous. A number of clergy left goods and furnishings and even lands to their successors, some expressly describing the bequest as an insurance against claims for dilapidations. ¹⁶⁴ Others simply left money or property for the repair and embellishment of the church. Of these the most explicit as well as the most generous was Thomas Vicars, vicar of Shilbottle, (d. 1636), who bequeathed £3 to the people of Shilbottle and £5 to those of Staindrop, with which to purchase the silver chalice and cover which were a proper part of the church furniture. ¹⁶⁵

Unlike their counterparts in Surrey, the Durham clergy did not see posthumous charity as the proper means to secure more preaching, either in the long term by adding to the endowment of a lecture, or more immediately by providing for

163. S.S. xxi, pp. cxxiv-cxxix.

164. See pp. 402-4.

165. D.R. Prob. 1636.

a sermon at their own funerals. Contributions to education were the prerogative of a handful of the senior clergy. Since the sums they gave were so much larger than the average, any calculation of the total and relative value of bequests directed to different purposes gives a misleading impression of the charitable habits of the clergy. The value of donations in the surviving wills amounts to £778 19s. 1d.; a total which makes no allowance for property or other gifts where the specific value is not given. Over £430, 60% of the total, was left for educational purposes, but that sum derived from only three bequests. The sum of £290 5s. 11d. which was left to the poor by fifty individuals represents a far wider concern amongst the parish clergy.¹⁶⁶

The well documented activities of a wealthy man like Gilpin tend to overshadow the role of the parish clergy as small scale benefactors. Although the charitable bequests they made were at best limited and were perhaps being further reduced during our period, as ministers they were in constant touch with the poor, the sick, and the unfortunate, and with those whose duty it was to aid the needy. Contemporaries recognised this and some still appointed them as agents of charity. The contribution made by each clergyman no doubt depended as did so much of his ministry, on his conscientiousness, and his financial and family circumstances. The rarity of complaint from the parishes, the occasional records of the performance of the duty of hospitality, and the testimony of parish accounts suggest that there, rather than in the great foundations, they could and did offer an important service.

166. Christophers, 'Surrey Clergy', 267; over a longer period, W. K. Jordan calculates that 44% of the charitable donations of the lower clergy went to education, 26.33% to poor relief, and 23.1% to the church. Philanthropy in England, 348.

Chapter VI

The Work of the Clergy. II. Agents of Order.

Official regulations cast the clergy in the role of guardians of order, both civil and ecclesiastical. Almost every series of injunctions and canons reminded the clergy of their responsibility to instil in their congregations the principle of obedience to established authority, the accepted basis of national well-being.¹ The government looked upon the bishops and the bishops on the lower clergy as well-placed local agents and purveyors of information. Meanwhile, the church had to regulate its own life, ordering and recording appointments, gatherings, and courts. In 1616 the elder William Morton expressed his acceptance of the double duty to which he was bound by his orders;

"For mie selfe I have ever since I entred the ministrie made my boddi, goods and credit and place to serve, first God, and then good Quene Elizabeth and his sacred Majestie."²

The same acceptance can be seen in the administration of the parishes themselves, where churchwardens and lesser officials as well as clergy were called upon to serve in both ecclesiastical and secular capacities. The interplay of the two functions at parish level forms the second part of this chapter. Before that, the role of the clergy in the government of county and diocese will be considered.

1. e.g. Visitation Articles and Injunction, ed. W. H. Frere and W. M. Kennedy, iii. 3; Canons of 1571 (Ch. Hist. Soc. xl), 11.

2. S.P. 14/87/14. Morton to Secretary Winwood, 7 May 1616.

1. Bishopric, County, and Diocese.

Bishops of Durham served the central government as did their colleagues elsewhere³ as members of the commission of the peace and of more recently established commissions and councils. They supplied a flow of information on local conditions, from the extent of recusancy to the state of agriculture. In extraordinary circumstances they still served the Crown as diplomats, as their predecessors had often done; as dean and bishop Toby Matthew was much occupied in negotiations with the Scots, sometimes in company with his spiritual chancellor, Clement Colmore.⁴ Commissions, formal or informal, from the central government provided only a part of the authority and influence of the bishop in temporal matters, however. Although many of the palatine rights of Durham had been lost in 1536, sufficient of the old franchise remained to set the bishop apart from his peers as a secular power in his own right. The king's writ had replaced that of the bishop in criminal justice but the civil law was still administered by the episcopal chancery. The bishop retained the right to nominate justices of the peace although the appointments were made by the Lord Chancellor. From 1536 the bishop and his temporal chancellor were justices ex officio and the bishop or his appointed deputy acted as custos rotulorum. After some uncertainty

3. The part of the episcopate in secular politics and administration is discussed by R. Houlbrooke, 'The Protestant episcopate, 1547-1603; the pastoral contribution', in Church and Society in England: Henry VIII to James I, ed. F. Heal and R. O'Day, 80-1; R. B. Manning, 'The crisis of episcopal authority during the reign of Elizabeth I', Jnl. Brit. Studies, xi. 8-9.

4. J. B. Gavin, 'An Elizabethan Bishop of Durham; Tobias Matthew, 1595-1606', (McGill Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1972), 85-192.

over procedure in the 16th century, it was established that commissions of assize and gaol delivery were to be addressed from the Crown to the bishop, who then reissued them to the judges. In military matters the bishops continued to perform many of the duties elsewhere undertaken by lord lieutenants. The appointment of Neile and his successors to the lieutenancy was thus a confirmation of episcopal powers rather than an innovation.⁵ Palatinate rights were, however, confined to the Bishopric; county Durham, North Durham, and Bedlingtonshire. In Northumberland the bishop's powers were those of ordinary and occasionally of government commissioner. Even so, as a great landowner endowed with unusual authority the bishop was amongst the leading contenders for power in the vacuum left by the defeat of the northern earls. Against such a background the part of the lower clergy in county and provincial government held a special significance in the eyes of contemporaries, already sensitive to the strength and pretensions

5. G. T. Lapsley, The County Palatine of Durham, 196-8; K. Emsley and C. M. Fraser, 'The justices of the peace for the County Palatine of Durham and Sadberge', Justice of the Peace and Local Govt. Review, cxxv. 84; J. S. Cockburn, 'The Northern Assize Circuit', Northern Hist. iii. 126-7; G. Scott Thompson, 'The bishops of Durham and the office of lord lieutenant in the 17th century', E.H.R. xl. 351-9.

of the church interest in the north-east.

The backbone of county government was the commission of the peace and clerical representation on the commission was one of the registers by which contemporaries judged the expansion of ecclesiastical influence.⁶ In the late 16th century the Durham commission usually included the spiritual chancellor and the dean, if he was resident, as well as the bishop and temporal chancellor. Under Elizabeth, Robert Swift and Thomas Burton both continued to serve as justices after resigning the office of spiritual chancellor. Although they were civil and not common lawyers, their legal expertise and administrative experience were no doubt valued by their colleagues.⁷ By the end of the century commissions also included one or two of the resident prebendaries, as a matter of course. They were men of high academic qualifications, usually either relatives of the bishop, such as Leonard Pilkington and Emmanuel Barnes, or of good family, like Francis Bunny. Clerical representation on the Northumberland bench was much slighter. The bishop was always named in the commission, as on occasion were his colleagues of York and Carlisle, but of the other diocesan clergy only Dean Whittingham was included before 1600.

6. Commissions to which reference is made in this chapter are listed by T. Barnes and A. H. Smith, 'Justices of the peace from 1558 to 1688 - a revised list of sources', Bull. Inst. Hist. Res. xxxii. 221-42. They include commissions of 1573-4. B.L. Egerton MS. 2345, ff. 27, 39; of 1577. S.P. 12/121, ff. 23-4, 35-6; of 1583. B.L. Royal MS. 18. D.iii; of 1604. B.L. Add. MS. 38139, ff. 119-20.

7. B. Levack, Civil Lawyers in England, 214, 219.

The pattern of membership began to change in the early 17th century. The archdeacon of Durham attended quarter sessions from 1610. As there are no quarter sessions records for Northumberland in the same period, it is impossible to tell whether his northern colleague served as a justice before 1622 but in that year he was named in both the Northumberland and the Durham commissions. During the first decade of the century, it also became more common for prebendaries to be appointed to the Durham bench. Henry Ewbanke first attended quarter sessions in 1608 and in 1616 Ferdinand Moorcroft and Marmaduke Blakiston both began long and active careers as county magistrates.⁸ Although the increase in the number and activity of clerical justices was thus well under way before Neile's episcopate, the development accelerated during the years of Arminian dominance in keeping with the prevalent understanding of the authority of the church and its ministers.⁹ By 1620 three more prebendaries had joined Moorcroft and Blakiston on the Durham commission, Francis Burgoine, soon to be archdeacon of Northumberland, Daniel Birkhead, and Augustine Lindsell. In the 1630s Neile's example was followed by Howson, on whose recommendation Anthony

. D.C.R.O. QS/I/2; QS/OB/1; commissions of 1608-11. S.P. 14/133; of 1622. C 193/13/1.

9. The development has been associated principally with the assertion of clerical authority by Neile; M. James, Family, Lineage and Civil Society, 163; cf. T. G. Barnes, Somerset, 1625-40, 45-6.

Maxton, John Cosin, and John Robson also became justices.¹⁰

All the prebendaries nominated to the bench were incumbents of parochial benefices in the diocese. Only four clergy who held no more than parish livings were appointed to the commissions, however, two in Durham and two in Northumberland. The earliest appointment of a clergyman without any experience of higher office was made to the Northumberland bench, perhaps because so few senior clergy resided there. Cuthbert Ridley, rector of Simonburn, and a justice from 1622, came from a gentry family, although one previously unrepresented on the county bench. As such, and as incumbent of the richest living in the archdeaconry, he was a natural choice at a time when the first parish clergy were being appointed to the commission in other parts of the country.¹¹ Just before his death in 1636 he was replaced by Thomas Gray, vicar of Chillingham and Ponteland, who also had influential family connections.¹² In Durham no parish minister without other claims to seniority served as a justice until the 1630s. Successive rectors of Houghton le Spring, Laurence Hinton and Hamlet Marshall, were then included in the commissions of 1632 and 1634/5.¹³

10. Commissions of 1620. C 181/3, f. 9v; of 1632. S.P. 16/272; of 1634/5. C 193/13/2.

11. C. M. Fraser and K. Emsley, 'Clerical justices of the peace in the north-east, 1626-30', Arch. Ael. 5th ser. ii. 189-99; S. Watts and S. J. Watts, From Border to Middle Shire; Northumberland 1586 to 1625, 64; Barnes, Somerset, 45-9.

12. He was allegedly the illegitimate son of Philip Gray, a kinsman of Lord Gray of Wark. The Petition of Pont Island against Dr. Gray (1641).

13. Commissions of 1632. S.P. 16/212; of 1634/5. C 193/13/2.

A distinction remained, however, between the practice of parish and senior clergy as justices. Many clerical justices performed their duties with an assiduity unmatched by most laymen but they were usually prebendaries. In the 1620s and 1630s, for example, Ferdinand Moorcroft, Anthony Maxton, and Daniel Birkhead scarcely missed a session and some of their colleagues were almost as conscientious, although those with commitments outside the diocese, like Lindsell or Cosin, attended much less frequently. The bishops and the parish clergy were also infrequent attenders and little pattern can be traced in the occasions when they did choose to be present.¹⁴

Men who served as J.P.s were also named amongst the commissioners for gaol delivery, for assizes, and in less regular commissions for sewers, for piracy, and especially in those for charitable uses.¹⁵ Such occasional bodies were appointed from a wider social group than the justices and in the 1630s several clergy who were not on the bench served on the lesser commissions. The gradual absorption of clergy into the ranks of the county governors can also be traced in the even more transient appointments made by central courts such as the Exchequer and Star Chamber of commissions to take local evidence in suits brought before them. Senior clergy often undertook such duties in Elizabeth's reign, at least in causes involving clerical interests. By the 1630s parish clergy in Durham and Northumberland were nominated to take depositions in or near their

14. Fraser and Emsley, 'Clerical justices in the north-east,' 196; D.C.R.O. QS/OB/1,2.

15. C 181; C192, passim.

parishes. In a tithe suit between Edward Young of Hart and three of his parishioners, for example, witnesses appeared before Gabriel Clerke, archdeacon of Durham, John Liveley, vicar of Gainford and Kelloe, and Andrew Perne, vicar of Norton and rector of Washington.¹⁶

The honour and obligation of magistracy had thus come to be attached to clerical offices below those of bishop, dean, and chancellor and not just to individuals of distinction. Whereas in the 16th century Bunny, Ewbanke, and Barnes served lengthy apprenticeships in local administration, gaining in experience, wealth, and influence over the years before joining the bench, the appointment of Anthony Maxton and Augustine Lindsell followed promptly upon their installation as canons. Membership of the commission of the peace had become a natural part of the career of the episcopal favourite, along with the cathedral stall and the wealthy parish living. Parish clergy were increasingly called upon to fulfil lesser tasks of local government but their absence from the working bench perhaps indicates a continuing uncertainty about their status within the county. They were not yet qualified by their benefices alone to take their places in the county establishment on equal terms with the gentry. Those who served as justices and even on lesser commissions were usually distinguished by their wealth, their learning, or their command of episcopal favour.

The clergy who took an active part in county government were nevertheless both numerous and obtrusive by 1640. Even before the major expansion in clerical membership of commiss-

16. E 134/9 Chas. I Mich./31.

ions in the 1620s and 1630s, the apparent intrusion of the church into secular affairs had provoked a hostile reaction. Resentment of the power of the church interest, fanned by clashes over parliamentary representation of the Bishopric, reached a peak in 1621. In that year, county politics were transferred to a national stage when a campaign was launched in the House of Commons to unseat the clerical supporters of episcopal dominance. The most prolonged conflict was over the composition of the county bench. The strength of professional representation, of both clergy and lawyers, was a matter of disquiet in many parts of the country. The opponents of the bishop of Durham could cite a specific example of the distortion brought about, they said, by the episcopal right of nomination. Allegedly "there were but 12 of the laity in the commission for peace and 13 of the clergy and their appendents".¹⁷ The substance of the complaint seems to have been justified even if the figures were exaggerated; in 1626 there were eight clergy among the forty justices. Even the smaller Northumberland commission of thirty four members included six clergy, although one of these was the archbishop of York. At the time the average clerical membership of commissions of the peace was only 9%.¹⁸ Lay fears could only have increased when they were eventually outnumbered on the quorum, a development which no doubt reflected the regularity of attendance by senior clergy at quarter sessions,

17. Commons Debates of 1621, ed. W. Notestein, F. H. Relf, and H. Simpson, ii. 333-4; iv. 36, 284.

18. Fraser and Emsley, 'Clerical justices in the north-east,' 196; J. H. Gleason, The Justices of the Peace in England, 1558-1640, 49.

as well as the strength of episcopal influence.¹⁹

The commission was not the only target of the opponents of the church party. The ejection of John Robson from his seat as M.P. for Morpeth must at least have interested those who attacked clerical justices, even if they did not initiate the proceedings. Robson was a canon of Durham and rector of Morpeth. When his parishioners elected him to parliament, the Commons' Committee for Privileges found a precedent in the case of Alexander Nowell, dean of St. Paul's who had been excluded from the parliament of 1553 as a member of convocation. Robson was not a member of convocation but his eligibility for that body was given as sufficient reason for declaring the election void.²⁰

Durham affairs again came up for discussion when the Commons heard complaints against John Craddocke, chancellor of the diocese and vicar of Gainford. The allegations amounted to a general attack on Craddocke's integrity as an official and a magistrate. He was said to have taken bribes as chancellor, ecclesiastical commissioner, and justice, using his authority in one capacity to bolster his illegal demands in another.²¹ The debate focussed on the actions of the chancellor and his deputies following the death of John Allenson, the scholarly rector of Whickham. Assuming the rector to have died intestate, Craddocke issued a hasty order for the sequestration of his property, with an eye, it was said, for the money stored

19. Fraser and Emsley, 'Clerical justices in the north-east,' 197.

20. Commons Debates of 1621, ed. Notestein, Relf, and Simpson, ii. 32, 41; v. 250; D.N.B., sub Nowell.

21. Commons Debates of 1621, ed. Notestein, Relf, and Simpson, ii. 368-71; iii. 260-5.

in Allenson's study. When Cuthbert Hawden, Allenson's son-in-law, came forward with his will, probate was refused and Hawden subject to false accusation before the secular authorities. Robert Jenison, who had found the will, was abused as a "puritanical forging knave" in open court and harboured a lasting grudge against Craddocke in consequence.²² Jenison's involvement suggests that the initiative for action against the chancellor may have sprung from those who found the religious as well as the political character of Bishop Neile's régime, as upheld by Craddocke, unacceptable but it is impossible to trace the source of the complaint to the Commons. Craddocke had been at the centre of disputes for many years. There had been complaints to Bishop James about his conduct as archdeacon of Northumberland and his personal life was allegedly also a matter of scandal. Not content with falsifying his degree, he was said to have defrauded Francis Brackenbury, a south Durham gentleman who had depended on his advice in matters of business, and his wife's first husband was rumoured to have been poisoned.²³ At the very least, Craddocke had enemies who circulated malicious and lurid gossip about his activities. His career was not interrupted by the various accusations and some retained a high opinion of his character; to the puritanical curate of Barnard Castle, Michael Walker, he was "my dear and loving friend" and Bishop Neile gave qualified commendation to his administrative skills.²⁴

22. Bodl. MS. Tanner 74, f. 242. Jenison to Samuel Ward, 10 Feb. 1619. Jenison ascribed the chancellor's conduct to his "insatiable and goldthirsty desires".

23. Sta. Cha. 8/16/1; Sta. Cha. 8/103/17; R. Welford, Men of Mark 'twixt Tyne and Tees, i. 652-6.

24. D.R. Prob. 1614; 'Four unpublished letters of Bishop Neile', ed. J.C. Hodgson, Arch.Ael. 3rd ser. xvi. 122-6.

Probably as important as the services formally commissioned from the clergy was their informal contribution to the preservation of peace and good order. They were most active where the doctrine that religious nonconformity was the equivalent of political disloyalty came into play. As specialists in the detection and assessment of unorthodoxy they were called in by secular magistrates; when a shipload of Catholic literature, pictures, and relics was discovered at South Shields in 1637, the cargo was handed to "Dr. Jackson", probably Thomas Jackson, the former vicar of Newcastle, for examination and safekeeping.²⁵ Others were prompted to undertake police duties on their own initiative. Occasionally, spectacular action was the result; Bernard Pattinson "the first seminary priest that ever hand was laid upon hereabouts" was captured by Henry Ewbanke, then rector of Washington, assisted by his brother and his curate c. 1586.²⁶ More commonly, clerical interest in local and national security produced words rather than actions. Parish ministers, like their bishops, were well placed to gather and retail information. A conscientious and alert clergyman would feel bound to pass on any report of more than parochial significance, even if only of the birth of a freak as happened at Ryton in 1562.²⁷ In 1606, when rumours of conspiracy were rife and unwary comments could easily be construed as sedition, John

25. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1637-8, 76. Mayor of Newcastle to Sir Henry Anderson, und. 1637.

26. Ibid. 1580-1625, 355-6. Dean Matthew to Id. Burghley, 16 Oct. 1593, referring to an incident which took place ten years earlier.

27. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1601-3 and Add. 525. William Garnett, rec. Ryton to Bp. Pilkington, Feb. 1562.

Ladyman, vicar of Warkworth, informed the bishop of the words of a visitor to his parish who had claimed that the king's accession had been conditional upon promises of greater leniency towards the Roman Catholics. Bishop Matthew took the report seriously, especially as the comment came from a member of the local gentry, and forwarded it to Salisbury with an examination of the suspect and witnesses.²⁸

Some clergy made more consistent and organised use of their opportunities and talents for the collection of information. In the early 17th century a number of Ladyman's colleagues became involved in the political divisions of Northumberland, where the religious difference between recusants and fervent Protestants reflected at a local level the contemporary struggle of court factions.²⁹ The Protestant defence was orchestrated by Sir Henry Sanderson and one of his earliest collaborators was John Craddocke as archdeacon of Northumberland. In return for his services, Sanderson commended him as "a man that understands the state of the country, no man better, both for civill government and religion" and a diligent observer of recusant activity.³⁰ At the centre of the clerical network, however, was William Morton, whose words were quoted at the beginning of the chapter. As archdeacon of Northumberland in the last years of the 16th century, he had come to know the state of the county and to nurse a lasting hostility towards two leading Catholic

28. Ibid. 1603-10, 332. Bp. and chancellor of Durham to
 Id. Salisbury, 16 Oct. 1606.

29. Watts, From Border to Middle Shire, 180-200.

30. S.S. lxviii. 421-2. Anderson to Secretary Winwood, 1 Apr.
 1606.

sympathisers of the Northumberland dales, Roger and Henry Witherington.³¹ The Witheringtons' power was assured by the protection of local Catholic magnates, Lord William Howard and Lord Walden and thus by the rising Somerset/Howard faction at court. Naturally, Morton and his associates sought the patronage of the Howards' opponents. To Winwood, the secretary of state, and Archbishop Abbot, he represented himself and his friends as the agents of the protestant cause in Northumberland.³²

Morton's activities and attitudes are best recorded in the campaign launched in 1616 to disgrace Robert Witherington by belatedly proving his complicity in the Gunpowder Plot. Morton was by that time suffering the ill-health which was to trouble him for the rest of his life and he therefore made extensive use of the services of John Smaithwaite, rector of Elsdon, who became his principal aid and informant in Witherington's own territory of Redesdale. The association between the two clergy had probably begun in the 1590s when Smaithwaite was one of the numerous preachers of Newcastle.³³ In 1597 he was presented by the Crown to the vicarage of Woodhorn and soon afterwards received Elsdon from the earl of Dunbar, who was seen by local clergy as the great protector of the

31. Hist. MSS. Com. 9, Hatfield, xvii, p. 189. Morton to Sanderson, 5 May 1605; S.P. 14/86/96. Morton to Secretary Winwood, 19 Mar. 1616.

32. Other letters from Morton to Winwood and Archbp. Abbot are in S.P. 14/46/136; S.P. 14/87/14; S.P. 14/87/37; S.P. 14/88/94. Cf. S.S. lxviii. 427-31.

33. D.R. Prob. 1596. Will of John Morehouse; Cal. S.P. Dom. 1595-7, 302. P. Proby to Secretary Cecil, 3 Nov. 1596.

Protestant cause in the north-east.³⁴ Between 1605 and 1616 the rector of Elsdon was known to the bishop of Durham and to the central authorities as a faithful servant, both as preacher and informant. His hostility to the Witheringtons, like Morton's, was of long standing. It can first be traced in 1605 when he complained to Sir William Selby of the decline of law and order in his parish, blaming those local gentry who would not take the necessary action without prompting from above.

"..... there is more stealing than ever hath bene in Redesdale thro seven yearers, if common report of the best be true. I have tasted thereof 7 or 6 tymes at least of late and unless my honourable lord the Earle of Dunbar see better order taken by his Officers it will be past poore mens dwelling here. I must be forced to resigne my living or else be a non-resident, which were much worse."³⁵

The natural friction between minister and recusant gentleman was aggravated by resentment of the authority wielded by Roger Witherington as steward to Howard de Walden in Tynedale and Redesdale. The steward's commands sometimes ran counter to those of the rector, successfully competing for the obedience of the tenants who attended the manor court on a Sunday instead of the church services. He also had the power to cause Smaithwaite material harm, not only by allowing disorder to flourish,

34. The date of Smaithwaite's appointment to Elsdon is not known but he first appears as rector in 1605 when Dunbar was lord of Redesdale and hence patron of the living. D.R. II.5, f. 99.

35. S.P. 14/21/10.1.

but also by denying him justice in cases brought before the court at Harbottle Castle. Not surprisingly, the rector sought out every item of gossip which was to Witherington's discredit and reported it to Morton. From there, he carried the same reports as the archdeacon's messenger to Winwood, regardless of the threats which he alleged were made against him.³⁶

Morton used his clerical authority and connections to involve other ministers in his campaign. The accusations upon which Roger Witherington was eventually examined in May 1616 included information from three Newcastle preachers, naturally open to Morton's influence, about his links with recusant activities in the town.³⁷ Cuthbert Ridley of Simonburn also testified to the growth of active recusancy in his parish and the responsibility of local gentlemen, including the Witheringtons, for this. Ridley had earlier been mentioned by Morton as a suitable recruit to Winwood's system of informants in the event of own death.³⁸

The attack on the Witheringtons was ultimately unsuccessful and in the last years of his life Morton was preoccupied with the more insidious threat to the established religion posed by the growth of Arminianism amongst the Durham clergy.³⁹

36. S.P. 14/86/96.1. 'A discoverie of Mr Roger Witherington's government in Riddesdale', Mar. 1616. Cf. Morton's letters of 1616.

37. S.P. 14/87/37-8. Examination of and charges against Roger Witherington, 30 May 1616.

38. S.P. 14/86/96. Morton to Winwood, 19 Mar. 1616.

39. Bodl. MS. Tanner 74, f. 246. Morton to Samuel Ward, 13 Feb. 1619; see below, pp 40-2

Later, the Arminians themselves were the trusted agents of government, providing valuable information about puritan strength in the area. As relations with the Scots deteriorated in the late 1630s the acute sense of crisis in the north-east prompted detailed and frequent reports on the activities of clerical dissidents, from influential men like Jenison to shadowy figures like the younger William Morton. Close watch was kept upon their lay supporters amongst the merchants and governors of Newcastle and Sunderland and the local gentry. Reports were passed on to Neile at York or sometimes to Laud himself and subsequently to the secretary of state and the king. In the process, the claims of the bishop of Durham were frequently ignored; at best Bishop Morton heard the news from his clergy after they had informed his superiors, at worst he was told by the archbishops with a rebuke for insufficient vigilance. The reports of Yeldard Alvey, vicar of Newcastle, about the religious politics of the town and the surrounding countryside were carefully concealed from the bishop, whose outlook was very different. Morton was probably well aware that such letters also contained critical comment on his reaction to the puritan threat and were the source of many exhortations from his superiors to greater strictness.⁴⁰

40. S.P. 16/436/22. Bp. Morton to Secretary Windebanke, 23 Dec. 1639; cf. S.P. 16/436/40. Archbp. Neile to Windebanke, 23 Dec. 1639; S.P. 16/442/28. Windebanke to Neile, 17 Jan. 1640; S.P. 16/442/102. Neile to Windebanke, 24 Jan. 1640. Alvey's reports are in S.P. 16/436/10. Alvey to Laud, 10 Dec. 1639; S.P. 16/441/97.1. To Neile, Jan. 1640; S. P. 16/442/136. To same, 27 Jan. 1640; W. Prynne, Hidden Workes of Darknes brought to Divine Light, (1645), 188-9. To Laud, 9 Oct. 1640.

Alvey was a natural choice for these duties. He had early obtained the favour of Neile and through him of the king. His institution to Newcastle as successor to Thomas Jackson had been speeded by royal intervention. As chaplain to the archbishop of York he retained an official connection with Neile and after the latter's death he looked to Laud as a patron.⁴¹ In contrast, Thomas Triplett, vicar of Woodhorn and rector of Whitburn, was a self-appointed agent of Canterbury. Triplett consulted his bishop on the problems and dangers of puritanism in Sunderland and the surrounding area, probably with greater honesty than did Alvey.⁴² Like Alvey, however, he also addressed himself to higher authority, although the only link with Laud of which he could boast was that of a university contemporary; on one occasion he reminded the archbishop of an early stand in defence of the established church.⁴³ In February 1640 he sent word to Laud of the seditious speeches of one George Stevenson, servant to the mayor of Sunderland George Lilburne, a known opponent of the political and ecclesiastical establishment. He explained that his report was prompted by the fear that the partiality of local magistrates and Lilburne's local standing would enable master, if not man,

41, A. Foster, 'The function of a bishop: the career of Richard Neile, 1562-1640', in Continuity and Change, R.O'Day and F. Heal eds., 46; Cal. S.P. Dom. 1631-3, 190. Bp. Howson to Bp. Laud, 28 Nov. 1631.

42. S.P. 16/447/84. Triplett to Archbp. Laud, 10 Mar. 1640.

43. S.P. 16/447/27. Same to same, 4 Mar. 1640.

to come through the scandal unscathed.⁴⁴ The ramifications of the case and the shortcomings of the participants formed the burden of lengthy reports to the archbishop over the next three months; in March, for example, Triplett passed on a story gathered from Eleazar Duncan of Lilburne's ignorance of the scriptural origins of the Magnificat.⁴⁵ Whitburn, one of Triplett's two parishes, lay only a few miles north of Sunderland, on the Durham coast and the activities of Mr. Banks, whom he described as a "mendicant preacher" posed almost as much of a threat to him as to John Johnson of Bishop Wearmouth and Richard Hickes of Monk Wearmouth, the two established clergy most closely associated with Sunderland. Like Smaithwaite, Triplett was thus one of a group who saw themselves as embattled defenders of the proper order; as well as Johnson, and occasionally Hickes, Eleazar Duncan was recruited as an active opponent of Lilburne and his friends. Even Henry Lever, curate of Alnwick and formerly Triplett's assistant, was co-opted to sound out the extent of Banks's alienation from the establishment, although, as Triplett acknowledged, he was sprung from a line of puritan clergy and his later career reflected his origins.⁴⁶

44. S.P. 16/444/29. Same to same, 4 Feb. 1640. The incident and its implications for local politics are fully described by W. Dumble, 'Government, Religious and Military Affairs in Durham during the Civil War and Interregnum', (Durham Univ. M. Litt. thesis, 1978), 19-21.

45. S.P. 16/447/27. Triplett to Laud, 4 Mar. 1640.

46. Ibid.; S.P. 16/447/84. Same to same, 10 Mar. 1640.

Participation by the lower clergy in the government of diocese rather than the county had a longer pedigree and the ecclesiastical and moral authority which they exercised as officers of the church had sanctions in tradition and law which their excursions into the political world often lacked. The clerical element was justifiably predominant in the organisation and staffing of the visitations and courts which were the usual instruments of ecclesiastical administration. A few lay lawyers served the church courts as registrars and proctors and lesser men acted as apparitors but even they identified their own interests closely with those of the church. Amongst the clergy, there was no clear distinction between those whose duties were primarily administrative and judicial and the parish ministers. All were potential officers and agents of the diocesan government. A familiarity with the workings of the ecclesiastical administration and judicial system was part of the clergyman's professional qualification, acquired by practice whatever his duties or benefice.

Using the parish clergy as agents or providing administrators with parochial livings eased the financial burden of staffing the administration. The practice is well illustrated by the preferments of senior officials. Until 1627 all the spiritual chancellors of the diocese were in orders and all held parochial cures.⁴⁷ Most were qualified for their duties by

47. The appointment of two lay chancellors, William Easdale (1628-32) and Thomas Burwell (from 1633), is the more surprising in an age of clerical self-assertion. Easdale's association with Neile's administration in York accounts for his appointment but that of Burwell is less easily explained. R. A. Marchant, The Church under the Law, 48-9.

so a legal training. Robert Swift, chancellor to Bishop Pilkington, was unusual only in having gained the degree of LL.B. from Louvain rather than from one of the English universities. In 1562, the year after his appointment, he received in addition the first prebend and the rectory of Sedgefield, which he occupied until his death in 1603.⁴⁸ His successor, Thomas Burton, was a canon of Carlisle and later of York, but surprisingly, not of Durham itself. He served Richard Barnes as chancellor at Carlisle and then accompanied him to Durham where he was presented to the rectory of Stanhope in 1577, a year before he replaced Swift. His resignation of the position of chancellor in 1582 was followed by presentation to another living, the vicarage of Kirk Merrington. As one of the few parochial clergy with a specialist training in law, he was constantly in demand to undertake administrative and judicial tasks until his death c. 1608.⁴⁹ The longest term as chancellor during the period was that of Clement Colmore. Appointed on 7 September 1582, he served four bishops before his death in 1619. In 1584 he was presented to the rectory of Brancepeth and further preferments followed. He was a prebendary of Durham from 1590, rector of Gateshead from 1588 until 1595, and of Middleton in Teesdale from 1599 to 1619. His successor John Craddocke, also died in office, in 1627.

48. Details of careers and preferments are taken from the following unless otherwise stated; D.R. I.3-4; D.R. VIII. 1-4; P. Musset, Deans and Major Canons of Durham; Venn; Foster; D.N.B.

49. e.g. D.R. V.7, ff. 40-3.

Craddocke's early career is more difficult to trace than those of his predecessors. The only clerical chancellor who had no legal training, he may have been a local man. A minister of the same name served as curate of Gainford and master of Barnard Castle Hospital in the 1590s.⁵⁰ In 1593 he became vicar of Gainford and was later also vicar of Heighington and Northallerton, both livings in the gift of the dean and chapter.

Craddocke had been archdeacon of Northumberland from c. 1604 until 1619 and was the only chancellor to be promoted from another diocesan office; a tribute to his ability to survive scandal, if nothing else. The archdeaconries never passed from clerical hands, perhaps because they involved the cure of souls in the parishes annexed to them. The archdeaconry of Durham was served between the 1560s and 1640 by three men, each of whom held the office for many years. John Pilkington, appointed by his brother in 1561, was also a canon of Durham but held no other parish living. His successors, William Morton, archdeacon from 1603 to 1620, and Gabriel Clerke, who held the office from 1620 until his sequestration in 1644, both had additional benefices, at Newcastle and Elwick respectively. Over the same period, twelve men served in the archdeaconry of Northumberland and the administration there may have suffered from the lack of continuity, although there is no clear evidence of this. Only William King, the first of the twelve, was convicted of negligence. He was deprived in 1566 for plurality and non-residence.⁵¹ Of the others, several passed on to other posts of seniority in the diocese.

50. E 134/35 Eliz. I Hil./8.

51. D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 6, p. 145.

Francis Bunny, for example, served for five years as archdeacon before his appointment to the eighth stall and the rectory of Ryton. Ralph Lever spent seven years in Northumberland and later added the rectory of Stanhope and the mastership of Sherburn House to his canonry. William Flathers and his successor Everus Gower were both episcopal chaplains who had their first taste of diocesan administration in the archdeaconry and whose further progress up the ecclesiastical ladder was disturbed by the Civil War. Only three men held the office for any considerable time; Ralph Tunstall, (1581-c. 1600), John Craddocke, (c. 1600-1619), and Francis Burgoine, (1620-1633), each of whom concurrently possessed at least one additional parochial benefice. The living was much poorer than the archdeaconry of Durham and the incitement to plurality was therefore greater.⁵² The comparative poverty of the office and the enforced absence from the cultural and political centre of the diocese probably also encouraged the archdeacons to move south as soon as the opportunity offered.

Almost all the senior officers of the diocese are known to have performed at least some of their duties in person. Most chancellors regularly presided in the consistory court and in the 1570s and 1580s Swift, Burton, and Colmore usually appeared at synods and general chapters.⁵³ The only exception was

52. S.S. xxi. 7. Durham was said to be worth £150 p.a. c. 1530, Northumberland £36 13s. 4d.

53. D.R. III.2-14. passim; D.R. II.1-2, passim.

William Easdale, a layman and civil lawyer, chancellor from 1628 to 1632, whose collaboration with Archbishop Neile in the reform and reorganisation of the diocese and province of York left him little time for Durham affairs.⁵⁴ The records of archidiaconal jurisdiction are less full and those for Northumberland are difficult to analyse in terms of the regularity of or attendance at court sessions or visitations, since they are arranged by parishes, without observing any strict chronological order.⁵⁵ In Durham John Pilkington was present at almost every sitting of his court between 1572 and 1576 and conducted visitations in person. By the beginning of the 17th century, however, age prevented him from making more than one appearance a year. William Morton never presided as regularly and from 1609 he left the administration of the archdeaconry increasingly in the hands of subordinates, devoting himself instead to the affairs of Newcastle and to his civil duties, both official and self-imposed.⁵⁶

Since all chancellors and archdeacons had other calls upon their time and attention, even the most diligent had occasionally to delegate their duties. Of those who deputised for the senior officers, a few were formally commissioned as surrogates or officials for a period of years or even for life and so empowered to perform almost all the duties of their principals. The most important appointments often went to laymen

54. Marchant, Church under the Law, 48-9.

55. D.R. VIII.2-3, passim.

56. P.K. D. and C. Mun., Act Bk. of Archd. Pilkington, 1572-6; D.R. VIII.1.

trained in civil law. One such position carrying considerable independence was that of the official of the dean and chapter. As a corporate body, the chapter found it necessary to delegate administration of the parishes in Durham, Northumberland, and Yorkshire over which they held archidiaconal jurisdiction.⁵⁷ Occasionally one of their own members was appointed to the task. In the 1570s the official was William Stephenson, prebendary, preacher at Berwick, and successively vicar of Gainford and rector of Hartburn.⁵⁸ At the end of the century Ralph Tunstall combined the post with the archdeaconry of Northumberland, his Durham canonry, and the rectory of Long Newton.⁵⁹ The officialty was held for longer periods, however, by laymen. Henry Dethicke LL.B., a master of requests, served as official from 1583 until Tunstall's appointment and after the latter's resignation Edward Hutton, another civilian and a kinsman of the archbishop, who had previously acted as deputy to Dethicke, held the post c. 1600-1622.⁶⁰ Both Dethicke and Hutton held other administrative and judicial posts. Thomas Burton appointed Dethicke principal surrogate in the consistory court in 1580.⁶¹ Hutton regularly assisted the chancellor in his visitations of Northumberland between 1599 and 1604 and in 1610 was appointed official to the archdeacon of Durham for life. In that post he was followed by another lawyer of the

57. Marcombe, 'Dean and Chapter', 311-48.

58. P.K. D. and C. Mun., D. and C. Reg. II, f. 138; III, f. 7.

59. Ibid. Officialty Act Bk. 1595-1606, ff. 6-12.

60. Ibid. 1583-6; 1595-1606, f. 111; D.R. III.3, ff. 51-61.

61. S.S. xxi. 23 sqq.; D.R. III.3, f. 235.

same family, Robert Hutton, who was commissioned as official of both archdeaconries in the 1620s.⁶²

A few clergy of lesser standing held similar appointments. William Harding, a minor canon and vicar of Heighington and Hart, preceded Dethicke as surrogate in the consistory court and also served as Stephenson's deputy in the officialty.⁶³ The latter post was often held by junior members of the cathedral staff. The numerous responsibilities of Henry Dethicke prompted him to appoint Robert Prentice as his own deputy in 1583. Prentice was a minor canon, curate of St. Giles's, Durham, and later curate of Whitworth and rector of Dinsdale. For at least eight years at the end of the 16th century he conducted courts and visitations in the city for the dean and chapter.⁶⁴ Commissions were also issued to groups of clergy, usually for a shorter term. One of the largest was appointed by William Morton in January 1604. Of the ten clergy named, four were prebendaries and the remaining six minor canons.

Between then and 1610 one, two, or occasionally three of the deputies would preside in the archdeacon's frequent absences.⁶⁵

The clergy of the city and cathedral also provided the surrogates and deputies who appeared only occasionally at courts or visitations. A few senior clergy gave temporary assistance to their colleagues; in 1578, for example, Bunny

62. D.R. II.4-5, passim; D.R. VIII.1, f. 247.

63. D.R. III.3, passim; P.K. D. and C. Mun., D. and C. Reg. III, f. 84.

64. P.K. D. and C. Mun., Officialty Act Bk. 1583-6, 5 Nov. 1583; S.S. lxxiv. 22-36.

65. D.R. VIII.1, f. 160 and passim.

was appointed with Harding to continue cases in the consistory court in the absence of Swift and Ewbanke and Henry Naunton presided when the chancellor himself was plaintiff in a tithe suit.⁶⁶ More frequently the surrogates were minor canons or parish clergy. In addition to Hutton and the commissioners of 1604, three other deputies presided over the archdeaconry court in Durham in the early 17th century. The most active was George Barker, minor canon and curate of Croxdale, who appeared in all 27 times between 1606 and 1615, apparently without receiving any official appointment. In 1605 and 1606 the lawyer Gilbert Spence, vicar of Tynemouth, presided at three sessions and in 1609 Henry Wandless, vicar of Monk Hesleden, served as the archdeacon's deputy on one occasion.⁶⁷

Most of those who took part in the administration of the southern archdeaconry and of the diocese, both centred in the city of Durham, were thus the cathedral clergy. Parish clergy were usually only called upon on the rare occasions that archidiaconal visitations were held in local centres.⁶⁸ They had a far more important part to play in Northumberland. In 157 Chancellor Swift established a separate organisation for the northern archdeaconry, duplicating the structure of the Durham consistory. The services of a deputy registrar were appropriated and William Duxfield, rector of Bothal and

66. D.R. VIII.3, f. 133; D.R. III.5, f. 266.

67. D.R. VIII.1, passim.

68. e.g. in Dec. 1608 the vicar, Isaac Lowden, presided at Darlington. D.R. VIII.1, f. 211.

Sheepwash, was appointed surrogate for Northumberland.⁶⁹ The parish clergy were more extensively employed by the chancellor in the visitations which took place at least once a year on his authority. Records survive of 348 meetings or sessions between 1595 and 1618, usually in the principal towns of the deaneries of Newcastle, Morpeth, Alnwick, and Corbridge,⁷⁰ and at Bamburgh, the dependent chapelry of Belford, or Berwick for the deanery of Bamburgh. The chancellor appeared at only 36 of the 269 sessions for which the presiding officer is known. In 1599, 1604, 1610, and 1613 Colmore visited most deaneries in person. Many other sessions between 1599 and 1604 were chaired by Edward Hutton, who presided at 72 meetings. The remaining sessions were conducted by parish clergy, a total of thirty individuals. Usually incumbents took responsibility for visitations held in or near their own parishes. Most acted as deputies to the chancellor no more than once or twice but three were particularly active. As vicar, William Morton presided at 20 meetings in Newcastle. John Willis, curate of Alnwick from 1605 to 1617 and vicar of Eglington from 1612 until 1627, chaired 34 sessions, most of them in Alnwick or Bamburgh. Between 1595 and 1608, William Assheton, vicar of Bywell St. Peter, deputised for Colmore once in his own church and on 19 occasions at Corbridge. The other deputies included a cross-section of the parochial clergy of the archdeaconry. Amongst them were the wealthiest and most senior incumbents, Archdeacon Craddocke himself, Ferdinand Moorcroft, rector of

69. D.R. III.3, f. 9 .

70. D.R. II.4-7.

Stanhope and a future prebendary, and Cuthbert Ridley of Simonburn, as well as one or two unbeneficed men, such as Thomas Falder, at that time curate of Morpeth, and John Frere, curate of Ancroft. The majority, however, were of middle rank, holding one or perhaps two parish benefices; Richard Lambert, for example, the vicar of Corbridge, who chaired four sessions in the town between 1616 and 1618, and Robert Mason of Woodhorn, who also presided there in 1595 and 1597.

The enforcement of discipline and morality was not left entirely to the traditional courts. Wider powers and sanctions were possessed by the ecclesiastical commission, a body of clergy and laity who derived their authority not from the church and canon law, but directly from the Crown. During the later 16th century commissions were used more extensively than ever before and became a familiar part of the machinery of church government. The title of "high commission" was usually given to the judges who met at Lambeth and were principally concerned with cases from the southern province. Although the act books of the Durham commissioners were described as the Acts of the High Commission in the Diocese of Durham when they were published in the 19th century, to their contemporaries they were known as "the Quenes or king's highnes Commissioners for the hearing and ordering and determyning of Causes ecclesiasticall".⁷¹

In the 17th century at least, the Durham commissioners were subject to their colleagues at York and even at Lambeth.

71. P.K. D. and C. Mun., York Dioc. Reg. DVI C Delta, f. 90; S.S. xxxiv. The most comprehensive discussion is R. G. Usher, The Rise and Fall of High Commission, (revised edn. with foreword by P. Tyler, 1968)

The archbishop of York occasionally summoned cases from Durham to the provincial capital and Peter Smart's virulence and the influence of his opponents secured for him the attention of the southern commissioners.⁷² The Durham commissioners usually sat as local representatives of the provincial court and were thus bound to respect the authority of the full northern commission. Only one piece of evidence suggests that they at some time formed an independent body. In 1578 articles of enquiry were issued in Durham on behalf of the bishop and others, described as commissioners for ecclesiastical causes within the diocese.⁷³ A number of diocesan commissions were established during the 1570s, for example at Gloucester and Canterbury, and the Durham commission may have been part of a wider experiment in diocesan government.⁷⁴ If so, it was short-lived. By the end of the century the Durham judges were included in a single commission published for the northern province and that remained the normal procedure until the abolition of the court by the Long Parliament.⁷⁵

The purpose of the late-16th-century commissions was the imposition of conformity. In the north-east, Catholic recusants rather than radical Protestants were the target. In

72. S.S. xxxiv. 21, 204.

73. P.K. D. and C. Mun., York Dioc. Reg. DVI C Delta, ff. 90-3.

74. The Commission of Ecclesiastical Causes within the dioceses of Bristol and Gloucester, 1574 (Bristol and Glos. Arch. Soc. Records Section, x); P. Clark, 'The ecclesiastical commission at Canterbury, 1572-1603', Archaeologia Cantiana, lxxxix. 186.

75. D. and C. Libr., Raine MS. 124, ff. 60, 210; T. Rymer, Foedera, xvi. 386.

1596 Toby Matthew expressed his concern that the wording and personnel of the most recent commission left it too weak to take adequate measures against the numerous papists in the diocese but he made no mention of any other duties.⁷⁶ The commission was, however, empowered to hear almost any issue which might otherwise have come before the traditional church courts. Their attention was particularly directed to serious cases of immorality and blasphemy and damage to or disrespect for the property and officers of the church. Between 1614 and 1617, the first years for which an act book of the Durham commission survives, Catholic nonconformity continued to provide the greater part of the court's business, although time was also devoted to disciplinary and moral cases.⁷⁷ The act books of the 1620s present a very different picture. Catholics were still prosecuted for obstinate recusancy and clandestine marriage. Under the influence of Bishop Neile, however, the commissioners were far more concerned than before with suits arising from the physical or verbal abuse of the clergy or of church buildings and goods.⁷⁸ In the last fifteen years of its existence, the Durham commission became a weapon used by the clergy for the defence of their own persons and status.

The change in the use of the commission was accompanied

76. Hist. MS. Com. 9, Hatfield, vi, pp. 62-3. Matthew to Id.

Burleigh, 20 Feb. 1596; 72-3. Same to same, 28 Feb. 1596.

77. D. and C. Libr., Act Bk. of Eccl. Commrs. 1614-17.

78. Cal. Pat. 1572-5, 168-9.

by a change in its composition, which made greater demands upon the diocesan clergy. In the latter part of the 16th century and the first decades of the 17th, a substantial number of commissioners were lay nobility, gentry, and officials. Of approximately 70 members of the northern commission of 1573, the first for which a full list survives, 9 had some direct connection with the diocese of Durham either as residents or office holders. The leading secular politicians and administrators, the march wardens and the governor of Berwick, were joined with their ecclesiastical counterparts, the bishop, dean, and spiritual chancellor. Only one other Durham clergyman was included, Leonard Pilkington, who possessed the requisite social and political standing both as a brother of the bishop and as a former master of St. John's College, Cambridge.⁷⁹ The proportion of clergy was higher in the commission of 1599, 18 out of 27 members from Durham. The number of commissioners with interests in the diocese reached a peak in that year, although in some cases possession of a Durham living was incidental to the appointment. Roger Acroft, for example, was named not as rector of Winston and Whalton, but as a prebendary of York. The representation of the diocesan clergy was extended to include the archdeacons of Durham and Northumberland in addition to three distinguished and able men who held only parochial livings; Thomas Burton, the former chancellor, John Hutton, royal chaplain and rector of Gateshead, and William Morton, at that time a preacher at Newcastle.⁸⁰ In the south of England, greater clerical strength on the commissions was associated with Whitgift's drive

79. Cal. Pat. 1572-5, 168-9.

80. Rymer, Foedera, xvi. 396.

for conformity within the Church of England. In the diocese of Chester, in contrast, the puritans themselves were responsible for the inclusion of a number of lecturers and parochial incumbents in the commission of 1598.⁸¹ Chester may have set the precedent for Durham, at that time under Bishop Matthew, but whatever its cause the alteration in membership did not last. Within four years the proportion of clergy was again similar to that of the 1570s, although they were still present in greater numbers than in the earlier commissions. In 1602 1 commissioners with Durham connections were appointed; half were clergy. The archdeacon of Durham now had a perpetual place on the commission and he was joined by four prebendaries. The chief omission was of clergy from Northumberland and of those who held only parochial livings, although Burton was still included.⁸² By the 1620s the commission presented a very different appearance. Clergy dominated the membership to an extent unknown even in 1599. Of 17 Durham members in 1625, only two were laymen, the temporal chancellor and Joseph Cradocke, son of the spiritual chancellor and lay rector of Middleton St. George. In addition to the senior clergy of the diocese, four parish incumbents were included. All were closely associated with the episcopal administration or held wealthy livings; Thomas Jackson, rector of Winston and vicar

1. Clark, 'Ecclesiastical commission at Canterbury', 183-8; R. B. Manning, 'The making of a Protestant aristocracy; the ecclesiastical commission in the diocese of Chester', Bull. Inst. Hist. Res. xlviii. 64.

82. Hist. MSS. Com. 9, Hatfield, xv, pp. 364-5.

of Newcastle, John Liveley, vicar of Gainford and Kelloe, Robert Brooke, rector of Whickham, and Laurence Hinton, rector of Houghton le Spring.⁸³

The contrast between a court in which senior clergy cooperated with members of the lay establishment for the preservation of moral and religious order and an instrument of correction wielded by the clergy alone in defence of their own kind was not as stark in practice as appears from these commissions. The earliest record of regular attendance at the sittings of the court is the act book of 1614-17. The business of the commission was even then transacted by clergy. The commissioners who appeared most frequently were Bishop James and his chancellor. Three prebendaries, Robert Hutton, Ferdinand Moorcroft, and Marmaduke Blakiston also attended regularly. Only one lay gentleman, Sir Charles Wren, was present more than three or four times in the three years. In the 1620s and 1630s, however, the lay presence had virtually disappeared. Apart from successive lay chancellors of the Bishopric, the sittings of the commission were entirely clerical occasions. The most conscientious members were those who also made frequent appearances at quarter sessions; Archdeacon Clerke, Francis Burgoine, and Marmaduke Blakiston of the prebendaries, and also John Liveley and Andrew Pernes, the two parish clergymen most heavily involved in local government, both secular and ecclesiastical.

83. Durham Univ. Libr., Mickleton and Spearman MS. 49.1.

11. Parish Clergy and Parish Government.

As secular and religious politics were entangled at county level, so in the parish civil and ecclesiastical government became inextricably mixed. The chief officials of the parish had responsibilities in both spheres. Originally officers of the congregation answerable to the church courts, the churchwardens were also the principal representatives of the parish to the secular authorities.⁸⁴ The clergy, in their turn, had a short-lived responsibility for the administration of the poor law and a more lasting part in the control of vagrancy.⁸⁵ When justices of the peace sought information about recusancy, they naturally summoned incumbents or curates as well as churchwardens to report on the state of their parishes.⁸⁶ More surprisingly, they occasionally expected ministers to take joint responsibility for civil matters, such as the poor rate, even in the 17th century.⁸⁷ Under stress, the county governors could turn to the clergy as reliable men of certain standing in their parishes. In 1637 the sheriff of Northumberland was unable to obtain assessments for ship money by the orthodox method, since "the constables in that place are much meaner than in other parts of the kingdom, both in respect of quality and abilities."⁸⁸ He therefore

84. E. Mason, 'The role of the English parishioner, 1100-1500', Jnl. Ecc. Hist. xxvii. 17-28.

85. 5 & 6 Edw. VI, c. 2; 5 Eliz. I, c. 3 and 4.

86. Examples from Pittington are in S.S. lxxxiv. 39, 45.

87. Emsley and Fraser, 'Justices of the peace for the County Palatine', 391.

88. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1636-7, 490. Sir William Widdrington to the Clerk to the Council, 8 Mar. 1637. No other mention has been found of the employment of clergy in the assessment or collection of ship money.

held meetings in every division of the county to which he summoned "two of the ablest men in every parish, with the parsons and constables" to provide the necessary information. Unfortunately there is no record of any response to the intrusion of the clergy into so sensitive an area of financial administration.

In the internal affairs of the parish, the minister was recognised as one of a ruling group which also included the churchwardens and often the members of the select vestry. As the only officer appointed by external authority and usually a stranger, he was, however, set apart from the others. In some respects he was their official superior. Although ministerial consent to the election of churchwardens is rarely recorded in surviving vestry and account books, it was required by canon and was specifically obtained at least in the parishes of Pitlington, Houghton le Spring, and Whitburn.⁸⁹ Although assistants to the churchwardens, sidesmen, and overseers were all appointed without reference to the minister, one other important office, that of parish clerk, was under his influence. The canons of 160⁴₃ specified that in the province of Canterbury the appointment was entirely in the hands of the minister but no mention was made of the northern province.⁹⁰ Clerical independence does not seem to have extended so far in Durham but in several parishes the incumbent exercised the right of nomination and elsewhere the procedure was that used for the

89. S.S. lxxiv, passim; D.C.R.O. EP/Whit 1, p. 115.

90. Canons 113, 119 of 160⁴₃.

election of churchwardens, by consent of minister, parishioners, and select vestry.⁹¹ The duties of the clerk, the day-to-day maintenance of the furniture and ornaments of the church and the smooth and orderly performance of services, made him the natural ally of the minister and in the records of the church courts there are many instances of cooperation between them against troublesome parishioners.⁹²

The most important decisions facing the parish hierarchy were usually financial. Some parishes received rents from houses or other property, others benefitted from the profits of a parish flock, but most raised money by cessments or rates. Whatever the means, the management of parish funds was in the hands of the parishioners or the select vestry. When they met, for example to decide on the levying of a parish rate, the purpose for which the proceeds were to be used determined whether the minister was associated with the decision. Contributions for the poor, repair of highways, or of gaols were raised without reference to the clergy. Repairs to the church, the replacement of books, or the renewal of ornaments were usually, although not invariably, discussed in the minister's presence and organised with his approval.⁹³ The incumbent or curate was also likely to be present when some more general regulation of parish life was attempted. In 1608 the vicar, churchwardens, and twenty-four of St. Oswald's, Durham, agreed to rules for the conduct of the parish clerk and sacriston, seating in the church, vestry meetings, and the rendering of

91. S.S. lxxxiv. 294; D.C.R.O. EP/Be 51, p. 219; EP/Au St H 1, p. 93; St. Oswald's Church Accounts, 1639.

92. e.g. S.S. xxxiv. 85-6, 297; D.C.R.O. EP/Da SC 35, p. 79; S.S. xxi. 287.

93. e.g. at Whitburn, 5 May 1632, a decision "by the 24 of this parish together with the Mynister of the same that there shalbe 2s 6d of every pound of the Auncient rent to be levied by the churchwardens and disposed for the good of the church" D.C.R.O. EP/Whit 1, p. 2.

accounts, in the hope of countering "the many fautes disorders and filchinges commytted in and about the said church by the negligence of inferior officers." The code was referred to the bishop for his approval but not to any secular authority, although it determined the procedure of the vestry and churchwardens in their civil as well as their religious capacity.⁹⁴

In matters where they might be expected to have special knowledge or interest, the clergy were often commissioned to act on behalf of the parish. Incumbents and curates supplied new copies of service books and compulsory texts and arranged for rebinding of old ones.⁹⁵ More lasting arrangements were made for the clergy to take over the churchwardens' responsibility for the provision of the communion bread and wine in return for a suitable payment. The financial arrangements at Pittington, for example, were elaborate. In 1595 the vicar, William Murray, agreed to supply the elements in return for the customary payment of 2d. p.a. from every house in the parish. Since that was expected to amount to more than the actual cost, he was to contribute a lamb to the parish flock each year. A more domestic image is conjured up by the churchwardens' accounts of Kirk Merrington, where for many years a regular payment of a few pence was made to the curate's wife for washing the church cloths.⁹⁶

94. S.S. lxxxiv. 213-15.

95. e.g. ibid. 45.

96. S.S. lxxxiv. 37, 42 ; cf. D.C.R.O. EP/Mer 34, pp. 7 et seq.

Even where he did not participate in the making of decisions, the clergyman was often called upon as a witness and record keeper. Many parish clerks had custody of registers and accounts, especially in the richer parishes, but a fair proportion of surviving parish records were kept by incumbents or curates. At Kirk Merrington the curate always attended the annual audit of the accounts on the Tuesday after Easter and the dinner which followed it. The curate of Ryton wrote and checked the parish accounts in the 1630s, signing them as "perused by me William Hancocke".⁹⁷ In the same volumes or in the parish register there often appear over the signature of the incumbent notes of decision affecting every aspect of parish life. It was in the interest of the minister to ensure that a clear record was kept of anything which affected his own rights or those of his successors and occasionally registers contain copies of a judgement on contested tithing rights or responsibility for the repair of the church fabric.⁹

There were other rewards for supplying the parish's frequent need for a scribe. Most churchwardens' accounts note the payment of a small fee to the writer; in Ryton 2s. was the standard rate between 1595 and 1640. James Calfhill, vicar of St. Oswald's, Durham, was paid 18d. in 1595 for preparing presentments for the archdeacon's visitation. At

97. D.C.R.O. EP/Mer 34, passim; EP/Ryt 1, ff. 227 sqq.

98. The register of Auckland St. Helen contains a copy of a deposition in a tithe suit, recorded by the curate presumably for the benefit of his successors. Ibid. Au SH 2.

Whitburn, successive vicars and curates received a fee of 4d. from individual parishioners for the registration of their rights to church stalls.⁹⁹ Some clergy obviously took pride and pleasure in the keeping of parish records. When reinstated after a brief suspension from his ministry in 1633, John Vaux of St. Helen Auckland pointed out with proprietorial disapproval that the temporary curate had failed to enter all the marriages and baptisms and that those which he had recorded were "registered disorderly". The register, in particular, might be treated by the incumbent as his own, the proper place for the expression of his religious and political sentiments. At the beginning of the register of St. Oswald's, Charles Moberly, vicar from 1575 to 1593, set a grandiloquent announcement that it was to be kept in accordance with the Royal Injunctions by himself and the churchwardens

"whose doinges God directe to hys glorie and profett of the sayd parysshe, and to the mantayning of the queenes Majesties godly procedinges, whom God preserve to Regne over us, to the abolysshment of popery and strange and false Relgion, and to the Mentenyng [sic] of the Gospell. Grant O Lord, yt she may long continewe a Mother in Israel with prosperous healthe, honor and felycitie, and after thys her gret government in thys lyffe she may with Moyses, Josua, Debora and other godly [rulers] injoy a crowne of aeternall glory, good Reder say Amen."¹⁰⁰

99. S.S. lxxxiv. 124; D.C.R.O. EP/Ryt 1, passim; EP/Whit 1, pp. 49-61.

100. D.C.R.O. EP/Au SH 1, pp. 79, 90; Parish Registers of St. Oswald's, ed. A. W. Headlam, 24.

The minister's authority in the daily occurrences of parish life might derive considerable strength from the support of local gentlemen and landowners. Only a few instances have been found of parish clergy formally employed by local landlords; one example is that of Thomas Gray of Ponteland, who acted as steward of the Northumberland estates of his relative Lord Grey.¹⁰¹ Oversight of farms and estates were more likely to be undertaken by a domestic chaplain such as Sir Claudius Forster's Mr. Marlowe.¹⁰² The performance even of minor services, however, could establish a claim on the goodwill of men whose influence was all important in the parish. George Forrest, curate of Alnham, felt he had such a claim on the earl of Northumberland as a result of his efforts "to set forth the truth of the state and valew of your honours memorie there to all such officers as had any occasion to enquire of the same." That exercise in public relations had earlier won commendation from Northumberland and at the time of writing, in 1620, Forrest hoped that it would move the earl to intervene with his subordinates to protect the curate's living.¹⁰³

A closer relationship existed between Richard Milner, curate of Lanchester and Eshe from c. 1562 until 1586, and William Hodgson, farmer of the deanery of Lanchester and thus probably Milner's patron and employer. The curate took no practical part in the administration either of the inappropriate tithes held by Hodgson or of his lands. He did, however, act

101. The Petition by the Parishioners of Pont Island against Dr Gray (1642).

102. D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 7.2. A clergyman to Mr. Marlow, 1623; 7.3. Sir Claudius Forster to same, 1 June -.

103. Alnwick Castle, Sion MS. Q.III. 2a. 5. Forrest to Northumberland, 25 Oct. 1620.

as the channel of communication between Hodgson and the parishioners. Public announcements, for example, about the manner of tithing were made by him in the churches of Lanchester and Eshe. His son Michael worked for Hodgson, helping his servants in the collection of tithes. On one occasion Michael Milner passed on to his employer a report of improper tithing methods which had first been drawn to his father's attention by another parishioner. In return for such cooperation, Hodgson established himself as Milner's protector, speaking on his behalf when the curate was accused in the consistory of drunkenness and brawling. He spoke appreciatively of Milner's character and sought to excuse conduct which he could not deny, since Milner was "a very earnest malincolye man and some tymes gyven to be angrye, and yett not in such raidge that ever he knew that therin he was gyven to fighte or brawle." 104

The close relationship which could exist between a patron and his presentee is well illustrated in the letters of Nathaniel Ward, vicar of Staindrop, to Sir Henry Vane of Raby. During Vane's absence, Ward reported on the progress of his domestic affairs, particularly the maintenance of the garden and grounds of the castle. Vicar and patron also cooperated for the common good. In March 1639 Ward reported that "touching the business of providing for the poore, & suppressing of superfluous ale-houses", matters had gone from bad to worse and compared very unfavourably with the relatively law-abiding south of England which he had recently left. One major problem was the lack of any resident justice of the peace in the immediate locality.

104. D.R. V.4, ff. 53-8, 64-8, 122-5.

Until a remedy was found, Ward was making himself

"very troublesome among my parishioners, both to present officers, for neglect of their duties & tiplers for their notorious disorders, which course (mingled with all possible indulgence) till I understand the world better, I purpose to continewe till either the delinquents are a weary of there disorders, or the magistrates ashamed of the neglect."

The correspondent of Basire, Ward was to die in the royalist army at the siege of Millom Castle in 1644.¹⁰⁵ Although it is in the context of militant puritanism that 'godly magistracy' and its consequences have received most attention, the close association of minister and gentleman in the promotion of civil order was not therefore an ideal or a practice followed only in one wing of the church. The relationship of Ward and Vane looked forward to the alliance of squire and parson which was later to be an accepted feature of English rural life.

The ideal of civil order had its religious counterpart in the concept of Christian brotherhood and the sanctions designed to encourage the latter could be used to safeguard the former.

105. S.P. 16/447/76. Ward to Vane, 10 Mar. 1639; S.P. 16/450/78. Same to same, 13 Apr. 1640; Surtees, Durham, iv. 139-40. Ecclesiastical landlords might have been expected to make similar use of parish clergy but evidence of this is limited. The dean and chapter communicated with their tenants at Billingham through the vicar, Christopher Boak, a minor canon. D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 11.17. There is little indication that the bishops employed clergy in the management of their estates; cf. P. M. Horton, 'The administrative, social, and economic structure of the Durham Bishopric Estates, 1500-1600', (Durham Univ. M.Litt. thesis, 1975), passim. Even the identification of John, brother of Bp. Barnes and rec. Haughton le Skerne, as clerk to the coroner and of the chancery is doubtful, *ibid.* 133. Amongst payments made by the clerk of the great receipt, 1594-5, the only clergyman mentioned is the master of Durham grammar school, *ibid.* 551-4.

The preservation of mutual charity or its restoration were the peculiar responsibility of the parish clergy, to be fulfilled by use of the rules governing admission to communion. Prosecutions for failure to attend or receive communion because the offender was out of charity with a neighbour were numerous. Sometimes the laity took the initiative themselves; George Cowdrie of Darlington refused to receive the sacrament at Easter, 1600, "alleging that he is not in charitie with Fraunces Oswald and William Howitson. He saith no man shall make him in charitie until the matters be ended betwixt him and them." When the vicar attempted to persuade him to change his mind, his only response was to become "outragious".¹⁰⁶ Resort to law may have been the generally accepted proof of the interruption of charity. Clergy often chose to intervene in a dispute when legal action was initiated, even when there was no question of absence from communion. On hearing of a defamation case between two women of his chapelry, Walter Denton curate of St. Andrew's, Newcastle, approached Isabel Hearon, the plaintiff, to "entreate her that the suit betwixte her and Eliz-¹⁰⁷abeth Hall might be taken upp and they mad loves and freindes ...". The clergyman could always justify involvement by virtue of his office; "I have to do therewith, bycause they are my parishioners and by the auctoritie I have under my lord of Durham to bringe them to good order and quietness", said Milner of Lanchester in a similar situation.¹⁰⁸ Almost every such case before the ecclesiastical courts thus represented a failure of

106. D.R. VIII.1, f. 16v.

107. D.R. V.7, f. 255.

108. D.R. V.4, f. 291.

the clerical office of peacemaking. Their successes went almost unrecorded, except for the rare commendation of outstanding pastoral work by men like Gilpin.¹⁰⁹

After Gilpin's time and perhaps with his example in mind, the function of the clergyman as arbitrator and reconciler was given official recognition at Houghton le Spring and incorporated into the formal pattern of parish life. On 26 April 1603 it was agreed by Robert Hutton D.D., the rector, and the gentlemen and twenty four

"that all controversies present, and which shall hereafter arise and growe, betwixte anie of the parishioners of this parish shalbe referred to the arbitrament and judgement and endinge of foure of the gentlemen, or of foure of the foure and twentie to be equallie chosen by the parties at variance, and of the Parson of Houghton aforesaid for the time beinge, who is to be umpier in everie arbitrament."

If the matter were "weightie and doubtful", the opinion of counsel was to be taken at the cost of the parties, who were then to submit themselves to the decision of the umpire and arbitrators. Should the dispute be between the rector and a parishioner, another umpire was to be selected by the vestry.¹¹⁰

109. W. Gilpin, Life of Bernard Gilpin, 165.

110. S.S. lxxiv. 282.

The scheme may have started well but became less effective after a while. In 1633 the rector, either Laurence Hinton or Hamlet Marshall, and the vestry recorded that

"this pious order haveng lyen fruitlesse for divers yeares last by past the parishioners of the said parish is growne to such a height of malice and contention as it hath caused the knights, the parson of Houghton and the gentlemen and 24 of the said parish, to take into there considerations what might be the causes why the aforesaid order, being made to so good and religious an end, should worke no better effect."

The explanation, they decided, was threefold. No provision had been made for the absence of the rector or the vacancy of his living, so that without him nothing could be done. There was no set procedure for lodging information or applying for arbitration. The decisions of the arbitrators could not be enforced for lack of any sanction or penalty. Additional rules were therefore formulated. The vestry was empowered to appoint a substitute umpire acceptable to both parties in case of the rector's absence. Any parishioner who would normally have sought redress for his grievances at law was to approach the rector or curate

"and shall desire him to give notice upon a Sunday in ye forenoone in the time of divine service, to ye knights, the Parson of Houghton, ye gentlemen & ye 24 of ye parish and the partie against whome any complainte is or shalbe made, to meete in the vestry

presently after the ending of the service or sermon about the publick affairs of the parish, at which meeting, the partie or parties complayning shall demonstrate the Cause of his or there defence, so as the controverise may receive a present end

If the issue were too difficult for immediate resolution, time would be allowed for the consultation of legal advisers and a second meeting held. Anyone who failed to go through the form or refused to abide by the decision of the arbitrators would be fined an unspecified sum by the overseers for the benefit of the parish poor fund. So that none could claim ignorance of the general agreement, the rector or curate was to read the regulations in full at the end of morning service one Sunday and the parishioners would then have a week in which to enter any objections. The names of those who dissented were to be entered beside the regulations in the church books. No such list was included in the records, so the entire parish presumably agreed to the scheme. Whether it succeeded in reducing the amount of contention is impossible to say. Certainly it did not end all litigation within the parish; Hamlet Marshall brought several tithe cases against parishioners in the consistory court during the later 1630s.¹¹¹

The principal source of ministerial authority on matters of morality or ecclesiastical discipline was not, however, parochial custom or the limited sanctions which the clergyman

111. Ibid. 300; Houghton 1e Spring Churchwardens' Bk. 1595-1670, ff. 123-4; D.R. III. 12, f. 137; D.R. III. 14. 12 and 19 Oct. 1638, 27 Sept., 8 Oct. 1639.

might impose on his own initiative, but his role as intermediary between his parishioners and the church courts. Citations to offenders and witnesses were often published by the clergyman in church. He certified the performance of penance, or any other requirement of the courts, and was frequently empowered to absolve those who had incurred excommunication. Those duties were regulated by the orders of the ecclesiastical judges, but the parish clergyman was more than the obedient mouthpiece of the judiciary. Changes in canon law justified and indeed required an active part in initiating disciplinary proceedings. The provisions of 1604 did not go unmarked; in the 1620s and 1630s visitation articles for the diocese and archdeaconery of Durham stress the minister's responsibility for assisting, and if necessary supplementing the churchwardens' presentments.¹¹²

The division of responsibility in practice is difficult to establish since the consistory act books rarely mention the origin of an office case and no presentments survive from visitations. Responsibility for presentations to a lesser court is, however, recorded in the act book for the archdeaconery of Durham for the period 1600-1619 in which the source of the 'detection' on which the prosecution was based is given in the great majority of actions.¹¹³ An analysis of detections for the period March 1600-December 1603 shows that the general

112. D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 67. Articles of Bp. Neile, 1; articles of Archd. Clerke, 1, 10; articles of Bp. Morton, 2.

113. D.R. VIII.1.

pattern conformed to that laid down in successive articles and injunctions. The churchwardens played by far the greatest part in reporting offences and their efforts were supported by the apparitors who usually initiated actions on the grounds of common fame or notoriety. Even before the passage of the new canons, however, some clergy were responsible for prosecutions for immorality or anti-social behaviour. In 16 of the 61 parishes from which offenders came before the court, at least one detection was submitted by the minister. Some led to routine prosecutions for common offences, and there is no obvious explanation for the minister's intervention.¹¹⁴ Others involved peculiarly flagrant breaches of the moral code which aroused strong feeling in the parishes and prompted clergy and churchwardens to act in concert. Darlington was particularly notable for such cooperation; the vicar added the weight of his authority to the churchwardens' pr sentment thr e times in the three years. On the last occasion, in June 1602, James Askerigge was prosecuted for drunkenness and blasphemy. The charge, and therefore presumably the detection, quoted the offensive words verbatim, and included an "earnest" request from vicar and churchwardens that Askerigge should be duly punished.¹¹⁵

Tensions within the parish hierarchy also prompted clerical action. In four parishes or chapelries, ministers laid information either against the churchwardens for negligence,

114. e.g. D.R. VIII.1, ff. 8, 9, 26. Cases of fornication and absence from church.

115. D.R. VIII.1, ff. 56, 103v.

or against parishioners whom they had failed to present.¹¹⁶ They were equally responsive to threats to their own authority. Several detections were of men who might rival them in their peculiar spheres of influence and ability. The only prosecution initiated by the curate of St Nicholas's, Durham, was of William Dixdail, who

"teacheth a schole secretlie in a chamber in widow Robinson her house the doore for the most parte locked to him, and will suffer none to knowe what he teacheth, and he having no licence so do doe." ¹¹⁷

At Barnard Castle, where there was a higher proportion of clerical detections than from any other parish or chapelry, the curate faced a greater challenge.¹¹⁸ Twice he laid information as a result of his conflict with Michael Walker, the preacher, who also claimed to exercise a ministry in the town. One charge was made against a parishioner "unlawfully" churched by his rival, the other against Walker himself.¹¹⁹

Ministerial action was not restricted to the processes of ecclesiastical justice. As in cases of defamation or breach of charity, presentation for immorality often followed a rebuke from the incumbent or curate which had failed to bring about any amendment in conduct. In the actions which came before the courts reproofs, exhortations, or even sanctions

116. D.R. VIII.1, ff. 14, 82, 117. The parishes and chapelries were Barnard Castle, Denton, (both in Gainford), Whickham, and Conniscliffe.

117. D.R. VIII.1, f. 56.

118. 6 out of 24.

119. D.R. VIII.1, ff. 8v. 181.

administered by the clergyman within the parish had often caused aggravation of the offence rather than restoring good order. As rector of Whitburn Leonard Pilkington refused to marry Robert Acre to the sister of a woman by whom he had already had an illegitimate child, unless he obtained the expression permission of the consistory court. Unwilling to rely upon a favourable response, Acre bribed the curate of nearby Tynemouth to perform the ceremony without further question.¹²⁰

An aspect of moral regulation with which the clergy were more commonly concerned was the problem of bastardy. The court records frequently state that the mother of an illegitimate child made a confession to the minister and sometimes also to the churchwardens. Moral exhortation no doubt formed some part of the conferences but they also served a more practical purpose; if the child's father could be identified, the burden of maintenance would fall upon him and not on the parish.¹²¹ Conscientious clergy therefore subjected offenders to searching enquiry; in Darlington and Norton, at the turn of the century, interrogation by the vicar was said to be the "accustomed practice" in such circumstances. In one case from Norton, a rare glimpse is caught of the vicar's wife, active in the same

120. D.R. V.4, f. 111; S. xxi. 308-9.

121. For that reason 18 Eliz. I, c. 1 required the examination of mothers of illegitimate children before birth but the statute implied that the responsibility lay with the justices rather than the parish officers.

cause; Mrs. Rand was one of the "goodwives" present at the birth of Jane Fowler's child and reported her somewhat tangled account of its paternity.¹²² Bastardy was not only a matter for rigorous condemnation, however. When Janet Spence returned in poverty to the parish of Hurworth and gave birth to her illegitimate child in circumstances of great distress, the rector, George Tayler, took the lead in organising the charitable assistance which was her first need.¹²³ In the city of Durham, the curates of St. Nicholas's and St. Giles's churches regularly stood as godparents to illegitimate children, presumably an office which few others were willing to undertake.¹²⁴

The defence of the moral order was an ancient problem and the clergy faced it with the ancient weapon of the church's courts. Of the innovations of the period in ecclesiastical discipline, the subtle changes in canon law had little practical impact. The clergy were already using every means to hand to compensate for the loss of the traditional disciplinary instruments of confession and penance. Exclusion from communion, private rebuke, and interrogation, not only of the mothers of illegitimate children but of every kind of sinner, and clerical initiation of court action were well-tried devices before 1603. Since sins against the moral code were so often

122. D.R. IV.4, 10 Mar. 1599; D.R. V.7, ff. 159-60, 193, 204-5.

123. S.S. xxi. 302-4.

124. Parish Registers of St. Oswald's, ed. Headlam. William Calamer, vicar of Conniscliffe, performed the same office in 1602; E. Mackenzie and M. Ross, The County Palatine of Durham, ii. 179.

seen as threats to civil order, it was natural that the increasing exercise of authority by the lower clergy outside their own parishes should extend not only to religious matters, in the ecclesiastical commission, but also to secular affairs regulated by justices of the peace and the numerous other commissions appointed by the central government. Parish clergy were thus endowed with a new authority which not only widened their horizons but also placed a new strain upon their relations with the lay community. The response of the clergy to their changing position and of their parishioners forms the subject of the following final chapter.

Chapter VII

Clergy and People.

The post-reformation clergy retained a distinctive place in English society which was not effectively challenged until the Civil War brought an end to government support for their monopoly of preaching, liturgy, and moral discipline. Yet much that had set the medieval priest apart from his flock had been lost. The Arminians could do little to revive the popular respect which had attended the semi-magical powers of the celebrant of the mass. Marriage gave the minister new ties of kinship and a share in his parishioners' concern for the future of a legitimate family. What remained of the clerical claim to a monopoly of learning was further undermined as laymen attended schools and universities in increasing numbers. The reaction of the clergy to their changed circumstances has been interpreted as a vigorous assertion of professional pride and authority, encouraged by better education and the shared experience of university life.¹ That was not, however, the only possible response; a man who was accepted by the lay community he served might find that the interests of a father and property holder countered those of a common calling. Examples are given below of both professional solidarity amongst the parish clergy and integration in lay society. The approach is of necessity illustrative since the sources used, principally letters, wills, and court records, are rarely susceptible to more formal analysis. They do, however, cast

1. O'Day, 'Reformation of the Ministry', 55, 74-5; O'Day, 'Clerical Patronage and Recruitment', 356-79.

light upon the attitudes of clergy towards their people and position and of laymen towards their ministers.

1. Ministers and Colleagues.

The sense that theirs was a place apart from the ordinary sphere of lay occupations was not lacking amongst the clergy of Durham. Others would no doubt have endorsed Thomas Oxley's exaltation of the distinctive character of

"..... the Minister and Messenger of God, who is the eye of the world and as it were a Sunne in the Firmament of the Church, to disperse the clouds of ignorance, and give light unto such as sit in darknesse"²

A similar enthusiasm was expressed by a handful of clergy who made some mention of their ministry in their wills. Thomas Handley of Warkworth and Woodhorn, for example, asked to be buried in Woodhorn church, "under the table, where I have often celebrat the holie communion, to my great comfort."³ Pride in a personal vocation and its fulfilment did not, however, presuppose a sense of identity with others who shared in the work of the ministry. By definition, the parish clergy worked for the most part in isolation, in teams of two or three at the most in the rural parishes. They were denied the powerful cohesive influence of constant association which kept alive a sense of unity amongst the cathedral clergy in spite of bitter divisions over national and diocesan politics, sustained by chapter meetings, the common table of the minor canons, resi-

2. T. Oxley, The Shepheard (1609), sig. 134.

3. S.S. cxii. 145.

dence in the college, and shared liturgical duties.⁴ If there was to be professional solidarity among the parish clergy, they or their superiors had to make available means of communication or, even better, of meeting to acknowledge and share their common concerns.

Of the various gatherings summoned by diocesan officers, the visitations and general chapters to which incumbents of a single deanery were summoned were probably the least influential in creating a common clerical identity. They were not yet the sociable gatherings of clergy and officials which they became in the 18th century.⁵ Matters of specifically clerical interest took second place to parish business. The clergymen arrived in the company of the churchwardens and his expenses, like theirs, were usually paid by the parish.⁶ The greater clergy attached little importance to such occasions and frequently delegated the duty of attendance.⁷ The diocesan synod, in contrast, was a predominantly clerical meeting which brought together incumbents and curates from the whole diocese. The attendance of parish officers was occasional and probably a matter of administrative convenience rather than custom.⁸ The medieval tradition of the synod was maintained

4. Marcombe, 'Dean and Chapter', 28-9; D. Marcombe, 'Durham Dean and Chapter; old abbey writ large?', in Continuity and Change, R. O'Day and F. Heal eds., 143.

5. e.g. as described by A. Warne, Church and Society in 18th century Devon, 12-13.

6. e.g. S.S. lxxxiv. 30, 34, 59.

7. D.C.R.O. EP/Mer 34, pp. 13, 15, 18, 20.

8. Ibid. p. 11; S.S. lxxxiv. 16.

in the later 16th century and under Bishop Barnes clerical meetings were given a new importance. Pilkington had enforced attendance at an annual synod on pain of excommunication.⁹ Barnes imposed the same penalty for unlicensed absence from meetings to be held in the Galilee of the cathedral after Easter and Michaelmas every year. They took place throughout his episcopate, except in 1581 when the Michaelmas synod was cancelled to make way for the triennial visitation.¹⁰ Toby Matthew preached before synods as bishop and under Morton they still took place annually;¹¹ although the records are less full after the 1580s, the synod thus seems to have survived. Its business was the instruction of the clergy in their duties. Practical directions were published, including the details of Barnes's scheme of additional preaching. Equally important was the opportunity to lecture the assembled clergy on their responsibilities. In 1578 Robert Swift, as the bishop's deputy, delivered an address "*praecipue suas curas et officiis pastoralis concernentes*".¹² In addition to the presidential exhortation, there was a sermon which usually played on the same theme. In 1603 Bishop Matthew selected as his text 1 Tim. 4 v. 12; "be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity

9. D.R. III.3, ff. 23, 40.

10. S.S. xxi. 11-111; D.R. II.1, ff. 22-74; D.R. II.2, ff. 9-151.

11. York Min. Libr., MS. A.18, pp. 766, 72; S.P. 16/412/45. Bp.

Morton's certificate of state of diocese, 15 Feb. 1639.

12. S.S. xxi. 81-91.

in spirit, in faith, in purity."¹³ Five years later William Morton appointed Thomas Oxley to preach at the synod in his place and in time received the dedication of The Shepheard.¹⁴

The opportunity offered by the synod for the airing of common concerns perhaps removed an impetus towards unofficial but organised interim gatherings on the lines of the classes of the radical puritans or, except in south Durham, of the combination lectures so popular in East Anglia and the Midlands. In the months between synods, individual clergy maintained social contacts with their fellows as they had inclination or ability. Depositions in the church courts occasionally give a glimpse of the friendship which grew up. In 1629 Henry Johnson, rector of Bothal, gave evidence in a tithe suit from the parish of Elsdon. Although the cures lay twenty miles apart, he had struck up a friendship with Isaac Marrow, the rector, within a year of the latter's institution in 1625. They visited each other's parishes and discussed the interests which they shared, including the management of clerical income. Johnson was thus able to give an account of Marrow's proposal to lease out the temporalities of his living, which had been the subject of conversations both at his own house at Bothal and during rides taken together in the neighbourhood of Elsdon.¹⁵

For many clergy, distance was a barrier to contact with their fellows but they could always communicate by letter. Correspondence, of course, widened social and cultural horizons considerably; as was described above, university contacts and

13. York Min. Libr., MS. A.18, p. 72.

14. Oxley, The Shepheard, epistle dedicatory.

15. D.R. V.12, ff. 69-70.

thus links with political and theological developments in the major centres were maintained. Isaac Basire, whose letters survive in greater numbers than any other parish clergyman of the period, except perhaps Robert Jenison and the younger William Morton, also kept in touch with friends in the ministry or other professions elsewhere in England.¹⁶ Even when sent to Cambridge or London, however, letters were subject to delay and difficulty; Jenison's correspondence with Samuel Ward is full of comment on the identities and fortunes or misfortunes of the bearers.¹⁷ Within the diocese, where a servant could be dispatched with a short note, casual correspondence was much easier and cemented close ties of friendship, as letters written to and by Basire in the 1630s illustrate. Affection as well as their common calling prompted Basire, John Johnson of Bishop Wearmouth, and Nathaniel Ward of Staindrop to address one another as "brother". They exchanged news of acquaintances, of local and national politics, and of parish affairs. Of all professional questions, matters of scholarship and biblical interpretation were the most pressing. Johnson's letters often ended with comment on the translation or exposition of Greek or Hebrew texts. Recent theological works were also discussed and in 1638 Ward promised Basire a catalogue of his entire library, so that he could share to the full

16. e.g. Correspondence of Isaac Basire, ed. W. N. Darnell, 6-7. Simon Birkbeck, vic. Gilling (Yorks.), to Basire, 20 Nov. 1634.

17. e.g. Bodl. MS. Tanner 71, f. 136. Jenison to Ward, 21 Apr. 1632; 72, f. 260. Same to same, 21 Apr. 1628; 73, f. 29. Same to same, 26 May 1621.

its benefits.¹⁸ The survival rather than the existence or content of the correspondence is unusual. Over fifty years earlier William Birch of Stanhope sent a copy of Cartwright's recently published works to Bernard Gilpin. He cannot have been happy with Gilpin's response to the radicals' teaching on church government, reportedly given in verse:

"Optant ut careat maculis ecclesia cunctis;
Praesens vita negat; vita futura dabit." ¹⁹

Nathaniel Ward's letters reveal a further stimulus towards association with his colleagues. Following the years at university where like-minded friends were constantly on hand, life in a rural parish, even at Staindrop, with the great household of Raby close by, brought a sense of cultural and spiritual isolation. In September 1637 Ward urged Basire to write, for the benefit of both his Latin style and his flagging piety. Unable to keep a later appointment, he lamented the loss of both the pleasure and the improvement he would have derived from his friend's company. Conscious of personal and professional failings, ("..... at home, I am engaged in a constant struggle against my corrupt nature; abroad I have to contend with impiety and barbarism"), Ward had hoped for the comfort of Basire's advice. Denied that, he asked instead for letters from him and from other friends and their prayers on his behalf.²⁰

18. Basire Correspondence, 27-9. Ward to Basire, 10 Dec. 1638; D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 9.31. Johnson to Basire, 25 May -; *ibid.* 6.41. Same to same, 14 Dec. -; Basire to Cosin, und.

19. W. Gilpin, Life of Gilpin, 137-9.

20. Basire Correspondence, 25-7. Ward to Basire, 7 Sept. 1637; 30. Same to same, ? Jan. 1639.

In Newcastle and the city of Durham, the great urban centres of the diocese, the concentration of clergy was sufficient to allay any fears of isolation. Within Newcastle's single parish were five dependent chapelries, three within the confines of the town and two more, Cramlington and Gosforth, beyond. Duties and pulpits shared by the vicar, his curates, and preachers, lecturers, and schoolmasters provided the basis for circles of friendship reinforced by and reinforcing professional awareness. The first surviving evidence of a close knit group of clergy within the town is from a series of wills from the years 1596-8.²¹ Richard Holdsworth, chaplain to the earl of Huntingdon, who had been vicar of Newcastle since 1585, died in 1597. He left small bequests to a number of friends, among them books for two fellow preachers, John Moorhouse and William Morton; Morton was also a witness to the will.²² Moorhouse died the following year and like Holdsworth left books and other mementoes to both laymen and clergy. Morton received the Histories of Theodoret, John Hutton, rector of Gateshead, a Greek lexicon, and John Smaithwaite, at that time also a preacher in Newcastle, works by Aquinas. Erasmus's Chiliades went to Cuthbert Ogle, master of the grammar school.²³ Ogle was also mentioned in the will of Clement Cockson, curate of the chapelry of St. John, who died

21. The high mortality among the Newcastle clergy at the time is explained by the plague which appeared in the north-east in 1596-7, preceded by general scarcity. M. James, Family, Lineage and Civil Society, 8.

22. D.R. Prob. 1596.

23. D.R. Prob. 1597.

in 1598, leaving him a dictionary for his own use and that of his pupils. Cockson also bequeathed an angel to "the worshipful my verie good Mr William Morton vicar of Newcastle." Other beneficiaries included his fellow curate at St. Andrew's, William Pearson, another of the town preachers, and clergy whose cures lay outside Newcastle. Cockson's cousin of the same name, rector of Elsdon, received "any booke I have which he liketh not before bequeathed." To Roger Acroyd, rector of Whalton and Winston, and his wife, he left a bible and a copy of John Udall's Sermons, an interesting choice in view of Udall's own Newcastle connections. Acroyd and Morton, the two most senior clergy mentioned, were also appointed supervisors of the will.²⁴

As vicar, William Morton remained at the centre of clerical life in Newcastle for another twenty years. Among his contemporaries, he made friends of the other leaders of Protestant Tyneside and in his turn acted as patron to their successors. In his last years he was visited by John Allenson, one of the most distinguished scholars of the diocese, who had earlier served under him as curate of St. John's and was then rector of nearby Whickham.²⁵ Another notable minister, Robert Jenison, preached Morton's funeral sermon, a proper gesture of respect to one who had helped him to his first appointment in the town as master of the hospital of St. Mary Magdalen.²⁶ Jenison was remembered in Morton's will, along with two curates, John Shaw and Abraham Robinson, and Robert Fobery, master of the grammar school.²⁷ Among Fobery's associates were Francis

24. D.R. Prob. 1598.

25. Bodl. MS. Tanner 74, f. 246. Morton to Samuel Ward, 13 Feb. 1620.

26. R. Howell, 'The career of Dr. Robert Jenison; a 17th century Puritan in Newcastle', Jnl. Presbyt. Hist. Soc. of Eng. xiii. 15.

27. D.R. Prob. 1620.

Gray, lecturer and curate at St. Andrew's in the early 1620s and one of his successors at the school, and Henry Power, who followed Morton as vicar.²⁸ In his last illness, too weak to write or sign his will, Power summoned Jenison to hear his verbal instructions for the disposition of his estate.²⁹

The amicable relations which he had enjoyed with Morton and Power no doubt dictated Jenison's expectation of easy social and professional intercourse with their successor, Thomas Jackson. Although aware of the growing difference in their views, he sought Jackson's acquaintance and was disappointed by his reaction. Repeated invitations to dinner gained only a single acceptance "and that with difficultie". Things would have been much easier, he told Samuel Ward, "yff he were not so much (or so onely) the Bⁱshop's creature."³⁰ While he was unable to establish friendly relations with the Arminian clergy in the town, professional contact did not cease. In 1626 he called at the lodgings of Yeldard Alvey, lecturer at St. Nicholas's, to borrow a copy of Ward's latest book. The meeting was not entirely happy; there was a dispute about the merits of Ward's argument in which Jenison took the part of his old tutor against Alvey and Jackson, who was also present.³¹

Most of the clergy mentioned in the preceding paragraphs were men of unusual gifts or achievements. Apart from the two curates who received bequests from Morton, their employer, only Clement Cockson seems to have been able to penetrate the charmed circle without holding a good benefice or the added distinction of a preaching appointment. In the city of Durham, with its

2 . Will of Robert Fobery. D.R. Prob. 1622.

29. D.R. Prob. 1623.

30. Bodl. MS. Tanner 73, f. 475. Jenison to Ward, 25 Aug. 1624.

31. Ibid. 72, f. 150. Same to same, 31 Aug. 1626.

five parish churches and two chapelries, the concentration of clergy was even greater and differences of status were more frequently overridden. The spirit of community shared by those who served in the cathedral was largely responsible for the more egalitarian atmosphere. Numerous examples could be cited from the probate records of cordial relations between prebendaries, minor canons, and city curates. One unusual illustration may suffice. Jane Jackson, who died in 1634, was the widow of Richard Jackson, minor canon from 1594 until 1617 and curate at various times of St. Oswald's, St. Margaret's and St. Mary, North Bailey. In her will she made over to William Smith, another minor canon and curate of Witton Gilbert, the sum of £10 which he had borrowed from her. Plate and money were bequeathed to the children and servants of Ferdinand Moorcroft, prebendary of the sixth stall, and Moorcroft himself was appointed sole executor.³²

Approximately one third of all surviving clerical wills of the period contain some acknowledgement of the testator's colleagues. Usually one or two clergy were mentioned, incumbents or curates of livings in the vicinity. Unlike the Newcastle clergy, few rural ministers left bequests of books. The gift in 1570 of a ewe from John Foster, rector of Edmundbyers, to William Strothers, curate of the chapelry of Shotley on the opposite bank of the Tyne, was more typical of the late 16th century.³³ In the 17th century the bond was often financial;

32. D.R. Prob. 1634.

33. S.S. 11. 312-13.

fellow ministers headed the lists of creditors and debtors, relationships of trust if not of affection.³⁴ Beneficiaries, in their turn, were often required to render some posthumous service to the testator. Executors were usually near relatives, wives, sons, or brothers, but supervisors were frequently appointed from outside the immediate family and almost a quarter of the surviving clerical wills name colleagues to oversee the performance of their wishes. Rather than entrust the responsibility to laymen, even the patrons upon whom their livings so largely depended, the clergy relied on their fellows and especially on the more senior among them, who had legal experience. Not all commissions were as formal. Several curates commended their wives and young families to the care of the incumbents who employed them. James Nelson, curate of Ryton at his death in 1596, had sufficient faith in the judgement of Francis Bunny to leave to him the choice of a guardian for his unborn child in case of the mother's death.³⁵

Kinship and friendship could pull in opposite directions. In the two decades before the Civil War, remembrance of friends in clerical wills gave way to concern for the immediate family as the real wealth of the parish clergy increased and the estates at their disposal became more substantial. On the other hand, the establishment of clerical dynasties could only strengthen the sense of professional identity. By the late 16th century, many clergy were sending their sons into the ministry. In the 17th century brothers might also be coll-

³⁴eg. Will of Cuthbert Hill, rec. Knaresdale. D.R. Prob. 1616;

will of Nicholas Hilton, rec. Hurworth. D.R. Prob. 1617.

3 . D.R. Prob. 1596.

eagues; Thomas Oxley had left Bamburgh for a benefice in Kent by 1615 when his brother Charles was presented to the vicarage of Chillingham, but the latter, who later held Ponteland and Ellingham, was still serving in the diocese when their youngest brother Amer, also in orders, was teaching at Newcastle and Morpeth.³⁶ The wives of the clergy are shadowy figures about whom little information survives. Eighteen Durham ministers are known to have married the daughters, sisters, or widows of colleagues. Ten of the marriages were between prebendaries and kinswomen of members of the chapter or bishops of Durham. Much more is known about the private affairs of the senior clergy than of the generality of parish ministers but that does not fully account for the preponderance of canons marrying within the chapter. Intermarriage was also a product of the closeness of the cathedral community and an awareness of the peculiar status of its senior members. Marriage ties did not, however, create an exclusive group. The wife of Adam Holiday, canon of the 11th stall and rector of Bishop Wearmouth, was cousin to the partners of Robert Swift and Robert Prentice, chancellor and minor canon, respectively.³⁷ Henry Naunton, incumbent of the 4th stall and at various times of Gainford, Bedlington, and Egglecliffe, married the widow of another minor canon, Robert Murray, vicar of Pitlington.³⁸ Enough is known of clerical intermarriage beyond the confines of the cathedral and city of Durham to suggest that it was far more common than

36. For these appointments, see Venn.

37. D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 32, f. 205.

38. Venn.

the figures indicate. The family affairs of John Hutton, rector of Gateshead, provide an extreme example of the network of relationships which could result. His first wife was Elizabeth Blithman, widow of his predecessor, Laurence Dodsworth. After her death he married the widow of another local incumbent, James Fernside of Whickham. At the time of Hutton's own death in 1612, the children of her first marriage were reaching maturity and in his will he left an M.A. hood to his stepson James Fernside the younger, later vicar of Long Benton.³⁹

Such marriages were encouraged by a recognition of the peculiar duties and responsibilities of the minister's wife. The qualities which the younger William Morton sought in a wife were dictated both by his theology and his professional needs. In his search he was aided by Peter Bulkley, later pastor of Concord in New England,⁴⁰ who conducted preliminary negotiations with the parents of one young woman. In 1634 Morton asked his friend to describe the candidate in greater detail, "what she is for her naturall disposition, what evidence of grace there is in her so that then I may looke for it." He hoped that she might be found to have "a humble and a meeke spirit a treasure not more precious than rare in women of ranke or place." The account which Bulkley had already given of "her affection to the calling of a Minister" pleased him;

"But I desire to know whether you have put her in mind of the difficulty a Minister may face for the cause, and of those dangers until which he shalbe exposed, or whether you conceive her to be such an

39. Ibid.; D.R. Prob. 1612.

40. Venn.

one as will be willing to frame herselfe to any condition these desperately evill times are like to expose a faithfull minister unto, for otherwise you know a wife will prove not a comfort but a burden, not a chefe furtherance but a dogg and hinderance in the mayne busyness."⁴¹

Isaac Basire, whose churchmanship was very different, also sought a partner with whom he could share his devotional and professional life. Basire's courtship of Frances Corbett, daughter of a Shropshire gentry family, was punctuated by offerings of spiritual and moral guidance. In August 1636 two books accompanied his letters; Nicholas Byfield's The Marrow of the Oracles of God, a guide to the reading and study of the bible, and Francois de Sales's Introduction to the Devout Life, "made by a French bishop, yet free from Popery (for I have read it beforehand for your soule's sake) only where you see a crosse atthe margent there it may be mistaken by some." The books, he warned, were to be studied with care and perseverance. "You must not for fashion sake but read them with a full purpose of heart to frame your life by their godly directions." ⁴²

Although some dissension was inevitable in so large a body as the parish clergy of a diocese, relations between individual ministers were generally distinguished by their harmony. Only rarely is there evidence of a clash of personal interests, perhaps because the beneficed clergyman, at least, was independent

41. S.P. 16/540/446.16. Morton to Bulkley, 24 Oct. 1634.

42. Basire Correspondence, 13-22. Basire to Frances Corbett, 10 Aug. 1636.

of his fellows and possessed of well-defined legal and customary rights. There was room for conflict where the definitions were less clear in practice than in theory. At the centre of one lengthy and unusual dispute was the tenure of the benefice itself. After his appointment as master of Sherburn House in 1577, Ralph Lever was replaced as rector of Washington by Anthony Garfurth. Lever had wished his brother John to succeed him. The proposal had found little favour with Bishop Pilkington, patron of the living, and there was some doubt whether he had ever accepted Lever's resignation. Lever and his brother continued to claim the profits of the rectory and the resulting suit came before the ecclesiastical courts of York and Durham and even the justices at quarter sessions. A compromise was reached whereby the income of the living was shared, while Garfurth served the cure. Although Ralph Lever continued the litigation after Garfurth's death, he was never able to recover the benefice.⁴³

Most personal quarrels took place between acknowledged incumbents of adjacent livings who put forward rival claims to tithes or offerings. Conflicts over boundaries were exacerbated by parishioners who moved stock from one parish to another to avoid paying tithes. Exemptions from payment were another source of trouble. William Murray, vicar of Pitlington, fought a long and ultimately unsuccessful battle against the master of Sherburn House, alleging that Byersgarth, on the estates of the hospital, was a titheable part of his parish.⁴⁴ Canon law made

43. D.R. III.3, f. 66; Borth. Inst. Hist. Res., High Comm. Act Bk. IX, ff. 30-74; E 134/23-4 Eliz. I Mich./12.

44. D.R. V.7, ff. 152-7; D. and C. Libr., Raine MS. 124, f. 230.

special provision for one area in which material interests were bound to clash. A new incumbent could sue in the church courts for the cost of any unrepaired damage to the property of the living which had occurred during the tenure of his predecessor. Nicholas Walton was presented to the rectory of Edmundbyers in April 1628, succeeding Mark Leonard who became vicar of Monk Hesleden. Within a month Walton sent his brother Hugh and a number of Durham craftsmen to view the buildings at Edmundbyers and draw up a schedule of the work which needed to be done. When the claim came to court, evidence of the state of the property was given by John Greenwell, son of a former rector and farmer of the living during Leonard's incumbency. He testified that repairs were now needed to glass windows and a byre which had been in good condition at Leonard's institution. On the other hand, the resigning rector could not be blamed for all the damage. During the vacancy "divers ruines did happen and fall in and about the said parsonage house and other houses therunto belonging by reason of tempestuous windes."⁴⁵

Entering a new benefice was an expensive business and the motive for claiming dilapidations was therefore a strong one. Some clergy sought to spare their families the expense of paying compensation by making bequests to their successors in lieu of dilapidations. In 1605 John Robson of Hart listed in his will the improvements he had made to the vicarage house and left these to the next incumbent with the proviso that no claim should be made against his estate.⁴⁶ Bernard Gilpin's bequest of furniture and agricultural equipment to the rectors of

45. D.R. III.11, f. 16; D.R. V.12, ff. 61-3, 154-6.

46. D.R. Prob. 1606; the will was written in the previous year.

Houghton le Spring carried a rider to the same effect, to protect his charitable endowments.⁴⁷ Even where no such condition was attached, testators probably assumed that a gesture of this kind would safeguard their heirs from future payment. It was a strong inducement to an act of professional piety and the rarity of dilapidations cases between parochial clergy suggests the success of the policy. They came before the church courts no more than once every two or three years, although there were on average five or six institutions each year.

Evidence of clashes with the ecclesiastical authorities is much more plentiful. The contrast should not be overdrawn since the purpose of ecclesiastical courts and visitations was the correction of faults. Many prosecutions were for the omission of administrative or disciplinary duties of relatively minor importance. Absence from visitations, failure to issue citations, or to give true certificates of the performance of penance were among the most common offences. The oversight could sometimes be explained by illness or a very understandable confusion about instructions received. In 1577, for example, Richard Milner of Lanchester found himself uncomfortably caught in the dispute over the sede vacante jurisdiction of the diocese and was prosecuted at Durham for conforming to the requirements of the chapter of York.⁴⁸ In other cases the charge of "contempt of jurisdiction" was fully justified by culpable negligence such as that of a curate of Middleton St. George who

47. S.S. xxxviii. 83-94.

48. P.K. D. and C. Mun., Act Bk. sede vacante 1576, f. 31.

failed to denounce an excommunicate parishioner, admitting him to the communion although the apparitor had certified his condemnation.⁴⁹

The greatest disrespect for the authority of the bishop and his courts was shown by men who added to neglect of their pastoral ministry some personal misconduct. Only a handful of Durham clergy were convicted of scandalous behaviour, either drunkenness or immorality or both, during the period. Most came from the dregs of the clerical population, the poorest curates, often of the most isolated livings. A typical case was that of Thomas Harriman, curate of the upland parish of Haltwhistle, who was accused of a catalogue of crimes against the professional code. In addition to celebrating clandestine marriages, he had for three years kept an alehouse, in contradiction of the Royal Injunctions of 1559. Not surprisingly he was "much addicted to drunkenness" and could not always perform his duties. Drunkenness led to pugnacity and he was at odds with his vicar, Thomas Astell, over tithes.⁵⁰

Astell had employed Harriman for several years in spite of his faults; perhaps he was willing to accept an unusually low wage and was thus an attractive employee. Bernard Gilpin, that model of a godly pastor, showed a similar unconcern with the insufficiency of his assistant. Confessing his own qualms of conscience about the Settlement of 1559, he mentioned in passing the fate of his curate. The man had died soon after subscribing to the royal supremacy. "Some supposed that subscription killed his heart; others said his infirmity proceeded from excessive drinking." It was scarcely the character

49. D.R. VIII.1, f. 17.

50. S.S. xxxiv. 5; D.R. VIII.3, f. 91.

of a suitable deputy for one so careful in his ministry, yet his employer was apparently unaware which explanation best fitted the case.⁵¹

Those two instances cast some light on the attitude of the clergy towards the private, as opposed to the professional, failings of their fellows. When one clergyman brought another's misdemeanours to the notice of the authorities, the charges usually concerned his ministry, not his personal conduct.⁵² The authorities themselves were not apparently enthusiastic or even consistent in the pursuit of clerical lapses. A number of accusations of personal misconduct were only recorded incidentally in actions brought for quite different reasons. Laymen accused of offering disrespect or injury to the clergy often sought to mitigate the offence by bringing evidence of the bad character of the minister involved. The charges were often exaggerated but some held a kernel of truth. The accusations of drunkenness and contentiousness against Richard Milner of Lanchester, which not even his patron could deny, occurred in just such circumstances. Milner did not, however, suffer any official reproof or correction. He might have escaped less easily in the decades immediately before the Civil War. The act books of the ecclesiastical commission for the years 1626-39 contain many prosecutions of unsatisfactory clergy;⁵³ most were brought by the diocesan authorities, apparently less

51. Carleton, 'Life of Gilpin', 420.

52. e.g. the faults of John Matthews, cur. of Tughall, were reported to the archd. in 1620 by the vic. of nearby Ellingham; they included concealment of his parishioners' offences and negligence in the saying of services. D.R. VIII.3, ff. 90-1.

53. See pp 362-7, 374-5.

accommodating than they had once been.

While the attitudes of those responsible for the discipline of the lower clergy can only be surmised, the extremes to which individual ministers might go in protection of their own kind are exceptionally well recorded in one case to which Robert Jenison was a party. As was his practice when troubled, he wrote to Samuel Ward in March 1622 of his concern at the "scandalous fall" of Stephen Jerome, the afternoon preacher at St Nicholas's, Newcastle.⁵⁴ Allegations that Jerome had attempted to seduce the wife of a parishioner were laid not before the diocesan authorities but before Jenison and the vicar, Henry Power. The two ministers summoned Jerome and his accusers and finding the lecturer to be guilty exacted a private submission and promise of amendment, although "his impudence and tergiversation made us wonder." His conduct did not improve and the wronged husband approached Jenison and Power again and they issued a warning that further lapses would lead to an official complaint. The threat, Jenison acknowledged, was not entirely serious but they were at a loss for some means of disciplining the errant preacher. Only when rumours of his conduct became general did they unwillingly face the need to inform the dean and chancellor in order to forestall any enquiry by the authorities. Jerome himself rescued them from the dilemma by withdrawing from Newcastle of his own accord once his

54. Bodl. MS. Tanner 73, f. 136. Jenison to Ward, 29 Mar. 1622.

reputation began to suffer.

Power and Jenison were not unmoved by Jerome's behaviour but they used to the full the influence and independence of the vicar's position in Newcastle to judge and sentence him without reference to external authority. However culpable their colleague, they did not wish his failings to become common knowledge. Jenison justified this to Ward:

"fewe besides ourselves knew of it, & wee respected the honour and creditt of the gospell hee being one well thought of by many (who knewe him least) & by them accounted zealous."⁵⁵

At that time "the honour & creditt of the gospell" meant more to Jenison than a euphemism for the reputation of the ministry. He was also acting from political necessity. The publication of Jerome's immorality would offer the powerful Arminian party a golden opportunity to discredit their opponents.

Party considerations were no novelty to the clergy of the diocese but in the later 16th century conflicts of wider significance than personal quarrels were the prerogative of the chapter and the cathedral. Among the diocesan clergy, the gradual replacement of pre-reformation priests by ministers brought up and ordained under the new regime caused little disruption and little sign of open hostility to the Protestant order. Although there had been numerous absentees from the royal visitation of 1559, few had suffered any penalty for

55. Ibid.

nonconformity. In the first five years of Elizabeth's reign a dozen clergy lost their benefices but the grounds for their dismissal were as often pluralism and non-residence as Catholicism. The Rebellion of 1569 revealed that there were still a few Catholic sympathisers among the parish clergy, who took the opportunity to revive the old practices. Of the twenty one clergy who were prosecuted, most were unbeneficed, and a number were guilty only of attending the masses said in Durham cathedral. Only eight are known to have used the Catholic liturgy in their own parishes.⁵⁶ Relations between conservatives and reformers in the cathedral were less easy. The deprivation of five prebendaries and the headmaster of the grammar school in and after 1559 still left a number of conservatives in the chapter and among the minor canons and it was there that clerical support for the Rebellion was strongest.⁵⁷ Even after 1569 the history of the Protestant chapter was not peaceful. There was tension between followers of Pilkington and Whittingham, including the bishop's brothers Leonard and John, Francis Bunny, and William Bennett, men who have been described as "establishment radicals", and Bishop Barnes. The conflict was brought to a head in the years after 157 by a renewal of the jurisdictional disputes between Durham and York. The conduct of chapter business and appointments to senior posts were also fertile sources of dissension, especially

56. B. Wilson, 'The changes of the reformation period in Durham and Northumberland', (Durham Univ. Ph. D. thesis, 1939), 555; S.S. xxi. 136-9, 142-7, 158-62, 172, 177-82, 198-203.

57. Marcombe, 'Dean and Chapter', 166-77.

in the years of Ralph Lever's prominence.⁵⁸

The disputes evoked little response from parochial clergy who had no personal connection with the cathedral. Only one attempt is known to have been made to engage their interest. In 1577 John Pilkington, as archdeacon of Durham, appealed to the diocesan clergy for contributions to a fighting fund to oppose the claims of the see of York. The response was sufficiently enthusiastic for Bishop Barnes to send warning letters against entertaining the dean and chapter in their "contentious quarrels".⁵⁹ Both the appeal and the warning were addressed to the clergy as a body; there was apparently no attempt to mobilise individuals known to incline to one side or the other, an omission which again indicates the detachment of the parish clergy from the quarrels of their superiors.

They became much more deeply engaged in the doctrinal quarrels of the 17th century. The existence of opposing factions was becoming clear by the second decade of the century. When John Allenson of Whickham visited Archdeacon Morton in 1611, he spoke of his fears for the future. A year of Neile's episcopate had passed and during that time death had depleted the ranks of the Calvinist clergy.

"Mr Bunnie is gon & Dr Colmore is gon & when you are gon & Mr Rand & I what wil become of the Bb/ric? For mark who succeed & what decaie there is alreadie of religion." ⁶⁰

58. Ibid. 59, 226, 245-9.

59. Ibid. 326; D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 35A, ff. 45-6. Any clergy who had contributed were summoned before the bp. at Auckland "where you shall receve intelligence further of your dewtie".

60. Bodl. MS. Tanner 74, f. 246. William Morton to Samuel Ward, 13 Feb. 1620.

Of the men he named, all but Allenson himself were prebendaries or diocesan officials but most had served an apprenticeship as parish ministers in Durham or Northumberland and were respected for their long and distinguished service. They were drawn together by common experience and by the threat to what they considered orthodox in the teaching and practice of the church. They would also have been well-acquainted with other cathedral clergy who were hostile to Neile and his followers; Robert Hutton, prebendary and rector of Houghton le Spring, who preached against the changes in 1621, the cantankerous Peter Smart, and those who showed sympathy for him after his famous attack on the ceremonialists, including John Robson and Christopher Beak.⁶¹

Through Morton, these men were linked with the anti-arminian tradition which was especially strong in Newcastle. When John Craddocke ordered the seizure of Allenson's goods after his death, the Calvinist clergy of Newcastle closed ranks against the chancellor and his agent, Edward Wiggham, vicar of Ponteland and Hartburn. Their concern was not only for their colleague's heirs but also for the safekeeping of his papers, especially his work on the writings of his old tutor William Whittaker.⁶² There was still an opposition party amongst the unbeneficed clergy of the town in the 1630s. Robert Jenison, one of the leading actors in the trouble over Allenson's estate,

61. V.C.H. Durham, ii. 44; S.S. lli. 151; xxxiv. 198.

62. Bodl. MS. Tanner 73, f. 29. Jenison to Ward, 26 May 1621; 74, f. 242. Same to same, 10 Feb. 1620. f. 246. Same to same, 10 Mar. 1620; f. 248. William Morton to same, 13 Feb. 1620.

did all he could to maintain the Calvinist presence. When Jerome left Newcastle in 1622, Jenison asked Samuel Ward to suggest a replacement. Wiggham had already been sent to the universities on behalf of the town council and Jenison feared that he would return with a candidate of unacceptable views.⁶³ On Alvey's promotion to the vicarage ten years later, he hoped that a cousin of his own, John Bewick, would be the new lecturer and was disappointed, but not surprised, by the appointment of the Arminian John Snape.⁶⁴ The younger William Morton had also been a candidate for the post and when he eventually came to Newcastle to exercise an unofficial ministry, Jenison kept in close touch with him until they both came under pressure from the authorities in 1638 and 1639.⁶⁵

Evidence of an anti-arminian faction outside Newcastle is more difficult to trace. Morton was in contact with John Vincent, the unlicensed preacher expelled from Darlington in 136.⁶⁶ Nothing is known, however, of links between the Newcastle dissidents and the preachers of Sunderland and Berwick whose activities so incensed Triplett and Durie. The connections were perhaps closer between men of more moderate views. The will of Thomas Vicars, vicar of Shilbottle, was proved in 1636. No violent opponent of due ceremony, he bequeathed to the parish £3 for the purchase of a silver chalice and cover

63. Ibid. 73, f. 136. Jenison to same, 29 Mar. 1622.

64. Ibid. 71, f. 135. Same to same, 21 Apr. 1632.

65. Morton's correspondents often asked to be remembered to Jenison; e.g. S.P. 16/540/446.20. Peter Bulkley to Morton, 7 Apr. 1635; S.P. 16/540/446.24. John Blakiston to same, 22 May 1635. Cf. R. Howell, Newcastle upon Tyne and the Puritan Revolution, 101-10.

66. S.P. 16/540/446.29. John Blakiston to Morton, 27 Mar. 1637.

and a further £5 for the "use ornament and benefit of the Church and parishioners". Among his colleagues he remembered "my most auncient friend" John Robson, rector of Morpeth and the only member of the chapter to dissent from the action of the ecclesiastical commission against Smart, and two close associates of the Calvinist Bishop Morton, his secretary, Richard Baddeley, and Joseph Naylor, archdeacon of Northumberland.⁶⁷

The pattern of support for Arminianism within the diocese was not dissimilar; a close-knit party at the centre and small groups of individuals among the parish clergy known to have sympathised with the changes of doctrine and practice, the most numerous of them in Newcastle. Its extent is difficult to assess. Of the clergy serving in the diocese in the years 1640-1, sixty suffered sequestration or other loss during the Civil War and Interregnum. Many were expelled on grounds of insufficiency rather than doctrine and only eighteen can be identified as Arminians by their known opinions or associations.⁶⁸ Many of those were survivors from Neile's episcopate who owed their preferments to the bishop. Three of his chaplains who held Durham stalls lost their livings; Gabriel Clerke, John Cosin, and Eleazar Duncan. By the time the sequestrations took place some of their closest

67. D.R. Prob. 1636.

68. The figures are from Walker Rev.; the displacement of clergy is described in detail for county Durham by W. Dumble, 'Government, Religious and Military Affairs in Durham during the Civil War and Interregnum,' (Durham Univ. M. Litt. thesis, 1978), 218-79.

associates had died or moved from the diocese, including Augustine Lindsell, identified by Smart as the intellectual leader of Arminianism in Durham, who became bishop of Hereford in 1634. The continuing political unity of the group sponsored by Neile was demonstrated when Bishop Howson attempted to reverse some of the changes which had been made in the liturgical practice of the cathedral. Lindsell and Cosin led the opposition from Durham. From Winchester, where Duncan was in attendance upon Neile, they were sure of sympathetic interest. Of the other prebendaries, Francis Moorcroft and William James gave active cooperation, as did two lesser members of the cathedral staff, William Smith, minor canon and sacrist, and Thomas Wandless, also a minor canon.⁶⁹ The Arminian faction also had a social dimension. Augustine Lindsell died in the first few months of his episcopate. His will had been drawn up ten years earlier and in it he mentioned members of the Neile group in and outside the diocese. Amongst them were Daniel Birkhead, Francis Burgoyne, both canons of Durham and rectors of Egglecliffe and Bishop Wearmouth respectively, Cosin, and the bishop's secretary Edward Liveley, whose brother John was vicar of Gainford and Kelloe.⁷⁰

Most of these men, including the minor canons, held livings in the diocese and brought the new ways to their parishes.

69. S.S. lii. 201-2. John Cosin and Augustine Lindsell to Eleazar Duncan, 16 Jan. 1631; Cal. S.P. Dom. 1629-31, 349. 'Orders to be performed by the Dean and Chapter of Durham,' 2 Sept. 1630; 538. Bp. Howson to Bp. Laud, 15 Mar. 1631; 563. 'My Ld. of Durham's proceedings about services etc.', ?Mar. 1631.

70. Prob. 11/166 (P.C.C. Seagar 111).

Cosin's changes and improvements in Brancepeth won warm applause in certain quarters, although Burgoyne's reverence for the new altar at Bishop Wearmouth drew sharp comment from Peter Smart.⁷¹ Other Arminians among the parish clergy, such as Basire and his friends, Johnson and Ward, presumably pursued the ideal of beauty of holiness in their churches, although no record survives of their activities. Alvey's attempts to bring the practice of St. Nicholas's, Newcastle, and its chapels into conformity with the views of his patrons, Neile and Laud, were supported by curates and lecturers of the same persuasion; Robert Bonner at All Saints, and the Scots Robert Urquhart of St. John's, who was also vicar of Hartburn, and George Wishart, Jenison's replacement in the lectureship at All Saints.⁷²

For some, the struggle against local opposition to the changes was too great. Thomas Stephenson, vicar of Stamfordham, gave up his Newcastle lectureship in 1639; few of his hearers showed any sympathy with his teaching and the majority, including the richest and most influential, gave active support to "insolent and factious" ministers of the opposite persuasion.⁷³ In Berwick the annexation of the congregation by a series of puritan preachers merely stimulated Gilbert Durie to greater support for the established authorities, in the hope that they in turn would intervene in his favour.⁷⁴ Roger Willis of

71. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1635-4, 154. Sir William Webb to Laud, 25 July 1633; S.S. xxxiv. 205.

72. Howell, Newcastle upon Tyne, 112-20, 147.

73. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1639-40, 385. Stephenson to Yeldard Alvey, 23 Jan. 1640.

74. See pp 168-70, 279, 284.

Lanchester was faced with a similar problem; in 1637 he complained that the lecturer, Mr Thompson, "had made all the parish puritanes or schismatickes."⁷⁵ Such a man, not himself committed to the policies of the Arminians, would yet give them his allegiance when his own ministry and position were undermined by their opponents. Others who subscribed more wholeheartedly to the Arminian creed appear as isolated figures, although this may be an accident of the evidence. John Manby, rector of Rothbury between 1628 and 1635, was later driven from his Cambridgeshire parish of Cottenham by parishioners who resented amongst other things his ceremonial practices.⁷⁶ In 1642 the parishioners of Ponteland petitioned the Commons against their vicar, Thomas Gray, whose many faults included the erection of an altar in their church.⁷⁷

For the unrecorded majority of the parish clergy, changes in the complexion of the church in the decades before 1640 were probably of incidental importance. Their ministry continued, with sufficient conformity to the new regulations to satisfy the authorities, but without disturbing the apathy or conservatism of their parishioners. Some managed to bridge the gap between the old and the new orthodoxies. Ferdinand Moorcroft has been cited as an opponent of Howson in the successful defence of ceremonial in the cathedral. Yet in the late 1620s

75. D.R. Miscell. Depos. 1636-7, ff. 17, 86.

76. M. Spufford, Contrasing Communities, 316.

77. The Petition by the Parishioners of Pont Island against Dr Gray (1642), sig. A2-3. Gray's other faults allegedly included bastardy, financial malpractice as agent to Id. Gray, and legal malpractice as a J.P.

Jenison described him as an exception to the prevailing Arminianism of the chapter.⁷⁸ Even so, the bitterness shown variously by Jenison, the younger Morton, Durie, and Triplett, none of them senior clergy, reflected a new element in the life of the diocese. The divisive issues of the later 16th century had been local matters over which the dean and chapter fought tooth and nail but of marginal importance to their colleagues in the parishes or national issues which awoke an equally limited interest outside the major centres. In the 17th century Neile's episcopate made Durham an early battleground in the conflict which was to split the English church. Better trained to appreciate the issues involved, far more parish ministers were drawn into the debate, even before the Civil War, than had taken an active part in the theological arguments of the mid 16th century. They now became adherents of faction, at odds with their fellows, and the unity in which they had previously lived, however passively, was destroyed by doctrinal argument.

ii. Clergy and Laity.

A minister's relations with his parish, rather than with colleagues or superiors, determined the comfort of his daily life and the fulfilment of his vocation. The way to both was eased if he could claim a respected place in lay society; hence in part the sensitivity of the clergy on the subject of secular status. Soon after receiving his doctorate, Robert Jenison enquired of Samuel Ward with ostentatious hesitancy,

78. Bodl. MS. Tanner 72, f. 260. Jenison to Samuel Ward, 20 Mar. 1627.

"what place, whether by the universitie statute, or by heraldery, yf by occasion (more than by search) you have heard a Doctor in Divinity hath, not so much with respect to the other degrees of learning, in Lawe or Physick, as to the laitie; as suppose to a justice of the peace (out of his proper place) and whether their wives (by custom at least) take not place aunswerably."⁷⁹

Although his declared motive was "to stoppe theire mouthes that are ready too farr to debase our calling and degree" the question of precedence clearly had a personal importance for both Jenison and his wife. Clergy of less professional distinction were prompted by lack of reverence for their cloth to claim acceptance on purely secular grounds. When William Wilson, an assistant curate at Heddon on the Wall, was reproved for drunkenness and cautioned to have a greater respect for his coat, he replied, "I doe not greatly care for my coate. I am a squire's sonne, and soe I respect my birth as much as my coate".⁸⁰

Wilson's comment ignored the truth appreciated by Jenison, himself the son of a respected Newcastle family, that for the great majority of the clergy lay attitudes were determined by their ministry. The effectiveness of the pastorate was thus of moment to every parish clergyman, however limited his vocational commitment. When Laurence Dodsworth, rector of Gateshead, wrote his will in 1571, he spoke of his congregation with

79. Ibid. 71, f. 30. Same to same, 29 Jan. 1629.

80. S.S. xxxiv. 9.

unstinted affection.

"..... my dere and lovinge flocke I committ to the great Shepherd Jesus Christe, whom I desyre to stir up unto them a lawfull and godlie pasture [sic].

Fare well, once agayne, my deare and lovinge flocke, in the Lorde to whose onlie providence I committ you, myself and all myne."⁸¹

No other surviving clerical will speaks in such terms and Dodsworth must have reached the end of his life with an unusual sense of achievement, surrounded by the goodwill of his parishioners. For many conscientious ministers, the problems of winning a congregation to a highly literary religion and a strict moral code were discouraging. The sense of isolation from which Nathaniel Ward suffered was one symptom of this. In the dedication of A Guide unto Godliness, Francis Bunny spoke of his pastorate with a mixture of resignation and hope;

"having travelled now a long time in my ministry, I yet finding no great comfort of all my labours, may perchance bee deceived as was Eliah who in his time complained that none truly religious were left, when God had reserved many. I will not therefore resolve my selfe as did Ieremie, not to speake any more in the name of God, or to forbear to preach, but rather hope, that hee who hath set men to worke (though the seede of my husbandrye lye hid for a time, and is not seen to sprout) yet will in the end give a gracious blessing, and a plentifull harvest."⁸²

81. S.S. 1. 285-6.

82. F. Bunny, A Guide to Godliness (1617).

In an earlier letter to the bishop of Durham, after nearly twenty years service in the parish he regretfully acknowledged his failure to detach his parishioners from such traditional amusements as the "hopping" on the Sunday after St. Helen's day.

"I speak as much against such things as I can, especially in these days rather of mourning than of mirth but my people are as in a dead sleep or a trance, past sense or feeling."⁸³

Apathy was perhaps the greatest of the obstacles which faced the minister. Protestant evangelism depended on the reading and preaching of the gospel; what hope could there be if people did not even attend to hear it? In 1637 the curates of Esh and Auckland St. Helen were prosecuted for failing to hold evening service on Sundays. They both produced the same defence; as Timothy Barnes of Esh protested, "he is ready and willinge to performe the said duties in caise he could gett an auditorye for want whereof he hath bene negligent therein."⁸⁴

There is, however, ample evidence that some parishioners received and appreciated the professional attentions of their clergy. Remembrances and commendations of particular ministers occur throughout the four volumes of wills published by the Surtees Society.⁸⁵ Requests to preachers, presumably heard and approved in life, were especially common in the testaments of aldermen and merchants of Newcastle. The custom of the funeral sermon does not seem to have become established there, but several parishioners of the southern chapelries of Bishop Auckland and Barnard Castle made provision for a burial address,

83. Hist. MSS. Com. 9, Hatfield, vi, p. 179. Bunny to Bp.

Matthew, ? 1596.

84. P.K. D. and C. Mun., Dioc. Chan. Vis. 1637, ff. 7, 19.

85. S.S. ii, xxxviii, cxli, cxlii.

sometimes specifying the preacher.⁸⁶ A more personal note was struck by William Trotter of Middle Merrington in 1622, who left 10s. to the vicar of Kirk Merrington in gratitude for his visits and exhortations.⁸⁷ In 1630 Elizabeth Jenison of Walworth, the foundress of Heighington grammar school, left £3 each to Ferdinand Moorcroft, then vicar of Heighington, and Ralph Richardson, vicar of Aycliffe, "unto whom I have been much beholden in the time of my present visitation of sickness."⁸⁸ Such requests reflect the seriousness with which the clergy undertook the duty laid upon them by the Prayer Book to comfort and exhort the dying. When Christopher Ridley sent for Alexander Woodall, curate of Simonburn, in 1602 to make his will, the curate only turned to the matter of his estate "after some exhortation to the saide Christopher Ridley as touching his soules health."⁸⁹ George Brown, curate of Chester le Street, enquired about the bequests made by one parishioner in keeping with the injunction to encourage charity; his chief purpose, however, was to administer the sacrament to the dying man.⁹⁰

The services of spiritual comfort and guidance which brought grateful laymen and women to remember their clergy went well beyond the duties of liturgy and prayer book. Every death left the living to be comforted; a pastoral skill at which Bernard Gilpin was said to excel. One example of his method survives; a letter written in 1583, when he was too weak to

86. S.S. xxxviii. 266; S.S. cxlii. 10, 113, 134, 169, 234, 250.

7. S.S. cxlii. 152.

88. Ibid. 336.

90. D.R. V.7, f. 185.

make visits in person, to a certain Mrs. Carr on the death of her young daughter. It is a lengthy document, but the message is summarised in the first sentence; "I beseech you, gentle Mrs Carr, diligently to call to mind how mercifully God hath dealt with you." All are subject to the divine will, which tends only to the good of mankind. Excessive indulgence in grief is therefore wrong. The lesson was drawn from numerous biblical examples and Gilpin recommended Mrs. Carr to seek these out for her own comfort and instruction.⁹¹

Personal guidance by their ministers was an essential part of the devotional lives of the Newcastle congregations later served by Jenison and William Morton the younger. The members of the congregations had in full measure the spiritual self-consciousness of contemporary puritanism. The negotiations which preceded Morton's invitation to Newcastle were led by John Blakiston, the future regicide. Blakiston was convinced that Morton was the right choice for the vacant lectureship and had high hopes of the satisfaction he and like-minded citizens would derive from his ministry. The terms in which he wrote to the preacher were similar to those used by Ward to Basire; "I long after you that I may receive some spirituall good from you and be more refreshed with your sweet fellowship."⁹² Once established in the town Morton came to be valued as Blakiston had foreseen. In 1633 he received a letter from another Newcastle merchant, Thomas Ledgard. Accustomed to self-examination, Ledgard was deeply troubled by a loss of religious enthusiasm. So great was his distress that he was unable to

91. Gilpin, Life of Gilpin, 165-8.

92. Howell, Newcastle upon Tyne, 89-94; S.P. 16/540/445.24.

Blakiston to Morton, 22 May 1635.

face the minister and forced to put his troubles on paper. God, he said, had deserted him and he could not even show grief or repentance at the divine displeasure. The necessary conclusion in the puritan mind was a horrifying one.

"I am possessed with a spirituall lethargie; no thought of mercie, no thought of divine severitie can rouse or move mee; sense and feeling is gone, & what argues that, but that death is in my soule? So long as God appeared to my soule & conscience, though itt was in fire & tempest as to Elias, in thundring & lightening as upon mont Sinay to the Israelites, I had some hope, some comfort; but now I am as descended into the place of silence; conscience hath stopt her mouth upon mee, terror hath left mee; I find neither joy nor sorrow in my soule; which is like the dead sea, that neither ebbs nor flowes, but is like the bulke of the earth that never removes. For saving graces & true comforts I hope for none, I expect none, so long as I am in this estate."

Even prayer "the voice and tongue of my soul" was now beyond him, and so he asked for Morton's intercession; "pray for me, weepe for m e that cannot weepe for myselfe". Should the reading of the letter bring the preacher "anie message from the Lord unto mee", Ledgard declared his willingness to come in person to hear it.⁹³

The ancient presumption that the minister had a special relation to the supernatural could be put to less orthodox uses. Belief in magic and witch-craft remained sufficiently strong for

93. S.P. 16/540/446.33. Ledgard to Morton, ?May 1638.

Cosin to preach against them in Brancepeth, in a fashion typical of the attitude of many Protestant clergy.⁹⁴ There were, however, two recorded instances of Durham clergymen who took the opposite view. The more famous case is that of John Vaux, curate of St. Helen's Auckland, who was tried before the ecclesiastical commissioners in Durham in 1633. He was an astrologer rather than a magician, as his published almanacs show.⁹⁵ For parishioners or others seeking the whereabouts of lost or stolen property he engaged in "the casting of figures", charging fees ranging from 12d. for a lost horse to 5s. for stolen corn. He was even known to offer predictions on the fortunes of runners at local race meetings. Copies of his almanacs were sold from the communion table in the chapel at 2d. each. These contained a calendar with astrological information, prognostications for the coming year, usually of a sensational but vague nature, and more domestic details of roads, distances, and local markets. Demand for Vaux's services kept him in business for several years in spite of admonitions from the bishop and local magistrates. Some of the parish gentry found his activities offensive and when one of them expressed his disapproval of the profit Vaux made from others' misfortune, the curate defended himself by quoting the example of Samuel, telling Saul what had become of his father's asses.

"It was then demanded of him if he were like Samuell the prophet, whoe was inspired by the Spiritt of God. Mr Vaux aunswered he hoped he had the same Spiritt."

94. J. Cosin, Works, (Libr. Anglo-Catholic Theology), i. 143 ff.

95. K. Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, 356, 382, 454;

see pp. 57-8. Vaux's first almanac was published in 1621 and A New Almanack was produced under his name almost every year from 1642 to 1666.

The commission, however, disapproved of his practices, especially those involving the communion table, and ordered his suspension from the ministry for three years and imprisonment at pleasure.⁹⁶ Their severity did not last and two years later he was back in his cure. Almanacs continued to be produced under his name but there is no further record of his astrological practice in the parish.

Less is known of the activities of another dependent curate, Thomas Lyons of Earsdon. No charge was made against him in his lifetime but in 1620 a couple from the chapelry were reported to the court of the archdeacon of Northumberland for witchcraft. They claimed to have learned sorcery from Lyons, their former curate. He was one of those permanently unbefitted and ill-paid clergy whose general record was poor. He appeared several times before the courts for the performance of clandestine marriages. The witchcraft which he practised was probably much closer to traditional rural magic than Vaux's interest in the more demanding study of astrology.⁹⁷

As figures of trust and authority there were many occasions on which the assistance of the clergy was valued. In Sedgefield in 1603, for example, the curate was asked by a parishioner to investigate the misappropriation of goods after the recent death of his brother. Only when his enquiries failed to produce a satisfactory result did the matter come before the courts.⁹⁸ The clergyman's ability as a scribe and the presumption that he would be a professionally reliable witness made

96. S.S. xxxiv. 34-43.

97. D.R. VIII.2, ff. 43v, 53; D.R. V.12, ff. 68, 85.

98. D.R. V.7, f. 290.

his presence valuable at formal meetings or agreements within or between families. Thus he often attended exchanges of property, the signature of marriage contracts, and the making of wills, as well as the baptisms, weddings, and funerals, which were part of his liturgical duties. A breach of promise suit brought before the consistory court illustrates the part which the clergyman might be asked to play. In 1602 John Robson invited Henry Wandless, vicar of Monk Hesleden, to meet him at the house of Christopher Glover, keeper of Durham gaol, where the marriage of his son to Glover's daughter Dorothy was to be discussed. When Wandless arrived, he called for Dorothy to hear her express her willingness for the match. The two fathers assured him that it was unnecessary as both young people had already shown themselves content with the arrangement. Wandless therefore asked Glover what portion his daughter would receive and supervised the making of the contract. Perhaps he should have been allowed to make his enquiries; Dorothy later married a certain George Cragge, hence the action brought by the Robsons.⁹⁹

The scribal work of the clergy is best recorded in the making of wills. While many clergy approached the dying with a genuine concern for their spiritual welfare, the principal motive of laymen in summoning the minister to a sickbed was to ensure that a valid will was written and signed. The great majority of depositions in the court books concerning the making of wills contain no reference to prayer or exhortation. In some parts of the country, notably in Cambridgeshire, the clergy were employed less often to write wills as levels of literacy improved.¹⁰⁰ That does not seem to have happened in

99. D.R. V.7, f. 244.

100. Spufford, Contrasting Communities, 320-4.

Durham, at least on the evidence of the wills published in the Surtees Society's volumes. Not all were written by clergy; schoolboys, notaries, and neighbours were also called upon. If it is assumed that where a clergyman was named among the witnesses he was probably also the writer of a will, a little over 20% of all the published wills dated before 1620 can be attributed to clerical scribes. After that date the proportion fell to just below 20%. As the sample taken by the Surtees Society's editors has a distinct bias towards gentry and merchants, the most literate classes and those most likely to have access to professional scribes or lawyers, the proportion of the whole was probably greater.

The consistency of the figures is partly explained by the persistence of the idea that the local incumbent or curate had a peculiar interest in the testaments of his parishioners. Philip Hagthorpe, who described himself as a gentleman of St. Andrew's Auckland, judged his own efforts at will-making by this standard in 1611.

"I make this little book protesting this to be done with my very conscience to as good a meaning as though it were in the best forme before any Curate at my very death, and this I dowe because I am sickly and sometime weke and my savioure may call sudenly." 101

Naturally the clergy did all they could to preserve that attitude. In 1630 John Wood, curate of Castle Eden, was summoned to a house in his brother Joseph's parish of Greatham to write the will of William Sparke. John was not satisfied with his first draft and he promised Sparke that he would ask his brother

101. S.S. cxlii. 52.

to make a fair copy, "sayinge unto him that he Joseph was his William's Minister and that it was meet that he should be acquainted therewith." ¹⁰²

A number of laymen appointed clergy as executors or supervisors of their wills, again a position of trust. In 1619 Peter Mowbray of Stanhope issued a less formal commission, merely requesting that the curate, George Hall, see "my will executed according to my mynd and to looke that no body do my wiffe any wrong."¹⁰³ Clerical supervisors occur in other parishes, but they were particularly common in Stanhope in the 1620s and 1630s. The parish was remote and the clergy perhaps had an unusual importance as representatives of officialdom. Alternatively the custom reflected the respect and affection in which Ferdinand ¹⁰⁴ Moorcroft, rector from 1608 to 1641, and his curates were held. Moorcroft was popular both with his colleagues and with laymen and women who had experience of his ministry. In 1613 Elizabeth Wren, widow of a gentleman of St. Andrew's Auckland, requested in her will that as her "kind friend" he should officiate at her funeral.¹⁰⁵ Clergy are mentioned in the texts of approximately 15% of the published lay wills, although rarely in terms so clearly indicative of personal friendship. Some testators left a small sum to the minister who wrote the will.¹⁰⁶ Amongst the Newcastle merchants it was customary to make some recompense at death for dues unpaid in life¹⁰⁷ but the practice does not

102. D.R. V.12, f. 95.

103. S.S. cxlii. 129.

104. e.g. ibid. 212, 272.

105. Ibid. 74.

106. e.g. ibid. 65, 223.

107. e.g. S.S. xxxviii. 30; S.S. cxli. 152.

seem to have been followed elsewhere in the diocese. A few wills reveal that the relationship between minister and layman was not one of service and duty alone. In 1589 Sir Thomas Gray of Chillingham left 40 ewes each to the vicars of Embleton and Ilderton, men with whom he apparently had no connection beyond neighbourhood and friendship. Two years earlier, a man of rather different social standing, John Sedgewick of Heighington, bequeathed a linen shirt to his friend and curate John Rowth.¹⁰⁸

Against the indications of respect and affection can be set the much fuller history of antagonism between the parish clergy and their congregations. In litigation conflict was given a formal expression which harmony between minister and people rarely received. The picture of relations between clergy and laity which emerges from the court records, the principal source of information, is therefore a grim one, even though not every disagreement over tithing or casual insult led to an action at law. Suits between clergy and laity were numerous and often lengthy. Because of the bulk of the material the surviving records for all the church courts, the consistory, episcopal and chancellor's visitations, the archdeacons' and officials' courts, and the ecclesiastical commission, have been examined for three sample periods, 157-80, 159-1603, and 1628-33.¹⁰⁹ Even without

108. S.S. xxxviii. 174; S.S. cxii. 142.

109. Records used were, D.R. II.1, 2, 4, 5; D.R. III.3, 5, 11, 12; D.R. IV.1, 4, 5; D.R. V.4, 7, 12; D.R. VIII.1; D.R. XVIII.3; D.R. Miscell. Depos. 1633-4; P.K. D. and C. Mun., Act Bk. sede vacante 1576; ibid. Act Bk of Archd. Pilkington; ibid. Dioc. Chan. Vis. 1634-7, 1637; D. and C. Libr., Raine MS. 124; Borth. Inst. Hist. Res., High Comm. Act Bks. of period; S.S. xxxiv.

a full series of records for every court, it is clear that in each period nearly half the parish clergy were engaged in litigation with laymen. The predominant cause of dispute was the collection of tithe. In an earlier chapter figures were quoted of the number of tithe causes brought by clergy in the consistory court during years close to the sample periods used here; 287 actions between 1577 and 1582, 411 between 1595 and 1600, and 633 between 1629 and 1634.¹¹⁰ Within each of the sample periods there were no more than a handful of instance suits between clergy and laity brought on other grounds; 21 in the first period, 11 in the second, and 26 in the third. The bringing of an action gives little clue to the exact state of affairs between plaintiff and defendant, however. Even the number of tithe suits is no more than an indication that the material interests of clergy and laity were often at variance; such disagreements were equally common where the tithe owner was a layman. Conflicts between the two groups and their origins are more clearly illustrated in those actions involving some direct criticism of the minister, suits brought by parishioners against defaulting clergy, or by the clergyman for disrespect, defamation, or even assault.

Although the prosecution of unsatisfactory clergy was usually left to the ecclesiastical authorities, congregations were not averse to criticising their ministers, as examples already cited bear witness. In 1635 Thomas Birletson, vicar of Long Houghton, was suspended from his benefice for drunkenness, neglect, and misappropriation of church goods.

110. See p. 159.

The sentence followed his prosecution before the ecclesiastical commission by Henry Whitehead, a local gentleman. There had been attempts to control the vicar's behaviour within the parish before the matter was brought to the attention of the authorities. On one occasion the gentlemen, including Whitehead, and churchwardens had summoned Birletson and questioned him about the disappearance of a surplice and service book. When he had arrived to conduct morning prayers one Sunday too drunk to read clearly, Whitehead and others advised him to abandon the service.¹¹¹ Such cases were not common, neither were they the product of hostility towards the established church and ministry. The respectable parishioners, who usually took such action under the auspices of the local gentry, sought the reform or replacement of an unsatisfactory minister, not the removal of clerical authority. The standards by which they judged were those of accepted morality and honesty and represented no encroachment on clerical preserves.

Conflict between clergy and whole communities accounted for only a small proportion of the litigation under discussion. Even tithe suits were usually between the minister and one individual or at most a small group. Actions for abuse or assault were almost always entered against one or two parishioners. From the records of the consistory in the three sample periods and from all the surviving records of visitations, archdeacons' courts, and the ecclesiastical commission, approximately 130 actions of this kind are known. Details of the nature of the dispute survive in just over half of these

111. S.S. xxxiv. 126-9.

and cast some light on the circumstances and issues likely to cause conflict between a minister and his parishioners.

The clerical character of one of the parties was not always of central importance. A clergyman who joined in the life of his parish was liable to be involved in the disagreements which might arise among any group of neighbours. If, ignoring the rules of his calling, he drank and gambled with members of his congregation, the likelihood of trouble became great. In 1629 a game of cards between Henry Simpson and John Kidd, curate of Escombe, in the parish alehouse where Kidd lodged developed into a brawl and then a chase, as Kidd sought refuge in other houses in the village. Simpson was heard to call the curate "base priest, base pore knave, foolish idle lying knave"; his opponent's orders only gave him another resource for verbal abuse and liability to prosecution in the ecclesiastical courts.¹¹²

In most cases, however, the conduct of the minister in his official capacity did have some bearing upon the disagreement. In a substantial proportion of the actions, 15 in all, the material possessions of layman, cleric, or parish were the source of the original quarrel from which the abuse stemmed. Like any other landlord, the incumbent might face resentment at his management of the property of the benefice. When John Ridley, a cadet of a gentry house from Haltwhistle, was brought before the ecclesiastical commission in 1627 on charges of immorality and of improper conduct towards the vicar, Thomas Astell, one witness identified as the origin of his grudge against the vicar Astell's refusal to allow a stackyard to be

112. D.R. V.12, ff. 146-8.

made in the churchyard, conveniently close to the door of Ridley's house.¹¹³ Mishandling of parish property could cause more justifiable resentment. A literate and independent parishioner of Lamesley was prosecuted in 1619 for claiming that he could prove the legality of theft from the bible and that he was more honest than the minister who was charged with the theft of parish money.¹¹⁴ The term 'thief' was often employed in abuse of the clergy although the belief that their monetary demands were rapacious and unjust rather than any clear evidence of malpractice probably provoked most of the reproaches. Allegedly novel claims to tithes and dues produced a number of instances of abuse or even assault. Tithe collection could be a dangerous business as John Heslehead, vicar of Warkworth, found, when his attempt to take a tithe of the trout caught by local fishermen on a Saturday ended in a bloody nose and the loss of his hat, tossed into the river by an angry parishioner.¹¹⁵ Considering the bulk of tithe litigation, however, the amount of personal rancour aroused by claims and refusals was minimal.

In contrast, disagreements over doctrine were unlikely to issue directly in court actions between clergy and parishioners; prosecution of unorthodoxy was left for the most part to the authorities. Nevertheless, amongst the causes of personal confrontation between ministers and people, doctrine was only slightly less important than material matters. Even at the height of Arminian influence in the diocese, however, lay

113. S.S. xxxiv. 6.

114. D.R. VIII.2, f. 82.

115. S.S. xxxiv. 101-4.

expressions of Protestant discontent were few. There were some stirrings of dissatisfaction amongst those taught by puritan preachers. One woman from Barnard Castle was heard to condemn a neighbour for the idolatrous practice of bowing at the name of Jesus, a gesture never used while Richard Rothwell was in the parish. As she quarrelled with the same neighbour over a seat in the church, the extent of her commitment to Rothwell's teaching may be doubted.¹¹⁶ Only when the reassembled parliament called for the complaints of the nation against the church was there any volume of unfavourable comment from the diocese and then only the petition from Ponteland specifically mentioned Laudian practices as a fault of the incumbent. One of the rare instances in which the differences within the church were reflected in the relations between layman and minister was the famous case of John Blakiston, Newcastle merchant, future regicide, and son and brother of Durham clergymen, who claimed that a sermon by the vicar, Yeldard Alvey, contained at least seven errors of doctrine, a comment which brought him before the ecclesiastical commission. The two men had attended a wedding party in 1636 and Blakiston's remarks followed his intervention to prevent his wife discussing matters of religion with Alvey. The difference in the accounts given by witnesses of Blakiston's behaviour on that and other occasions reflects the strength of party allegiance among laity as well as clergy in the town.¹¹⁷ The supporters of puritan preaching in Berwick, Sunderland, and even Lanchester probably shared many of Blakiston's attitudes but

116. P.K. D. and C. Mun., Dioc. Chan. Vis. 1637, f. 26.

117. S.S. xxxiv. 155-67; cf. Howell, Newcastle upon Tyne, 85-115.

they are not known to have expressed the same personal hostility towards the conformist clergy.

For the majority of the diocesan clergy, the chief threat to orthodoxy was posed not by Protestant radicals but by Catholic recusants. In parishes where a recusant community survived and even flourished, the established minister could expect innumerable small irritations. In addition to absence from church, clandestine marriages and baptisms, and attempts to seduce others from conformity, the Catholics were guilty of wholesale and often vocal disrespect for the established ministry. Five cases of abuse came from Hartlepool alone in the early 17th century and no doubt they were the tip of the iceberg.¹¹ Amongst those prosecuted was Robert Porrett, farmer of the tithes of the chapelry, who was alleged to have failed to repair the chancel, kept popish conventicles, and declared "n a Sunday and in the hearinge of five neighbours that he was afferde in his conscience that the soule of the late deceased wife of Mr Younge [Vicar of Hart] was in hell."¹¹⁹ Common on clerical marriage by Catholics was naturally derogatory and accounted for a large number of the many cases of defamation or abuse brought by or on behalf of the wives of the clergy. "Priest's sibb" was the epithet of which they complained most frequently.¹²⁰

A more fertile source of expressed resentment among the laity than either tithe or doctrinal differences was the imposition of ecclesiastical discipline. The authority of the

118. D.R. VIII.1, f. 190, 199, 209.

119. P.K. D. and C. Mun., Dioc. Chan. Vis. 1634-7, ff. 12, 16.

120. e.g. D.R. II.5, f. 64; D.R. III.5, f. 15; D.R. III.11, f. 271; D.R. IV.5, 26 Sept. 1601.

parish minister was in theory considerable. It was also jealously preserved. When William Assheton, vicar of Bywell St. Andrew, drew up his will in 1611 he refused to make any bequest to his own church and people because of the activities of George Lawson "the church robber who hathe all the sainge in the parish" The challenge to his standing in the community rather than Lawson's various defaults of tithe and dues apparently lay at the root of Assheton's venom against him.¹²¹

Clerical sensitivity may explain the numerous actions which had their origin in some breach of ecclesiastical discipline. The suit in which the shortcomings of Richard Milner of Lancaster were reviewed began when he tried to lecture a particularly argumentative parishioner into harmony with his neighbour and merely provoked an assault on his own person.¹²² Reproofs could easily be met by a sharp retort. John Dalton and Stephen Rearly, caught by the curate of St. Andrew's Newcastle drinking the communion wine in the vestry and reprimanded by him, retaliated by calling him a "scurvie knave".¹²³

The parish minister's role in the disciplinary machinery of the archdeaconry and diocese also exposed him to abuse. As the local representative of the church courts he was the natural focus for resentment of the restrictions imposed by ecclesiastical law. In the 1630s John Lambe, keeper of an alehouse in Long Benton, complained that people could no longer drink at their leisure on Sundays without being presented by the churchwardens, vicar, or parish clerk. When one of the churchwardens

121. D.R. Prob. 1613.

122. D.R. V.4, ff. 53-72.

123. D.R. II.5, f. 56.

pointed out that he could avoid this fate by attending church as the law required, he claimed to be defending the ancient practice of the parish, "in despite of you and the preist both and if you be not quett I will banish the towne of you and tell the vicar that from me." ¹²⁴ The discretion which the minister had de facto in the suppression of information and the exaction of penance could also be invidious. When Isaac Marrow, rector of Elsdon, refused to modify the penalties imposed on Percival Reede for some offence (the records do not say what it was), Reede "did breake forth into violent and outragious tearmes against Mr Marrowe, and toulde him he cared for never a preest of them all." ¹²⁵ If the clergyman misused his powers, the scope for trouble increased again. Several clergy against whom respected laymen gave evidence were accused of causing and maintaining disputes amongst their parishioners, presumably to enhance their own powers. Amongst these was John Vaux, the astrologer, who was said to have issued citations to the diocesan courts which were found to be fraudulent, merely to vex his neighbours and amuse himself. ¹²⁶

Almost all the examples quoted above are drawn from the 17th century. This reflects not a dramatic worsening of relations between clergy and laity but the unevenness of the evidence. Actions arising from disrespect of the clergy were usually brought before either the archdeacons' courts or the ecclesiastical commission. There are no 16th-century commission records and the act books of the archdeacons survive in

124. D.R. Miscell. Depos. 1633-4, ff. 56-61.

125. S.S. xxxiv. 184-5.

126. Ibid. 36-8, 106.

quantity only from the beginning of the 17th century. The question of any general development in attitudes is an important one, nevertheless. After 1640 there were outbursts of anti-laudian and anticlerical sentiment in Durham as elsewhere and with hindsight some increase in tension between clergy and laity might have been expected in the immediately preceding period, especially in the years when the ecclesiastical and political affairs of the diocese were dominated by Neile and his followers.

There are some indications that conflict was becoming more common in the parishes, even if isolated and much quoted instances, such as the notorious laments of Muggleswick, are set aside.¹²⁷ The volume of litigation between clergy and laity rose sharply between 1600 and the late 1620s, as an increasing number of tithe suits were brought. As has been seen, the actions came from more parishes than before and involved a larger cross-section of the clergy, including incumbents of the poorest livings and curates who leased the rectory or vicarage from their employers.¹²⁸ The history of the ecclesiastical commission also suggests a change in attitudes towards and by the clerical authorities. The contrast between the business before the court in 1614-17, when only one case of disrespect for a minister was heard, and in the years after 1626, in which such cases were commonplace, may be explained as the result either of a more vigorous anticlericalism following Neile's episcopate or of a new determination by the leaders of the church to protect the clergy, by improving their standards and

127. A most lamentable information of Part of the Grievances of Muggleswick, (1641).

128. See p. 159.

imposing severer penalties on those guilty of irreverence; probably the two went hand in hand.¹²⁹

The clashes which took place at the end of the period were of familiar kinds. Perhaps the only novel element was the increasing importance of the property not of the benefice but of the church itself as an object of dispute. The accusations against Birletson had included misappropriation of a surplice and service book. Other clergy were accused of removing more valuable items. Thomas Astell of Haltwhistle was alleged to have used the stones from a ruined porch to build a wall before his own door.¹³⁰ The refurbishing of churches encouraged by the authorities in the 1620s and 1630s may have increased the traffic in church goods. Possibly it also increased the resentment of the laity, who were paying higher church rates than before, against the readiness of some clergy to treat the belongings of the church as their own.

It is impossible to apportion the elements of lay and clerical aggression and no easy connection can be made with the development of Laudianism, with its emphasis on the authority of the church and its ministers. Parishes with Laudian clergy do not seem to have had unusually bad relations with their ministers. Brancepeth, where John Cosin, one of the most famous of Neile's protégés, was rector, is a good example. Cosin was energetic in the defence of his rights. While resident in the diocese in the early 1630s he brought an average

129. P.K. D. and C. Mun., Act Bk. of Eccl. Comm.; S.S. xxxiv. passim.

130. D.R. V.12, f. 100.

of seven tithe cases a year against parishioners.¹³¹ Even so, he seems to have provoked little personal hostility, although those prosecuted no doubt resented his attentions. In the only action for abuse of a minister recorded from the parish in the 1630s, the injured party was William Milburne, the curate and lecturer, whose intervention in a dispute over church seating had proved unwelcome.¹³² The opponents of Arminianism were just as likely to suffer on such occasions. When Cosin was sequestered from Brancepeth, his place was taken by Henry Lever, who became one of the leading Presbyterian ministers of the north-east. As curate of Whitburn in 1633 he had initiated disciplinary proceedings against James Gibbon for brawling in the churchyard; Gibbon "taking a peace of dirt said he cared not that for the said Mr Lever"¹³³

Both incidents highlight the importance of the personal element in expressions of hostility towards the clergy. Although some actions were based on remarks reportedly made by the defendant to a third party, in most suits for abuse or defamation a confrontation had taken place between layman and minister. That in turn helps to explain the apparent lack of resentment against over-bearing Laudians who forced innovations upon traditionally-minded parishioners. Most of the known ceremonialists or Arminians of the diocese were members of Neile's circle, senior clergy, often absent from their parishes about the affairs of the bishop, chapter, or archdeaconry. The collection of tithes and the daily administ-

131. D.R. III.11, f. 57, 10, 216, 231, 312; D.R. III.12, ff. 29, 117, 134. After 1635 Cosin was usually resident in Cambridge as master of Peterhouse. P. H. Osmond, Life of John Cosin, 80-90.

132. P.K. D. and C. Mun., Dioc. Chan. Vis. 1634-7, f. 1.

133. D.R. Miscell. Depos. 1633-4, f. 30; R. Welford, Men of Mark 'twixt Tyne and Tees, iii. 25-30.

ration of the parish were left to deputies who bore the brunt of grievances against the demands of the church. The clergy engaged in actions for abuse were mostly curates or incumbents of benefices of poor or middling value who had neither the income nor the need to employ curates of their own.

A single influential layman who saw little good in the church or its ministers could cause a disproportionate amount of trouble. Robert Brandling, farmer of the rectories of Alnwick, Lesbury, and Shilbottle, was summoned before the ecclesiastical commission in 1633. The first charge against him was adultery but in spite of his comments on the "bawdy courts" of the church moral discipline was not the principal cause of his conflict with its representatives. The incumbents of the parishes where he farmed the tithes claimed to have suffered assault and abuse as he asserted his independence of them and of all ecclesiastical authority in the disposal of his property. Thomas Vicars of Shilbottle clashed with him over the collection of tithes: Robert Stephenson, curate of Alnwick, over the fees for marriages, baptisms, and burials. At Lesbury, Brandling changed the seating arrangements of the chancel without reference to the bishop, to the anger of the vicar, Patrick Mackilwayne. The chancel of Alnwick church was frequently locked against communicants and, on one occasion, when an archidiaconal visitation was meeting inside. Brandling was said to have claimed that "the chancell was his owne, and therefore he would locke it and openn it whenn he saw cause." Even the liturgy was not free from interference. There was an attempt to force a Scots preacher upon Stephenson during one service. The local clergy interpreted Brandling's behaviour as purely malicious;

"he hath much laboured the subversion of divers ministers dwellings nere unto him, for he hath, by vexatious courses and causeless suites, brought manie pleas and trobles against this examine Thomas Vicars and Mr Mckilwyann, Mr Stevenson and Mr John Fawlder" ¹³⁴

Brandling's power and willingness to damage the parish clergy were extraordinary. Contemporary incumbents in other parishes found annoyance in the behaviour of impropiators, especially when the collection of Easter dues disrupted the communion service, but these incidents did not lead to personal conflict.¹³⁵ The action against Brandling was one of the longest heard by the Durham commission and the penalties were the harshest imposed by the court. Unlike John Blakiston he could find few witnesses to testify in his favour and he must stand alone as a singular example of virulent anticlericalism.

A more common figure in the history of the Durham parishes was the contentious minister, single-minded in the pursuit of what he believed to be his rights. Patrick Mackilwayne was a native of Galloway whose incumbency at Lesbury lasted from 1610 until his death, aged 90, in 1659. The first legal action known to have been promoted on his behalf was the prosecution of three parishioners before the chancellor's visitation in the year of his institution. He was still engaged in litigation in 1639.¹³⁶ The disturbance of tithing

134. S.S. xxxiv. 53-6 .

135. e.g. incidents at Alwinton and St. Oswald's and St.

Margaret's, Durham, *ibid.* 6-8, 82-100.

136. D.R. II.7, f. 141; D.R. IV.14, 15 Nov. 1639.

customs in the parish by the enclosure of common land at the beginning of the 17th century no doubt contributed to the many suits over tithes and dues in which Mackilwayne was involved. Between 1611 and 1618, for example, he was at odds with the whole township of Bilton; in the latter years, both sides appealed for the support of the earl of Northumberland.¹³⁷ The vicar was defendant as well as plaintiff before the courts. Several cases were brought against him by lay impro-priators or farmers, including Brandling, and early in his career he was charged with failing to repair his vicarage house.¹³⁸ "The vicar was a man of an ill-conscience and a troublesome man to sue for his tithe-hay," complained one parish-ner in 1619. His authority within the parish can only have be n weakened by the unparalleled amount of such comment. Even his household came under attack. One quarrel over church seating led to threats against Mackilwayne's servant "and other malicious reports against the vicar", as the court records discreetly noted.¹³⁹

N ne of Mackilwayne's opponents forgot that he was a clergyman and in that the parishioners of Lesbury were typical of the laity of the diocese. The records of the church courts no doubt distort the picture, since such cases only came before them when one party was in orders. Even so, lay comment upon the clergy, whether abusive or respectful, rarely if ever divorced the man from his profession. There was a distinctive

137. D.R. V.12, f. 170-2; Alnwick Castle, Sion MS. R.II. 17c, 5b-c.

138. D.R. III.11, f. 0; S.S. xxxiv. 182; D.R. II.7, f. 141.

139. D.R. VIII.2, f. 194.

code of conduct by which laymen and colleagues could assess the behaviour of a minister and all his actions were judged on that basis. Clerical self-consciousness was a natural corollary, although some clergy paid less attention to the code than might have been hoped. Gatherings of ministers, rising educational standards, and ties of friendship, and from the late 16th century especially, of kinship, reinforced their awareness. Whether, in consequence, other attitudes changed during the period is more difficult to assess. The authority delegated to the parish clergy and the trust so often placed in them led to an assertiveness as characteristic of Richard Milner in the 16th century as of Mackilwayne in the 17th. Laurence Ddsworth and Francis Bunny cared as deeply for the success of their ministry as did Robert Jenison and Nathaniel Ward. In the 17th century, however, Jenison and Ward expressed an anxiety for the standing of the ministry which was perhaps new. Unlike William Watson, they sought respect as clergy; unlike the curates against whom the people of Muggleswick and Aycliffe petitioned the Long Parliament, they also sought to merit respect by supplying the pastoral needs of their parishioners. With that concern went a commitment to ecclesiastical politics; a conscientious and educated ministry was also a divided profession, as the 16th century clergy, however devoted to their cures, had never been.

Conclusion

The work of the clergy who served in the parishes of Durham and Northumberland in the 16th century and the early 17th illustrates the diversity of function of the parish minister. As the commentators suggested, much more was demanded of him than the conduct of public worship and exhortation. The responsibilities and duties described by Bernard, Perkins, and Herbert lay within areas of concern appropriated to the pastor well before the 17th century. Instruction, counsel, discipline, exemplary personal virtue - all would have been recognised as traditional aspects of the ministry by Durham clergy in 1570 as in 1640, although few may have approached the ideals of conduct put forward by their mentors.

The closeness with which the ministry within the diocese approximated to those standards and the adequacy of the pastoral service offered in Durham and Northumberland can be the subject of surmise but no certainty. The numbers of clergy changed little; there were always a few vacancies and the disappearance of chapelries possibly reduced the effectiveness of the church in some isolated areas. On the other hand, lack of demand may have contributed to the change in ecclesiastical geography which in turn perhaps helped to concentrate the clergy's efforts. Certain livings remained very poor and progress towards augmentation in the 17th century was slow. They were, however, the minority and even poor rewards did not always result in an inadequate ministry. The most clearly measurable change in the character of the parish clergy in the period was in their formal education. After a promising beginning,

improvement was slow by comparison with some southern dioceses; the presumed aim of an all-graduate ministry was only within sight by 1640. The change probably had least effect on the character of the upper and middle ranks of the clergy, although the group of able non-graduates, holders of good livings and episcopal favour in the 1570s, disappeared, to be replaced by men of slightly more diverse geographical background whose ladder to preferment was that of university connection as often as local standing. A greater contrast was to be found among the curates, independent, dependent, or assistant; by the 1630s they included a number of men of ability, graduates who might wait longer than their less well-qualified predecessors before finding a patron and a benefice. The change was in part a matter of policy. Ecclesiastical patrons, especially the bishop of Durham, who held the largest collection of advowsons in the diocese, were most consistent in presenting candidates with good formal qualifications. In the late 16th century the bishop also influenced the disposition of Crown livings to the same effect. A few laymen sought to attract preachers to benefices in the north-east but the passage of Crown patronage into the hands of county families probably strengthened the importance of local connection in gaining preferment.

For much of the period, the better education of the clergy and the promotion of a preaching ministry were inseparable aims, which, it was hoped, would be achieved in unison. The number of sermons preached from week to week in the parish churches of the diocese no doubt increased as serving clergy benefitted from further training in the scriptures and new

recruits came better prepared to receive orders. There was, however, little expansion in the facilities for preaching. Additional preachers or lectures were almost unknown outside the major towns and even in the 1630s the sum of preaching available remained inadequate in the eyes of both the people and the authorities. Complaints about the insufficiency of the church and its ministers in the north-east just before the Civil War were, however, in part the result of the coincidence of stricter censorship and lay particularity about the style and subjects of sermons. Catechising, the second weapon in the armoury of religious instruction, probably fared better; certainly, any insufficiencies attracted less attention from either diocesan officials or the lay public. In the form specified by local or national injunctions, the exercise was apparently rarely neglected by graduates or preachers. Less qualified clergy who attended diligently to the lessons offered at Barnes's synods and general chapters would have been well able to offer the basic instruction required. The curate who profited so well from those lessons that his sincerity and clarity in teaching the Prayer Book catechism laid the foundations of faith for Dr. Thomas Jackson may have used it as the introduction to personal conference and advice, as Richard Baxter was later to advocate. If he followed the letter of Bishop Barnes's Monitions, he would at least have interested himself in the future of the children to whom he offered spiritual and perhaps also secular instruction. As employed by Francis Bunney and Robert Jenison, catechising itself was a powerful instrument for more

than just the inculcation of the fundamentals of Christian teaching.

Outside the framework of the Prayer Book, personal counsel was sought and received from Bernard Gilpin, and the younger William Morton, and from many others whose ministry is only recorded incidentally in the deposition books of the ecclesiastical courts or by the grateful testimony of dying parishioners. No evidence has been found of parish visiting as a regular practice but clergy attended the dying as comforters as well as scribes and intervened in conflicts between members of their flocks. Parishioners guilty of misconduct were approached with both reproofs and persuasions to better behaviour. Private warnings, delivered by either the clergyman, or the churchwardens, or both, were the preliminary to presentation and the more cumbersome processes of the church courts. If promises of improvement were secured in response to the minister's reproaches or even the minor sanctions at his disposal, the matter probably went no further. The clergyman's part in the maintenance of moral discipline was thus given a personal dimension easily lacking if he adhered to the letter of the law, acting mechanically as the agent of the system of visitation and presentation. A sincere concern to fit measures to individual cases, however, could not save him from frequent clashes with offenders, as he sought to impose the standards demanded by the ecclesiastical code. The respect which the commentators insisted should be granted to the minister both for the sake of his office and his own virtue is little in evidence in the records of the

church courts; the clergy were instead at greatest risk of abuse when exercising their authority to rebuke or chastise.

Outside the ecclesiastical sphere the authority of the clergyman still depended largely upon his professional character. The first clerical justices of lower rank than the bishop and chancellor included men of gentle birth, but Henry Ewbanke, the elder William Morton, and many others were qualified for secular office only by seniority in the church and the administrative experience, social, and material standing this gave them. By the end of the period, even a parochial benefice could give the necessary status; holders of the most valuable livings were candidates for the bench, incumbents of lesser benefices served on less important commissions but still wielded an influence in temporal affairs unknown by their predecessors of the 1570s. In the parishes, where the clergy had a traditional role to play in civil government, their activities were accepted without question. Elsewhere, the extension of clerical responsibilities aroused vocal resentment. The response to the profusion of clerical justices in the north-east in the 1620s was harnessed and fanned by political interests but it had its origin in the belief that ecclesiastical orders did not in themselves constitute a proper qualification for the exercise of secular authority.

The clergyman could not, therefore, be sure of obtaining respect and obedience, even in matters spiritual, through deference to his office alone. Much depended on the qualities of the individual. Standards of conduct among the clergy.

were not above reproach but offences against the moral code were rare, at least according to the records of the church courts. Charges of immorality, drunkenness, or dishonesty were remarkably few, especially in view of the tendency of laymen under threat of ecclesiastical penalties to counter-attack with accusations against the agents of their disgrace. Professional unwillingness to expose the personal failings of colleagues may have reduced the numbers of prosecutions. Those clergy who were guilty of misconduct were usually drawn from the ranks of the unbeneficed and ill-educated, although some senior clergy, including John Craddocke and Thomas Gray, bore most unsavoury reputations. The absence of convictions before the ecclesiastical courts, however, is little guarantee that the lives of the clergy had that exemplary quality which the commentators required of the faithful minister. On the credit side, what is known of the lives and work ^{of} Bernard Gilpin, Francis Bunney, William Birch, and those ministers affectionately remembered in their parishioners' wills undoubtedly points to outstanding pastoral and personal virtue. The basic demands of hospitality, charity in one of its institutional forms, were met by most, as the occasional prosecutions of the negligent testify. Nevertheless, the lack of commitment to philanthropy evident in clerical wills suggests that few led that life of Christian self-denial and good works described by the idealists.

The omission is hardly surprising in view of the other ^x demands made upon the clergy by family and profession. Those, too, were sometimes difficult to reconcile. It was easy to

see the fight to maintain position and material rights, for example to tithe, as the defence of a successor's well-being. Similar concerns and interests, personal friendships, inter-marriage, and eventually the foundation of clerical dynasties helped to develop professional awareness without endangering older and more restricted loyalties. The sense of unity and common purpose rarely, however, went beyond such personal contacts. Common institutions and action were organised and imposed from above. Some clergy were as close to their lay patrons, especially if they lived and held lands in the parish, as to colleagues or superiors, although the number of such relationships was limited by the preponderance of ecclesiastical and institutional patronage. For most, loyalty lay first to family and immediate friends; the nature of the clerical contribution to education typifies this order of priorities. Clergymen made their greatest contribution as teachers, an additional role which brought a welcome income. Few showed any interest in the general expansion of educational facilities. The handful of ministers who left gifts or endowments for schools or scholars or voluntarily helped to organise new institutions within their parishes concerned themselves with the professional needs of the church but not apparently with the requirements or desires of the laity. As they came to appreciate the growing importance of education, many more made provision for a son or nephew to attend school and university. Often the stated intention was that the young man should follow a career in the church. For the next generation of clergy, these benefactors probably envisaged a position of

some power and standing in the limited community of the parish if not beyond and at least a moderate standard of living. Although the variety of clerical estates had diminished over the preceding seventy years, there was still in 1640 scope for the fortunate and able man to make his name. Cushioned by the improvement in clerical living standards and by the new skills at his disposal with which to augment his income, the less ambitious minister could hope to find an accepted place in local society; there might be occasional clashes over failure to pay tithes or the imposition of discipline but not until the following decades would there be any serious challenge to the clergyman's position within his parish.

Appendix AProbate Inventories of Clerical Libraries.

1. Inventory of the books of Richard Clerke, vic. Berwick,
taken 16th April 1607.

"Vigands common places	vis. viiid.	
Marloratts commonplaces	vis. viiid.	X
A concordance of Marbecke in Englishe	iiis. ivd.	
Musculus common places	vis. viiid.	
Tremellius bible in Latine	vs.	
A geneva bible in Englishe	xs.	
A renishe Testament	vs.	
Beza his great Testament	xvs.	
Musculus upon the psalmes	xs.	
Musculus upon Essay	vis.	
Musculus upon Genesis	ivs.	
Swinglius upon Essay	is. vid.	
Peter Martyr upon the judges	iiis. ivd.	
The same upon ye Romans	vs.	
Brentius uppon the actes	iis. vid.	
Erasmus upon the hebrewes	is.	
Explicationes etc.	iis. vid.	
Calvin upon Deuteronomie	vis. viiid.	
Calvin uppon Essay	vs.	
Calvins harmonye upon ye gospels	viis.	
Calvin upon all the epistles	viis.	
Calvin uppon Timot. & Titus	iiis. ivd.	
Oecolampadius upon Job and Daniell	vis. viiid.	
The same uppon ye great Prophets	vs.	
Zanchius de Operibus dei	vis. viiid.	
Lavater uppon Josuah	vs.	
Harding & Iewell	iis. vid.	
The defence of the Apologie	iiis.	
A greate dictionarie	iis. vid.	
Musculus uppon Mattheu		

Bookes of smaller volume than the former

Camdens historie	iis.	
Isocrates orationes greeke & latine	iis.	
Homers Iliads	is.	X
Homers Odysse	is.	
Theocritus	is.	
Cicero his Academicall questiones	is.	
Cicero ad Brutum	is.	
Tullies Sentences	is.	

Tullie de Oratione	is.
Tullie in Verrem	is.
Phillipica	viiid.
Freigius questiones	is.
Cypponnes greeke grammer	vid. x
Olenarde greeke grammer	vid.
Justine	ivd.
Brenchusius	vid.
Demetrius	ivd.
Aristotle in Latine	vid.
Tullies offices	iid.
His familiar epistles	iid.
Seneca	vid.
A psalme booke	vid.
Terence	iid.
Aristophanes in greeke	is.
Sophologium	is. viid.
Scutorum historiae	iiis.
Gregories decretals	xs.
An hebrewe dictionarie	iis.
Hebrew psalmes	viiid.
Martinus hebrewe grammar	viiid.
Clenards hebrewe grammar	vid.
Postilla	is.
The same by Spanderbergge	is. x
Zanchius confessions	is. iid.
Olevarius ad Romanos	iis.
Idem upon ye creede	viiid.
Orsius explicationes	is. vid.
Ireus in genesis	is. vid.
The same upon Job	is. vid.
The same upon ye preacher	is. ivd.
Piscator upon genesis	iis. ivd.
Haynon in Esaiam	ivd.
Piscator in Johannem & Pauli epistolas	is. vid.
Piscator in epistolas Petri et Johannis	is.
Idem in epistolam ad Hebreos	is.
Chiteus in Lenitin. Letin.	is. ivd. x
The same on ye booke of numbers	xd.
The same de statu Ecclesiarum	vid.
Eiusdem regula vita	ivd.
Aretius uppon John	is.
Udalls sermons	is. vid.
Udall on the lamentations	viiid.
Jewell upon Paulles epistles	vid.
Lambertus Danaeus physickes	is.
An exposition upon Hester	ivd.
Gualteri homiliae in Canonicas epistolas	is.
Perkins aurea emilla	vid.
His vocations	ivd.
Perkins Idolatrie	xd.
Bullinger in apolcaypsin	is. vid.
Chrysostome upon Mathewe	xd.
Nicholaus Hemingius	ivd.
Bale his image of both churches	is. ivd.
Junius anlyses uppon John	iis.

Fulke upon ye revelation	is.
Andreaes upon ye canticles	vid.
Willoughby upon ye same	iiid.
The Canticles Andreas	vid.
Calvins free election	
The canticles in Englishe meeter	ivd.
Beza uppon job	xd.
Serranus upon Ecclesiastes	is. ivd.
Calvins 4 sermones	iiid.
Beza his catechisme	viiid.
Babington upon genesis	is. viiid.
Jacksons sermons	xd.
Calvin on free election	is. vid.
Merlins 26 sermons upon Hester	is. iid.
Calvini expositiones	ivd.
Homilae Docaei	vid.
Sharpi explanationes	ivd.
Mortons threefolld estate	xd.
Peters watchword	ivd.
A treatise of Melchisadech	iiid.
Pollocke on the Ephesians	viiid.
Pollocke upon Daniell	is. ivd.
De vocatione	vid.
Idem upon ye Romans	vid.
A treatise of conscience	iiis.
Babingtons sermons	iis.
Arguments for ceremonies	ivd.
Whittakers de sacra Scriptura	iis.
A defence of reformed catholickes	is. ivd.
Homilies	viiid.
A replie against Browne priests	is. iid.
Whittakeri respona ad Sam. etc.	viiid.
John Reynolds contra Romanam Ecclesiam	is. viiid.
A defence of Catholicke doctrine	viiid.
Homiliae de iustificatione	vid.
Whittakers answers to Campion	vid.
Reasons of refusall	ivd.
Dorelles catechisme	viiid.

Sum. tot. £14 9s. 4d."

ii. Inventory of the books of Isaac Lowden, clerk, of Darlington,
taken 15th July 1612.

"Gualther uppon Luke	viiis.
Peter Martir upon the Rom.	ivs.
Lambert uppon Luke	is.
Jacobus de voragne	ivd.
Urstitius Arethmeticke	vid.
Caesars Comentari.	is.
Hermanus Bodius	is.
Theodorett.	is.
Titlemans physickes	vid.
20 small books	vs.
Erasmus Apothegimes	ivd.
A Scapula	xiiis.
Gulthers homilies	vis. viiid.
Hugo Cardinalis uppon the whole Bible	viis.
Homers Illiades	is. viiid.
Brittaynes resurrection	id.
French and Italian Testament	ivd.
Direction to death	viid.
Simon de Cassia	iis. vid.
The Reformed Catholicke	ivd.
A Childrens Dictionary	iid.
C'mnisius 4or tom.	xs.
Theophilactus uppon the fower Evangelists	is. vid.
Calvins Institutio.	iiis. ivd.
Christs Triumph	iid.
Granadoes Meditations	is.
Mr Deeringes Lectures	is. vid.
Dux peccatorum	iis.
Sheppards Callendar	ivd.
Setons Log.	ivd.
Mr Estes workes	iis.
Burtasius de mundi creatione	viid.
Aulus Collius	is. viid.
Comedia Sacra	iid.
Petrarch de remediis utriusque fortune	vid.
Quintilians Institutions	iis. vid.
Brittaynes deliverance	iid.
Directions to the holy land	iid.
King uppon Jonas	iid.
Bilsons Controversies	iid.
Calvin uppon the Epistles	is.
Gualther uppon the small prophettes	vis. viiid.
The golden Chayne	vid.
Halls Epistles	ivd.
An exposition of two chapters of ye proverbs	ivd.
Heming uppon James	vid.
A pt. of Titus Livius	xiiid.
Salust	ivd.
The pedigree of popish heretiques	ivd.
Doctor Playfayres sermons	ivd.

The Anatomie of Abuses	ivd.
Critchies Sermones quadragesiales	iid.
Talens Retorique	iid.
A greeke Testament & a Glenardes gramar	is. viiid.
One volume of Tullies orations	ivd.
Piscator uppon ye Epistles	viiid.
Gibsons meditations	ivd.
Ramus Log.	iiid.
Valerius Flaccus Argo.	vid.
Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius	is.
Five bookes of moses in laten with a commentarie	viiid.
A statute booke	xiid.
A treatise of Christian equalitie	xid.
The reasure of Exominus	ivd.
Michaelle de Hungaria	is.
Licosthenes Apothegemes	is.
Tullius Tusculan quest.	is.
Sallust	vid.
An Englishe Bible	iiis. ivd.
Brocard uppon ye Revellations	is.
Glenardes greeke grammar & Clarke de Aulice	vid.
The English Secreterie with three old books	vid.
Sum. tot. £5 16s."	

(Sources: D.R. Prob. 1607, 1612)

Appendix BValue of Endowed Livings in 1535Durham

Aycliffe vic.	£16.
Billingham vic.	£11. 3s.
Bishopton vic.	£ 4. 5s. 8d.
Boldon rec.	£24. 13s. 4d.
Brancepeth rec.	£60. 10s. 4d.
Cockfield rec.	£ 9. 18s.
Conniscliffe vic.	£ 7. 18s.
Dalton le Dale vic.	£ 6. 0s. 7d.
Dinsdale rec.	£ 4. 11s. 4d.
Durham; St. Mary, North Bailey	10s.
" St. Mary, South Bailey	£ 4. 13s. 4d.
Easington rec. (Archd. of Durham)	£104
Edmundbyers rec.	£ 6. 11s. 4d.
Egglescliffe rec.	£28. 17s.
Elton rec.	£ 7. 1s. 4d.
Elwick rec.	£20. 18s.
Gainford vic.	£39. 16s.
Gateshead rec.	£27. 13s. 8d.
Greatham vic.	£ 7. 1s. 8d.
Grindon vic.	£ 4. 11s. 4d.
Hart vic.	£11. 17s.
Haughton le Skerne rec.	£53. 6s. 8d.
Heighington vic.	£12. 14s. 8d.
Monk Hesleden vic.	£ 7. 12s. 4d.
Houghton le Spring rec.	£124
Hurworth rec.	£27. 5s. 4d.
Kelloe vic.	£20.
Kimbleworth rec.	£ 3. 6s. 8d.
Kirkmerrington vic.	£14. 4s. 8d.
Bishop Middleham vic.	£ 4. 19s.
Middleton in Teesdale rec.	£26. 17s.
Middleton St. George rec.	£ 3. 13s.
Long Newton rec.	£20
Norton vic.	£31. 11s. 4d.
Pittington vic.	£14. 14s.
Redmarshall rec.	£17. 18s.
Ryton rec.	£47. 10s. 7d.
Seaham vic.	£ 5. 0s. 4d.
Sedgefield rec.	£73. 18s.
Sockburn vic.	£ 3. 18s.
Stainton le Street rec.	£12. 13s. 4d.
Stanhope rec.	£67. 6s. 8d.
Stranton vic.	£17. 16s.
Washington rec.	£18.
Bishop Wearmouth rec.	£89. 18s.
Whickham rec.	£20. 19s.
Whitburn rec.	£39. 19s. 4d.
Winston rec.	£ 9. 18s.
Wolsingham rec.	£31. 13s. 4d.

Northumberland

Alnham vic.	£ 3. 7s.
Alston vic. (Cumb.)	£ 7. 13s.
Bedlington vic.	£13. 6s. 8d.
Long Benton vic.	£ 3. 1s. 4d.
Bolam vic.	£ 6. 13s. 4d.
Bothal rec.	£25.
Branxton vic.	£ 3. 6s. 8d.
Bywell St. Andrew vic.	£ 3. 9s. 1d.
Bywell St. Peter vic.	£ 9. 18s.
Chatton vic.	£12. 16s. 0½d.
Chillingham vic.	£ 4.
Chollerton vic.	£ 6. 14s. 4d.
Corbridge vic.	£11. 11s. 8d.
Edlingham vic.	£ 6. 14s. 4d.
Eglingham vic.	£23. 3s. 1½d.
Ellingham vic.	£ 6. 5s. 4d.
Elsdon rec.	£20.
Embleton vic.	£11. 3s. 4d.
Felton vic.	£ 3. 13s. 4d.
Ford rec.	£24.
Haltwhistle vic.	£12. 3s.
Hartburn vic.	£20. 0s. 8d.
Heddon on the Wall vic.	£ 4. 8s.
Long Horsley vic.	£ 7. 13s. 4d.
Howick rec. (Archd. of Northumberland)	£36. 13s. 4d.
Ilderton vic.	£ 4.
Ingram rec.	£24. 16s. 5d.
Kirkharle vic.	£ 3. 8s. 4d.
Kirkhaugh rec.	£ 4. 7s. 8d.
Kirknewton vic.	£ 3. 6s. 8d.
Kirkwhelpington vic.	£ 7. 3s. 4d.
Knaresdale rec.	£ 4. 18s. 8d.
Lesbury vic.	£ 8. 2s. 10d.
Longhoughton vic.	£ 9. 9s. 4d.
Meldon rec.	£ 4. 8s. 8d.
Mitford vic.	£10. 6s. 8d.
Morpeth rec.	£32. 16s. 8d.
Newton vic.	£16.
Newcastle vic.	£50.
Norham vic.	£15. 6s. 8d.
Ovingham vic.	£ 5. 8s.
Ponteland vic.	£13. 6s. 8d.
Rothbury rec.	£58. 6s. 8d.
Shilbottle vic.	£ 4. 14s. 8d.
Sheepwash rec.	£ 3. 17s.
Simonburn rec.	£34. 6s. 4d.
Stamfordham vic.	£14. 18s.
Stannington vic.	£ 5. 13s. 4d.
Tynemouth vic.	£24. 19s. 4d.
Warden vic.	£ 7. 16s. 2d.
Warkworth vic.	£18. 5s. 8½d.
Whalton rec.	£13. 0s. 8d.
Whitfield rec.	£8.
Woodhorn vic.	£21. 18s. 8d.
Wooler vic.	£ 5. 8s.

(Source; Valor Eccl. (Rec. Com.), vi. 299-330)

Appendix CEndowed schools in Durham and Northumberland, 1500-1640.Alnwick.

- 1548 Continuance warrant, stipend of £4. 1s. 8d. to master of grammar school.
- 1613 Order of alderman, burgesses, and 24 for establishment of school. £20 to master, £6. 13s. 4d. to usher. No record of appointment of usher before 1640.

(G. Tate, Hist. Alnwick, 72-5, 81-2.)

Bishop Auckland

- 1604 Letters Patent for establishment of the Free Grammar School of King James I, to have master and undermaster.
- 1605 Endowment by Ann Swift with income of £10. p.a.
- 1605 Endowment by Ralph Madison with increase of £6. p.a.
- 1625 Grant of 8d. by Richard Richardson.
- 1638 Grant of schoolhouse and cottages by Bp Morton.

(Endowed Charities of Durham, i.1-2)

Darlington

- 1548 Continuance warrant; stipend of £4. 8s. to master of school.
- 1564 Letters Patent for establishment of Free Grammar School of Queen Elizabeth.

(Mackenzie and Ross, Hist. Durham, ii. 140; Endowed Charities of Durham, i.192)

Heighington

- 1601 Grant from Elizabeth Jenison to William Jenison and seven others of £11 rent from lands at Bishop Middleham to maintain schoolmaster. Articles for government of school.

(Endowed Charities of Durham, ii. 17-18; B.L. Egerton MS. 2877, ff. 73-5)

Houghton le Spring

- 1574 Foundation charter of Kepier Grammar School. Endowment of £50 p.a. by Bernard Gilpin and John Heath, to maintain master and usher.

(Endowed Charities of Durham, ii. 41-3)

Morpeth

- 1548 Continuance warrant; stipend of £6.12s.10d. to master of grammar school.
- 1552 Letters Patent for establishment of Free Grammar School of King Edward VI. Endowment of £20 p.a. to support master and assistant.

(G. Tate, Hist Alnwick, 74; N. Carlisle, A Concise Description of the Endowed Grammar Schools in England and Wales, 249.)

Newcastle upon Tyne

- c.1525 Endowment by Thomas Horsley for schoolmaster.
- 1600 Great Charter of Newcastle upon Tyne established Free Grammar School of Queen Elizabeth; endowment of £40 p.a. for master and usher.

(R.F.Tuck, 'The origins of the Royal Grammar School, Newcastle upon Tyne', Arch.Ael. 4th ser. xlv, 230-2, 257-60; J. Brand, Hist. and Antiquities of Newcastle upon Tyne, 86-90; A.R.Laws, Schola Novacastrensis, i. 25, 47.)

Norton

- c.1578, 1597, 1600 Leases from bp. to James Rand, vicar, and certain parishioners, of site of kiln in Norton, for £2. 1s.11d. for maintenance of schoolmaster.

(D.R.V.7, ff.32-3; Endowed Charities of Durham, ii. 167-70).

Sedgefield

- c.1590 Establishment of school for poor children of parish by Robert Swift, rector.

1656 Refoundation.

(D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 13.1.)

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Appendix D

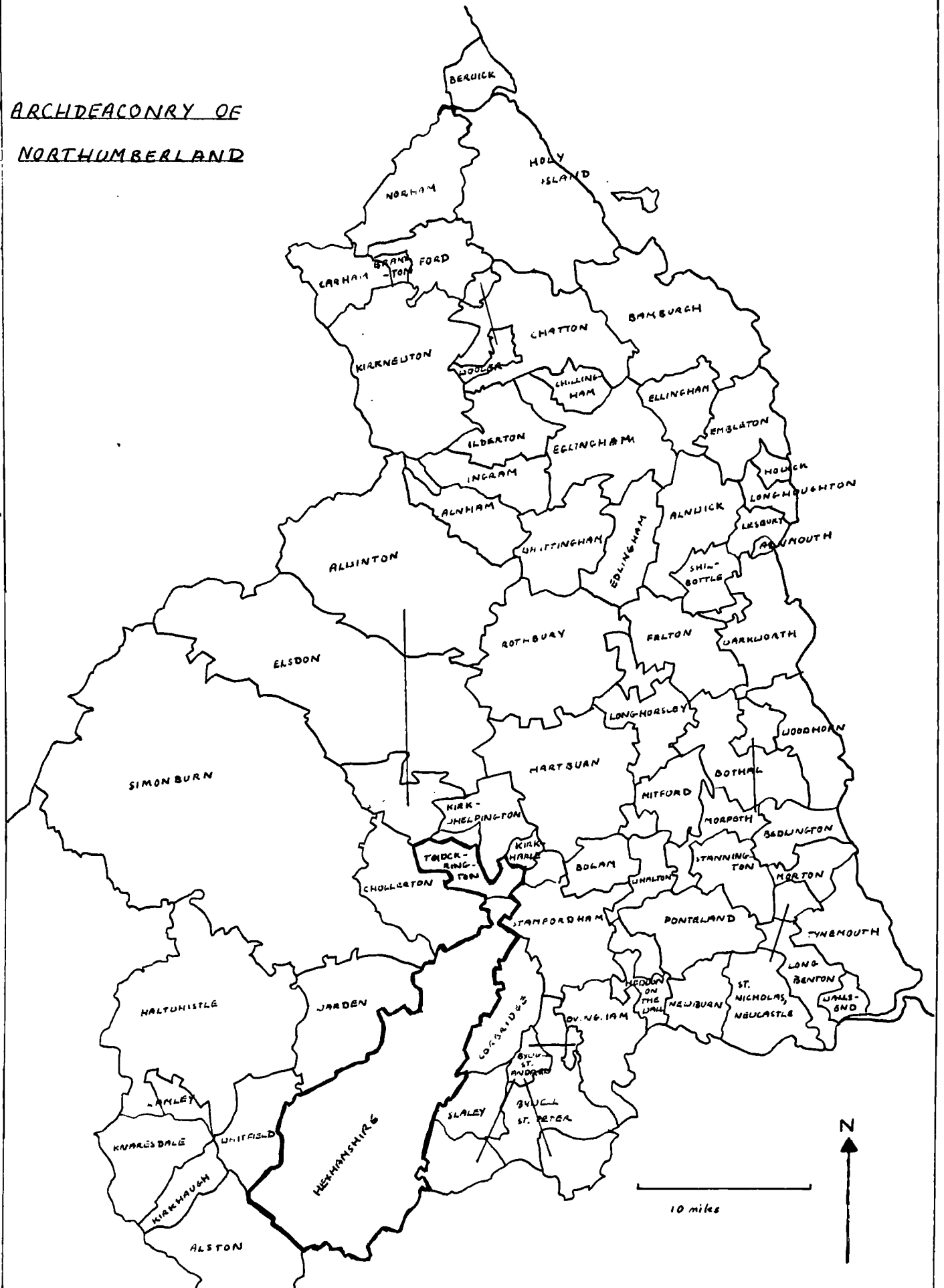
Maps

- i. The Archdeaconry of Durham
- ii. The Archdeaconry of Northumberland

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10 miles

ARCHDEACONRY OF
NORTHUMBERLAND



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