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*The parish ministry in the diocese of Durham,  
c.1570-1640.*

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## ABSTRACT

Some one thousand clergy served the parishes of the diocese between 1570 and 1640. They were drawn from diverse backgrounds but northerners of yeoman or professional family apparently predominated. Initially they included a substantial group of able non-graduates but the proportion of university-trained clergy had increased to 56% by the early 1630s. The bishops, the greatest patrons of the diocese, favoured men of proven ability. The dean and chapter, also very influential, and lay patrons were more often susceptible to local or personal connections.

A benefice brought security but not necessarily financial gain. Differences in clerical incomes remained wide, although the value of the poorest rectories increased extraordinarily rapidly. The wealth of the individual minister was, however, dependent upon family circumstances and additional income from a variety of sources.

The few contemporary writings on the pastorate described duties and conduct which many Durham clergy would have recognised, although most learned their profession from predecessors and colleagues rather than textbooks. The instruction of the laity was a major part of their work. Preaching became much more plentiful during the period but was still insufficient, especially in Northumberland. Catechising fared better and many clergy were involved in secular education. They also bore some responsibility for the administration of charity although few were notable philanthropists. The traditional place of the minister among the parish governors was unchallenged but the disciplinary role of the clergy caused anger among laymen, who resented clerical intrusions in county government or ecclesiastical penalties imposed upon themselves. Relations between minister and parishioners were, nevertheless, often marked by trust and affection. The ties of profession, friendship, and kinship which bound clergy to one another were perhaps even closer but came under strain in the 17th century as Arminianism created divisions in the church.

THE PARISH MINISTRY IN

THE DIOCESE OF DURHAM,

c. 1570-1640

By

JANE FREEMAN

DURHAM UNIVERSITY Ph.D. Thesis, 1979

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## PREFACE

My thanks are due to the Duke of Northumberland and the Revd. Peter Brett, rector of Houghton le Spring, for allowing access to MSS. in their possession, and to the Society of Genealogists for copies of the maps upon which those of the archdeaconries of Durham and Northumberland appended to the thesis are based. I am also most grateful to the staff of the various record offices listed in the Bibliography, and especially of the Durham University Department of Palaeography and Diplomatic, for their helpfulness, and to my supervisor, Dr. D. M. Loades, for his advice and encouragement.

Dates in the text are given under the new style; quotations are in accordance with the source cited in the footnotes.

NOTE ON ABBREVIATIONS

Public Record Office classes, cited in footnotes without the prefix P.R.O., are listed in the Bibliography. Other abbreviations are as follows.

<u>Arch. Ael.</u>	<u>Archaeologia Aeliana</u>
B.L.	British Library
Barratt, 'Condition of the Parish Clergy'	D. M. Barratt, 'The condition of the parish clergy from the Reformation to 1660, with special reference to the dioceses of Oxford, Gloucester and Worcester' (Oxford Univ. D. Phil. thesis, 1949).
Bodl. MS.	Bodleian Library, Manuscript
Borth. Inst. Hist. Res.	Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York
Carleton, 'Life of Gilpin'	G. Carleton, 'Life of Bernard Gilpin' in <u>Ecclesiastical Biography</u> , ed. C. Wordsworth, (1818), iv. 77-158.
Christophers, 'Surrey Clergy'	R. Christophers, 'The social and educational background of the Surrey clergy, 1520-1620' (London Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1975).
D.C.R.O.	Durham County Record Office
<u>D.N.B.</u>	<u>Dictionary of National Biography</u> , ed. L. Stephen etc. (1895-1903).
D. and C. Libr.	Dean and Chapter Library, Durham
D. and C. Mun.	Muniments of the Dean and Chapter of Durham

- D.R. Diocesan Records in Durham  
University Department of Palaeography and Diplomatic, South Road Office.
- Foster J. Foster, Alumni Oxoniensis 1500-1714, 4 vols. (Oxford and London, 1888-92).
- Hist. MSS. Com. Historical Manuscripts Commission  
Marcombe, 'Dean and Chapter' D. Marcombe, 'The dean and chapter of Durham, 1558-1603' (Durham Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1973).
- N.C.R.O. Northumberland Country Record Office  
O'Day, 'Clerical Patronage and Recruitment' M. R. O'Day, 'Clerical patronage and recruitment in England in the Elizabethan and early Stuart periods, with special reference to the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield' (London Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1972).
- O'Day, 'Reformation of the Ministry' R. O'Day, 'The reformation of the ministry 1558-1642' in Continuity and Change, ed. R. O'Day and F. Heal (Leicester, 1976), 55-76.
- P.K. Durham University Department of Palaeography and Diplomatic, Prior's Kitchen Office
- S.C.H. Studies in Church History
- S.S. Surtees Society Publications

Surtees, Hist. Durham

R. Surtees, History and Antiquities of Durham, 4 vols. (London and Durham, 1816-40).

Venn

J. and J. A. Venn, Alumni Cantabrigensis, from the earliest times to 1751, 4 vols. (1922-7).

Walker Rev.

A. G. Matthews, Walker Revised: being a revision of Walker's Sufferings ... (Oxford, 1948).

## Introduction

The ancient boundaries of Durham, the most northerly diocese in England, stretched from the Tees to the Scottish Border. They encompassed the counties of Durham, with its outposts of Bedlington and North Durham, and Northumberland, an adjacent parish in Cumberland, Alston, and another in Yorkshire, Craike. Only the former regality of Hexham, an enclave of the diocese of York within Northumberland, and Thockrington, immediately north of Hexham, the peculiar of a canon of York, were exempt from the bishop's jurisdiction. The few major towns of the diocese lay on the eastern plain, along the road north to the border; Darlington, Durham, Newcastle upon Tyne, Alnwick, and Berwick. Only Durham, the administrative centre, Newcastle, the major port and centre of the coal industry, and Berwick, the garrison town, were of more than local importance. On the coast, Sunderland began to expand in the 17th century, to compete with Newcastle in the coal trade. At the same time Berwick, deprived of its military function, entered a long period of decay. To the west in both counties were the uplands, where the scanty population was dispersed in hamlets and farmsteads rather than gathering in villages as in the east. The dales were the homes of the border clans or surnames, notorious for their lawlessness and nearly impossible to police because of the proximity of the

frontier. 1

Recent studies show that the north-eastern counties were far less backward and barren in the 16th and 17th centuries than was often supposed. Even so they retained peculiarities of government which had originated in the needs of a remote area bordering a hostile power. Until James I attempted to create a 'middle shire' between England and Scotland, the principal political figures in Northumberland held military office; the wardens of the east and middle marches, and the governor of Berwick. In Durham the bishop had lost most of his palatine powers in 1536 but the vestiges of that authority, combined with his position as the greatest landowner in the county, ensured that he remained the dominant influence in local affairs.<sup>2</sup>

The years 1569-70 brought political upheaval to the north-east. The Northern Rebellion, often seen as the last gesture of the old political and religious order, won few supporters in Northumberland and only limited popularity in Durham. Its consequences were, however, of lasting significance. The power of the noble families of Percy, Neville,

1. Unless otherwise stated the following sketch of the geography and history of the diocese is drawn from M. James, Family Lineage, and Civil Society; S. Watts and S. J. Watts, From Border to Middle Shire. Northumberland 1586-1625. Information for this para. is also from R. Howell, Newcastle upon Tyne and the Puritan Revolution, 1-35; J. Scott, Berwick upon Tweed, 151-287; G. M. Fraser, The Steel Bonnets, passim.
2. The bishop's powers before and after 1536 are described by G. T. Lapsely, The County Palatine of Durham, passim.

and Dacre was no longer unshakeable in the 1560s and had not been so for many years.<sup>3</sup> Even so, their disappearance left a vacuum in the social and political structure of the diocese and the secular history of the area over the next seventy years can be seen as the filling of that void. Although the earldom and estates of Northumberland were restored in the 1570s, the Percies became absentee landlords by compulsion or choice and rarely intervened in the affairs of their own county. Freed from Percy dominance the local gentry found themselves at odds with the officials, often strangers to the county, to whom the Crown gave increasing authority in an attempt to bring the borders under the rule of law. After the union of the crowns came the turn of royal favourites. The first was George Hume, earl of Dunbar, in whom James I sought to personify the 'Middle <sup>s</sup>hire' by adding Crown lands in Northumberland to his extensive estates in south-east Scotland. Dunbar's holdings passed to the Howard family, whose northern branch was led by Lord William Howard, resident just over the county border at Naworth in Cumberland, and Theophilus, Lord Walden, later earl of Suffolk, who held the Dunbar lands in Tynedale and Redesdale.

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3. G. R. Elton, England under the Tudors, 298; M. E. James, 'The Concept of Order in the Northern Rising, 1569', Past and Present, lx. 49-83; M. Weiss, 'A Power in the North? The Percies in the 15th century', Hist. Jnl. xix. 501-9.

In Durham the bishop's influence was enhanced by the disappearance of his greatest potential rival, the earl of Westmorland. . The trimming of episcopal wealth under Elizabeth was a source of irritation but made little difference to his local standing. Only when Robert Carr, earl of Somerset, was granted many of the Neville estates in the early 17th century did it seem possible that the bishop might be challenged. The rule of the church interest, i.e. the bishop and his lay and clerical adherents, was not accepted with acquiescence, however. Among the local gentry were old families and new men who had prospered in the redistribution of lands after the Rebellion or in the coal trade and now sought to establish their independence. The symbol of that independence came to be the representation of the county in parliament other than by the bishop's seat in the Lords. A campaign for county members was launched in 1614 and the subject was revived at intervals until the Civil War.

The extraordinary secular power of the bishop of Durham was matched by claims to exemption from the normal oversight of the higher authorities of the church. . Before every meeting of the northern convocation the bishop of Durham made a formal protest of his independence from the see of York.<sup>4</sup> Although counted within the province of York and subject to the archbishop's appellate jurisdiction, Durham was by custom exempt from archiepiscopal visitation. In addition the dean and chapter claimed the right to administer the see during vacancies, forstalling the reversion of authority and profits to

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4. S.S. cxiii, pp. xlvi, 16

York. During this period they proved themselves the principal guardians of the tradition of independence. In the 1570s they even opposed the bishop of Durham, Richard Barnes, when he supported Archbishop Sandys's proposal to visit the diocese. Disputes over sede vacante jurisdiction arose at every vacancy until the last decade of the 16th century but from then until 1630 relations with York were less acrimonious.<sup>5</sup> When the possibility of an archiepiscopal visitation was revived in 1630, the bishop, John Howson, himself led the protests.<sup>6</sup>

The secular powers of the bishop and the freedoms claimed from York had little obvious effect upon ecclesiastical government within the diocese. Much of the administrative and judicial responsibility was delegated to the chancellor, the bishop's chief deputy in Durham as in other dioceses. The only suffragan bishop of the diocese, Thomas Sparke, died in 1572. Prior of Lindisfarne at the Dissolution, he had been consecrated bishop of Berwick in 1537 but was never considered sufficiently trustworthy to undertake episcopal duties after 1559.<sup>6A</sup> The chancellor was assisted by two archdeacons, of Durham and Northumberland, both of them parish clergy by virtue of the annexation to their offices of the rectories of Easington and Howick. There were some fifty parishes in Durham, sixty in Northumberland, subdivided into deaneries made up of groups of anything from six to seventeen parishes. The deaneries

5. Marcombe, 'Dean and Chapter', 212-41.

6. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1629-31, 205. Bp. Howson to Bp. Laud, 4 Mar. 1630.

6A. Marcombe, 'Dean and Chapter', 162.

of Newcastle, Corbridge, Morpeth, and Bamburgh in Northumberland and of Easington, Auckland, Chester, and Darlington or Stockton in Durham were used as units for episcopal and archidiaconal visitations but no mention has been found of rural deans.<sup>7</sup>

Exempt from archidiaconal jurisdiction were the parishes of the officialty, the peculiar of the dean and chapter of Durham. The dean and chapter were second only to the bishop as landowners in county Durham and also held extensive estates in Yorkshire and Northumberland. The parishes where they held land and often also the impropriation and advowson usually came under their peculiar jurisdiction. There were fourteen officialty parishes in Durham and a further twelve in Northumberland, including Norham, Holy Island, and Bedlington, which were not properly part of that county.<sup>8</sup>

The administrative division between north and south was no more important than the physical contrast between east and west which dictated the ecclesiastical as well as the economic geography of the diocese. Along the eastern plain were numerous compact parishes, few of them of any great size. The smallest, Dinsdale, Sockburn, Elton, Redmarshall, and Winston, were on the Yorkshire border in the lower Tees valley. There were, however, few small urban parishes. Only the city of Durham had more than one parish church. Much of the city lay within the large parish of St. Oswald's, but there were also the vicarages or

7. Cf. S.S. xxii. 11-12.

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

curacies of St. Nicholas and St. Giles, and two tiny rectories of St. Mary in the North and South Bailey in the immediate shadow of the cathedral. Other towns lay at the centre of single parishes; even in Newcastle the chapelries of St. John, St. Andrew, All Saints, Crumlington, and Gosforth had not broken free of the mother church of St. Nicholas. In the western hills parishes were generally much larger; Middleton in Teesdale, Stanhope, Haltwhistle, Simonburn, Elsdon, and Alwinton each spanned many square miles of sparsely populated countryside. The scattered communities were served by chapels dependent upon the mother church. Most parishes in the far north of the diocese also had at least one chapelry, although they usually covered a smaller area; Holy Island and Bamburgh each had four dependencies. Similarly structured were the large parishes of central Durham where there had formerly been collegiate churches; Chester le Street, Lanchester, and St. Andrew Auckland.

The disintegration of the Northern Rebellion in 1570 marked the end of the religious upheaval of the mid-16th century.<sup>9</sup> The changes of direction which had dogged the church were for the moment complete and the immediate threat of an enforced return to Roman Catholicism had receded. The turnover of personnel

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9. The process of reformation is described by B. M. Wilson, 'Changes of the Reformation Period in Northumberland and Durham', (Durham Univ. Ph. D. thesis, 1939); S. M. Keeling, 'The Church and Religion in the Anglo-Scottish Borders, 1534-1572', (Durham Univ. Ph. D. thesis, 1975); Marcombe, 'Dean and Chapter', 162-79, 182-91.

which had accompanied the shifts of the previous forty years was also at an end; in Durham even the first flurry of Protestant radicalism had been quashed by the deprivation of a handful of recalcitrant prebendaries.

The ensuing seventy years were not, of course, a period of unruffled religious calm. Although the conservative clergy had demonstrated the limits of their commitment to Catholicism in 1570, lay recusancy, bolstered by the presence of seminary priests and Jesuits, remained a problem in the north-east. The confessedly Catholic population was always comparatively large, although numbers fluctuated with the rigour or leniency of the government. Some towns, including Newcastle, were reputed to contain thriving Catholic communities. Recusant gentry from the diocese were continually appearing before the High Commission in York and in the 17th century the strength of the Howards seemed to threaten a revival of Catholic power. All bishops, even those reputedly lenient towards popery, paid lip-service to the problem;<sup>10</sup> most, urged on by the central government, saw the suppression of Catholicism as one

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10. J. A. Hilton, 'Catholic Recusancy in County Durham, 1559-1625', (Leeds Univ. M. Phil. thesis, 1974); J. A. Hilton, 'Catholicism in Elizabethan Durham', Recusant Hist. xiv. 1-8; J. A. Hilton, 'Catholicism in Elizabethan Northumberland', Northern Hist. xiii. 44-58.

of their most important tasks.

Until the 1620s Protestant dissent was scarcely a problem in the diocese, although the degree of sympathy with which successive bishops treated their more radical clergy varied considerably. Under James Pilkington, bishop from 1561 to 1576, Protestantism was placed on a firm footing within the ecclesiastical establishment. A scholar, master of St. John's College, Cambridge, under Edward VI, and a leader of the Marian exile, he was one of the most radical bishops of the early Elizabethan church. Around him in Durham he gathered men of a similar cast, relatives, friends, and former colleagues in exile. Thomas Lever and William Birche, deprived of their prebends for opposition to the Advertisements governing clerical dress, were appointed by him. So too were his brother, John Pilkington, and chancellor, Robert Swift, who were summoned before the ecclesiastical commission in York for similar offences. Pilkington's influence was reinforced in 1563 by the appointment to the deanery of William Whittingham, an active participant in the conflicts of the exile. At the end of his life Whittingham was also at odds with the ecclesiastical authorities but the charges against him related only incidentally to his religious views.<sup>11</sup>

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11. L. M. Rosinsky, 'James Pilkington: The Study of an Elizabethan Bishop', (West Virginia Univ. Ph. D. thesis, 1975) gives an outline of Pilkington's career but says little about his administration of Durham. See also J. Pilkington, Works, (Parker Soc.) i-xvi; Marcombe, 'Dean and Chapter', 191-7; A. J. Carlson, 'The Bishops and the Queen: A study of "Puritan" episcopal activity in early Elizabethan England', (Princeton Univ. Ph. D. thesis, 1962), 6 and passim in which Pilkington appears as the typical "puritan" bishop.

The career of Pilkington's successor, Richard Barnes,<sup>12</sup> bishop from 1577 to 1587, had followed a different pattern. During Mary's reign he had continued his studies in Oxford and then taken a parish living nearby. He won praise for his preaching<sup>13</sup> but was an administrator rather than a scholar. Before coming to Durham he served an unusually long episcopal apprenticeship as suffragan of Nottingham and bishop of Carlisle. Thanks to the fame of Bernard Gilpin, who quarrelled bitterly with the bishop's brother, his government of the diocese carries the stigma of corruption and inefficiency.<sup>14</sup> In fact his rule was careful and even painstaking; he organised regular visitations, synods, and general chapters, and conscientiously followed the directions of Archbishop Sandys.<sup>15</sup> At least at the beginning of his episcopate, however, he seriously miscalculated the state of the diocese, especially the strength and persistence of recusancy.<sup>16</sup> Less radical than the prebendaries appointed by Pilkington, he was at odds with the chapter over the powers of York and much else and that quarrel probably helped to undermine his efficiency and his reputation.

12. D.N.B.

13. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1566-79, 72-3. Earl of Sussex to Wm. Cecil, 20 Feb. 1569.

14. Carleton, 'Life of Gilpin', 435-8.

15. S.S. xxii. passim.

16. B.L. Lansd. MS. 25, ff. 161-2. Bp. Barnes to Wm. Cecil, 11 Feb. 1578. In Northumberland he found "soche, and so humble obedience and soch conformitye unto all good orders, even of the wildest of those partes, as (trewlie and before God) I thinke better . . . . can not be found . . . .", although the people of Durham were "stubborne" and "churlish".

After a vacancy of two years Matthew Hutton was promoted to the bishopric from the deanery of York.<sup>17</sup> He had had the distinguished university career characteristic of late-16th and 17th-century bishops. Further preferment in the church depended on influential patronage and Hutton, like Barnes, owed his appointment to Durham to Burleigh<sup>gh ey</sup>. His cultivation of court connections was perhaps more assiduous than was usual and he has been described as a courtier.<sup>18</sup> The favour which he had won carried him, perhaps unwillingly, to York in 1596, in spite of the criticisms which had been levelled at his government of Durham. While dean of York he had been charged by Sandys with favouring puritans but in the later years of his episcopate at Durham complaints were made of his laxity in dealing with recusancy.<sup>19</sup>

Toby Matthew, promoted from the deanery of Durham in 1596 was a friend of Hutton<sup>20</sup> and his career followed a similar pattern, aided once again by the Cecil interest.<sup>21</sup> Both as dean and as bishop of Durham he took a more active part in the secular politics of the north-east than any leading churchman

17. D.N.B.; S.S. xvii. 50-72.

18. Marcombe, 'Dean and Chapter', 67.

19. Hilton, 'Recusancy in Durham', 90; cf. S.S. xvii. 147.

Archbp. Whitgift to Archbp. Hutton, 22 Aug. 1599.

20. S.S. xvii. 92-3.

21. For a full account of Matthew's episcopate, see J. B. Gavin, 'An Elizabethan Bishop of Durham: Tobias Matthew 1595-1606', (McGill Univ. Ph. D. thesis, 1972).

of the diocese since Tunstall. With the diocesan chancellor, Clement Colmore, he was much occupied with the lengthy negotiations with the Scots which preceded the Treaty of Carlisle in 1597. Matthew was also known to contemporaries for qualities more directly relevant to his calling. He was a famous preacher and the diary of his preaching engagements is evidence of his diligence.<sup>22</sup> Calvinist in his own theology, he sympathised with the puritan element in the church and was even rumoured to favour their cause at the Hampton Court Conference.<sup>23</sup> His government of Durham and York was shaped by an overriding hostility towards Roman Catholicism and the problems of Catholic survival in the north were the subject of innumerable letters to the central government.

On Matthew's translation to York in 1606, William James, his successor as dean, became bishop. James has been taken as a typical example of the Jacobean episcopate;<sup>24</sup> in fact, in his ecclesiastical outlook and preoccupations he differed little from Matthew. His visitation articles of 1613, for example, laid great stress on the importance of the preaching ministry and the proper observance of the sabbath, less on the necessity of correct clerical dress.<sup>25</sup> His episcopate was a troubled period in Durham, partly because his authority was weakened by his loss of royal favour and thus support. The

22. York Min. Libr. MS. A.18.

23. B.L. Sloane MS. 271, f. 23. Stephen Egerton to ?, 30 Nov. 1603

24. N. R. N. Tyacke, 'Arminianism in England in religion and politics from 1604 to 1640', (Oxf. Univ. D. Phil. thesis, 1962).

25. D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 67.6.

Catholic threat was magnified by the nervousness of the years following the Gunpowder Plot and by the political strength of the Howards and their protegés in Northumberland. At the same time conflicts between the bishop and county gentry and the city of Durham also came to a head; James was so unpopular in his cathedral city that there were riots following his death in 1617.<sup>26</sup>

Whatever the difficulties of James's successor, Richard Neile, the want of royal favour was not among them. The patronage of James I brought him the sees of Rochester, Coventry and Lichfield, Lincoln, and Durham, that of Charles I under the guidance of Laud took him to Winchester in 1627 and then in 1632 to York.<sup>27</sup> His arrival in Durham marked a sharp change in the direction of ecclesiastical affairs. Even before he came to the diocese, the restoration of ceremonial in the cathedral had begun.<sup>28</sup> While at Durham Neile gathered around him the men who were to become the leaders of the Arminian and Laudian faction in the church. Many were given appointments within the diocese, which thus felt the full force of change,<sup>29</sup> in spite of the bishop's absence for six months of every year.

26. D.N.B.; James, Family, Lineage, and Civil Society, 151-4.

27. 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., 33-54.

28. Tyacke, 'Arminianism in England', 226-7.

29. D.R. I.4. passim.

The innovations drew protests from cathedral and parish clergy, some of whom were forced into open conflict with the authorities. There was no accompanying change in local politics, however, and the tensions which existed under James were exacerbated by Neile's insistence upon the authority of the church, backed as it now was by royal support.

George Montaigne's translation to Durham in 1628 was followed almost immediately by nomination to the see of London and the next resident bishop was John Howson. His four-year episcopate was in some ways contradictory. Although an early opponent of the predominant Calvinism of the English church, he had little sympathy with the Arminian prebendaries of Durham and sought to return the practice of the cathedral to a form more acceptable to the local laity.<sup>30</sup> He even interceded on behalf of Peter Smart, one of the prebendaries appointed by Bishop James, who had taken the opportunity of the episcopal vacancy in 1628 to deliver a vituperative sermon against the ceremonialists, the beginning of an extended attack on the practices and characters of the Durham Arminians.<sup>31</sup>

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30. D.N.B.; Cal. S.P. Dom. 1629-31, 173. Orders to be performed by the Dean and Chapter of Durham, 28 Sept. 1630; 363. Bp. Howson to Bp. Laud, 20 Oct. 1630.

31. S.S. xxxiv. 198-250. Smart's was not the first protest to come from within the chapter. Robert Hutton, prebendary and rector of Houghton le Spring, had been prosecuted before the High Commission for a similar sermon in 1621 but he lacked Smart's talent for publicity and the details of his attack on the innovations have not survived. V.C.H. Durham, ii. 44.

The public controversies came to an end with the appointment of Thomas Morton to the bishopric in 1632. One of the few opponents of Arminian theology to be appointed to high office in the church in the 1630s, Morton had even less cause to favour Neile's remaining protégés than had Howson. Nevertheless he carried out the requirements of the archbishop with care and at the same time encouraged preaching ministers and published attacks on popery in a fashion more reminiscent of Matthew or James.<sup>32</sup> Such moderation whether in the ecclesiastical or the political field could only win a limited success in the remaining years before the Civil War and Morton's flight from the diocese in 1640 before the Scottish threat effectively ended episcopal government in Durham for twenty years.

As social, political, and ecclesiastical changes took place, the institutional position and official duties of the parish clergy scarcely altered. As a result, the men who served in the parish ministry, whatever their past or future careers, can be isolated as a single group. Their response and their contribution to change form part of this study but the approach is topical rather than chronological. The first three chapters give an account of the personnel of the church at parish level. The background of those who entered the ministry and the opportunities and rewards of the clerical career are there discussed. A wealth of material relating to these topics survives and the analysis is sometimes presented in a rather condensed form but wherever possible com-

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32. R. Baddiley, Life of T. Morton.

parisons have been made with other areas of the country. The aim of the study is, however, to go beyond an analysis of the parish clergy as officers of an institutional church. The essence of their work was the ministry to the local community and the nature of that ministry is considered in the second part of the thesis.

To set the practicalities of the pastorate in context, the two halves of the thesis are divided by a discussion of general attitudes to the ministry in England in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. The theme is the work of the parish minister rather than the theology of the priesthood. The basic duties of the parish clergyman were, of course, laid down in official documents; the Prayer Book, royal and episcopal articles and injunctions, and the canons of 1571 and 1603. The discussion draws heavily upon the few unofficial works which deal directly with the pastorate. Incidental comment from a variety of contemporary writers has also been used and wherever possible the published opinions of Durham clergy have been quoted. Whether they practised what they preached is the question which frames Chapters V and VI. There, the ministerial duties of preaching, hospitality, and the maintenance of discipline and their natural corollaries, teaching, charity, and the exercise of secular authority, are examined. The impact of the pastorate is assessed in the final chapter, which looks at the attitudes of laymen and clergy in the diocese to the church and its ministers.

## Chapter I

### The Background and Recruitment of the Clergy

This and the following chapter will follow the parish clergy from their social and geographical origins, through their education, training, and recruitment, to preferment within the diocese of Durham. The framework for the discussion is provided by lists of clergy serving in the diocese in 1578, between 1603 and 1605, and c. 1634. No analysis of the whole body of clergy has been attempted because the series of episcopal registers, the usual source of information about ordinations, vacancies, and appointments, is incomplete for this period; only three relevant registers survive, those of Pilkington, Barnes, and Neile, the latter containing fragments from the episcopates of Howson and Morton. The first of the three lists used was prepared for a general chapter held by the chancellor in July 1578. It is a full account of all the clergy of the diocese, both beneficed and unbeneficed. Neither of the subsequent lists is as complete but they can be supplemented from other sources, including the incumbency lists given in county histories, probate and court records, and parish registers. The second list is a compilation of three returns. A visitation by the chancellor in March 1605 was the occasion for a survey of the clergy of the archdeaconry of Northumberland but there is no parallel record for Durham. Chronologically the nearest list is that prepared for an archidiaconal visitation in September 1603, which excludes the parishes and chapelries of the officialty. Information about the clergy in these livings is

available from the records of a third visitation, by the official of the dean and chapter, in October of the same year. The final list, that of c. 1634, is the least satisfactory. It is based on a manuscript in the Hunter Collection which notes the incumbents and contemporary value of most of the benefices of both archdeaconries, probably in connection with the collection of ship money. The manuscript cannot be assigned to a single date as some clergy are named as colleagues whose incumbencies are known not to have overlapped. As all those mentioned held the parishes assigned to them at some time between 1633 and 1635 the entries have been allowed to stand. To that list have been added, wherever possible, the names of those holding benefices omitted in the original and of curates who served in dependent chapelries or assisted in the parish churches.<sup>1</sup>

The lists give the names of over 500 clergy, approximately half of those traced in the diocese during the seventy years covered by this study. One result of the Reformation had been a dramatic fall in the number of clergy. In 1517 there had been approximately 400 secular clergy serving

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1. The list for July 1578 is from D.R. II.1, ff. 24-38; most of it is printed in S.S. xxii. 70-9, where it is described as the record of the chancellor's visitation. The list for the officialty, Mar. 1603, is from P.K.D. and C. Mun., Officialty Act Bk. 1595-1606, pp. 234-5; for Durham, Sept. 1603, from D. R. VIII.1, ff. 152-77; for Northumberland, Mar. 1605, from D.R. II.5, ff; 91-104. The list of c. 1634 is based on D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 19.11.

in the diocese.<sup>2</sup> By the end of the century there were less than half that number; 198 in 1578 and 192 between 1603 and 1605. Northumberland always had slightly more clergy than Durham but not as many as its greater size and number of parishes might have warranted. Of those summoned to the general chapter in 1578 103 held livings in the northern arch-deaconry. The numbers of beneficed and unbeneficed were roughly equal; in 1578 97 clergy were assistants or served dependent chapelries. The opportunities open to them and the way in which they obtained their livings will be considered in Chapter II. Here we are concerned with the origins of the clergy, the training they received, and the process of their recruitment.

i. Social and Geographical Origins of the Clergy.

Information about the social and geographical background of the clergy is comparatively scarce. The principal sources are the university matriculation registers which often give not only a man's place of residence but also his father's occupation or status.<sup>3</sup> Only in the later part of the period, when the majority were graduates, do these records relate to a substantial proportion of the Durham clergy. The somewhat meagre evidence which has been gathered from these and from chance references is summarised in table i. below.

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2. R. Donaldson, 'Patronage and the church: a study in the social structure of the secular clergy in the diocese of Durham, 1311-1540' (Edinb. Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1955), 36.

3. cf. Venn; Foster.

Table i.

	1578	1603/5	1634
Total number of clergy	198	192	135
Number for whom information available	10	21	51
Episcopal relatives	2	3	1
Clerical relatives	1	4	19
County gentry	6	8	5
Urban gentry	-	-	2
Tradesmen	-	1	1
Other professions	-	1	4
Yeomen	1	-	2

The background of the majority of the clergy is unrecorded probably because their families were too humble to leave any trace. Those clergy of 1578 and 1603/5 whose background is known almost all came from families of some standing. There were always some such, for whom gentle origins or influential connections, a university career, and one or more benefices formed a recognisable pattern. In the early years most were to be found amongst the prebendaries and diocesan administrators, men such as Francis Bunny, the brothers of Bishop Pilkington, Marmaduke Blakiston, and Ralph Tunstall.<sup>4</sup> There were also always one or two purely parochial clergy who were the younger sons of local gentry; Francis Trollope of Sockburn, Cuthbert Ridley of Simonburn, Charles Slingsby of Rothbury, (the latter of a Yorkshire family and also a nephew of the 7th and 8th earls of Northumberland).

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4. Unless otherwise specified, information about the preference of individuals is taken from the following sources, which will not henceforth be quoted; D.R. I.3. (reg. of Bp. Barnes); D.R. I.4. (reg. of Bp. Neile); S.S. clxi. (regs. of Bps. Tunstall and Pilkington); Venn; Foster; D.N.B.; Surtees, Hist. Durham: Northumberland County Hist.

The figures do not show any general rise in the social origins of the clergy but by the end of the period there were more men of good family who held only parochial livings, particularly in Northumberland, some of whom came from further afield. William Cox, for example, vicar of Embleton from 1622 to 1657, was described at matriculation as a gentleman of Wiltshire. To these may be added the urban gentry, including the offspring of aldermanic families from the city of Durham and from Newcastle. Robert Jenison, who was to play an important part in the religious history of Newcastle in the early 17th century, was one such. By the 1630s, clerical sons of gentry families had lost their places in the chapter and administration, a loss which perhaps created resentment against those of humbler origins who received greater preferment.<sup>5</sup>

A number of the prebendal and official group of c. 1634 were the sons of clergy or of other professional men. The emergence of a group of second generation clergy is the most striking feature of this survey of their family background. By 1603/5 the offspring of marriages contracted at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign had reached maturity and it is

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5. Many prebendaries of the 1630s were Arminians appointed by Neile in the previous decade and the contrast between their social origins and those of their puritan or Calvinist colleagues of gentle birth supports the suggestion of N.R.N. Tyacke that Arminianism appealed to the "less socially assured" amongst the clergy. 'Arminianism in England, 1604-40' (Oxf. Univ. D.Phil. thesis, 1968), 249-51.

surprising that so few clerical sons appear in the lists for that date. The influx of second generation clergy was well under way by the first decade of the 17th century. Two sons of Clement Colmore, the diocesan chancellor, Thomas and Richard, received their first benefices in the diocese in 1603 and 1608 respectively. A third son, Matthew, was beneficed in 1619. Those whose fathers were in orders often found at least a first appointment near their place of origin. Fourteen of the nineteen clerical offspring of 1634 were sons of Durham or Northumberland clergy. The figure is perhaps slightly distorted because information for those with local connections is far more plentiful than for strangers to the area. The university lists reveal that many sons of Durham clergy found benefices elsewhere and no doubt the diocese had its share of immigrants of a similar background.

Although the social background of the clergy underwent some change, the geography of clerical recruitment remained noticeably consistent, as the table below shows.

Table ii.

	1578	1603/5	1634
Total number of clergy	198	192	135
Number for whom			
information available	45	59	54
County Durham	2	7	16
Northumberland	9	4	12
Total from Durham diocese	21	26	28
Carlisle diocese		6	4
(excluding Lancashire)	4	3	1
Lancashire	4	7	4
Yorkshire	5	15	4
Total from York diocese	5		
Chester diocese		1	-
(excluding Lancashire)	-	-	6
London and Home Counties	-	3	4
East Anglia	1	3	3
Midlands	1	2	4
Scotland	9		

At all times, the largest number whose place of origin is known were natives of the diocese and they formed a fairly constant proportion of the whole. Although once again the figure is inflated by the diversity of sources of information about local connections, it is justifiable to assume that a majority of the clergy were local men. The imbalance between the two archdeaconries is inexplicable. Durham had better communications and educational facilities and wealthier benefices but there were more parishes in the larger northern county. The totals are so small, however, that the true explanation may lie in the chance survival of evidence.

Clergy of northern origin remained the rule in this most northerly of English dioceses throughout the period. There were always a number from west of the Pennines, especially from Cumberland and Westmorland. Bernard Gilpin, the most famous of all Durham parish clergy in the 16th century, was born at Kentmire in Westmorland and gave as a reason for refusing the bishopric of Carlisle the extent of his family interests there.<sup>6</sup> In the years following the Settlement a number of Lancastrians followed Bishop Pilkington into the diocese, most notably members of his own family and the Lever brothers, Thomas and Ralph. Later, however, the number of recruits from Lancashire declined. Recruitment from the diocese of York, and particularly from Yorkshire itself, also fluctuated. There is no obvious explanation for the very high total of men from York who were serving in the diocese in 1603/5, although the episcopate of Matthew Hutton had perhaps influenced some appointments.

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6. Carleton, 'Life of Gilpin', 404.

By the 1630s there had been a marked increase in the number of southerners, although they were still less than one quarter of all those whose geographical origins are known. The change was principally amongst the clergy connected with the chapter or with the diocesan administration. Episcopal influence was again the key factor. When Neile was appointed to the see in 1617 he was the first bishop of Durham since the Reformation who was neither of northern origin, nor of considerable experience in a northern diocese. His successors, Mountain, Howson, and Morton, were also southerners, who had served in the south of England and the midlands. The distribution of their favours reflected this. Amongst the episcopal chaplains of the 1620s and 1630s were Gabriel Clerke, archdeacon successively of Northumberland and Durham and son of a Hertfordshire yeoman, John Cosin, prebendary and rector of Elwick and Brancepeth, who was born in Norfolk, and John Johnson of Bishop Wearmouth, a Londoner.

The remaining group worthy of remark were the Scots, an ever-present element among the Durham clergy. The Scottish presence was most noticeable and least acceptable in the decades immediately following the Settlement. Bishop Pilkington's return of the state of the diocese in 1563 showed that there were 20 Scots curates in the two counties, most of them in Northumberland.<sup>7</sup> The bishop more than once expressed his concern at the number and quality of these "Scottes, vacabondes and wycked men, which hide themselves ther because thi dare not abide in ther countre." In his view, one of the

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7. B.L. Harl. MS. 594, ff. 187-95.

major hindrances to "religion" in the north-east was

"..... the Scottishe preistes that are fledde out of Scotland for their wickednes and be hyred in parisshes on the borders because they take lesse wages than other, and doe more harme than other wolde or colde in disswading the peple. I have done my diligence to avoide them butt it is above my power."<sup>8</sup>

Most of the nine Scots listed in 1578 were the survivors of those whose activities so concerned Pilkington. Not all arrivals from over the border were of such poor quality. John Magbray, vicar of Billingham (1565-84) and Newcastle (1568-84), had behind him a distinguished career as an adherent of reform in Scotland in the 1540s and an associate of Knox in England under Edward VI and subsequently on the continent. He received his Durham benefices from Bishop Best of Carlisle to whom he was chaplain. His service was not always to the satisfaction of the Durham authorities, however; in 1578 he temporarily resigned both vicarages, probably as a result of charges of non-residence and neglect.<sup>9</sup> The year of Magbray's death, 1584, saw

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8. S.P. 15/12/108. Return of vacant livings, ? 1565; Letters of the Bishops, (Camd. Soc. Miscellany ix), 67. Pilkington to Privy Council, 22 Nov. 1564. The English ambassador in Scotland expressed the same concern; S.M. Keeling, 'The Church and Religion in the Anglo-Scottish Borders between 1534 and 1570' (Durham Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1975), 140-1.

9. J.K. Hewison, 'Sir John Macbrair, a friend of John Knox', Trans. Dumf. & Gall. Nat. Hist. & Antiq. Soc., 3rd ser. ix 158-68; S.S. xxii. 135; D. and C. Libr., Raine MS. 124, f. 204.

the arrival of another eminent Scot, James Melville, one of the group of presbyterian clergy who took refuge in England at that time. After travelling south with his fellows, he returned to Berwick, where some of the Scots refugees had remained, to stay there for two years. Although he had no recognised cure in the town, by his own account his ministry was most welcome to the "godlie people", led by the wife of the deputy governor, Sir Henry Widdrington.<sup>10</sup> By the 17th century, the Scots had even penetrated the chapter, chiefly through royal patronage. Anthony Maxton was installed in 1633, John Weemes in the following year, and Walter Balcanquhall became dean in 1639. Of these only Maxton held a parochial living.<sup>11</sup>

Once time had solved the problem posed by conservative refugees from the Scottish Reformation, the English authorities did not question the suitability of Scots for English benefices or the acceptability of their orders. William Simpson, summoned before the ecclesiastical commission in Durham in 1634 for "exercisinge his ministry without anie lawfull ordinacionn", offered a certificate of his orders from the Glasgow Presbytery; it was only unacceptable to the commission because it was believed to be counterfeit.<sup>12</sup> Amongst the laity of the diocese,

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10. G. Donaldson, 'Scottish Presbyterian Exiles in England, 1584-5', Rec. Scottish Ch. Hist. Soc. xiv (1), pp. 69-76; J. Melville, Autobiography and Diary (Wodrow Soc. 1842), 170-227; T. Mcrie, Life of Andrew Melville, ii. 364-73.

11. P. Mussett, Deans and Major Canons of Durham, 1541-1900, 4, 20, 64

12. S.S. xxxiv. 111.

however, traditional resentment against the ancient national and immediate enemy found expression in attacks on clergy of Scottish birth. A parishioner of Ovingham was presented in 1608

"for abusing the vicar at the Communion table, calling him false cullion carle & scottish rogue in the presence of a great multitude."<sup>13</sup>

The feeling continued well after the union of the crowns. In the 1630s Scottish clergy of the diocese who crossed their parishioners were still taunted on their race. Patrick Mackilwayne, vicar of Lesbury (1609-59) suffered abuse as a "Gallowaie knave" from several of the many laymen with whom he came into conflict.<sup>14</sup>

ii. The Education of the Clergy.

More relevant to the nature and effectiveness of their ministry was the educational background of the clergy. Almost inevitably the starting point for any discussion of the subject is the proportion of university-trained men serving in the diocese. It has frequently been pointed out that a degree in theology, let alone a degree in arts, law, or medicine, was no guarantee of good pastoral conduct.<sup>15</sup> Those who attended the universities did, however, have a different experience from colleagues whose education was limited to

13. D.R. II.6, f.9.

14. S.S. xxiv. 65, 83; D.R. V.12, f. 170-2; D.R. II.7, ff. 141, 150; D.R. VIII.2, ff. 194-6. On Mackilwayne, see below, pp.442-3.

15. O'Day, 'Reformation of the Ministry', 74; Christophers, 'Surrey Clergy', 48-9.

local schools and tutors. In addition to their academic training they had the opportunity to observe and join a geographically mixed society which was in close touch with contemporary developments in politics and theology. The numbers of graduates also provide a useful comparison with other parts of the country, setting the diocese of Durham in the context of more general developments.

In the early years of Elizabeth's reign, the diocese was less well served in this respect than many other parts of the country. In 1563 only 17% of diocesan incumbents had attended university.<sup>16</sup> The improvement after this date is outlined in the following table.

Table iii.

	Graduate clergy	%of all clergy	Graduate incumbents	%of all incumbents
1578	23	11%	23	22%
1603/5	44	28%	43	44%
1634	76	56%	63	60%

("Graduate" is here taken to include those who attended university but are not known to have gained a degree; these were very few. "Incumbents" include all beneficed clergy, stipendiary vicars, and curates of independent chapelries.)

The situation in Durham in 1578 was thus only marginally worse than in the archdeaconries of Lincoln, Stowe, and Leicester in Lincoln diocese, where two years previously between 14% and 15% of all clergy were graduates. Like these areas it lay between the extremes of the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield, where only 13% of incumbents held degrees in 1584 and the county of Surrey, with its strong connections with the capital,

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16. B.L. Harl. MS. 594, ff. 187-95: cf. Worcester diocese where 19% of beneficed clergy were graduates c. 1560. Barratt, 'Condition of the Parish Clergy', 49.

in which the figure for 1581 was 29% of all incumbents. Although the initial position was not perhaps as bad as might have been expected in so remote a diocese, progress in the later 16th century was slower than elsewhere. By 1603 69% of the clergy in the favoured county of Surrey were graduates. In the archdeaconries of Lincoln mentioned above the proportion was 43%.<sup>17</sup> Without further figures from areas with a poor record in this respect such as Coventry and Lichfield or the north-western dioceses, the picture is incomplete but it is clear that in Durham during the later years of the century there was a failure either to attract men of proven academic ability to the diocese or to provide an adequate supply of scholars from within to keep pace with the improvement in at least some of the more southerly dioceses.

The majority of graduate clergy served in the archdeaconry of Durham. Although the number of graduates in Northumberland rose from 6 in 1578 to 20 c. 1634, the proportion of the diocesan total remained a little over a quarter. This, as will be seen, corresponds to the pattern of preferment of the senior clergy.<sup>18</sup> Amongst the prebendaries and administrators, also, were the only holders of degrees higher than that of M.A. In contrast to some other parts of the country there was no increase in the number of men with higher

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17. C.W. Foster, State of the Church in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I (Lincoln Rec. Soc. xxiii), 453-4; Christophers, 'Surrey Clergy', 53-7; O'Day, 'Clerical Patronage and Recruitment', 252. For a more general survey of numbers of graduate clergy, see Barratt, 'Condition of the Parish Clergy', 42-55.

18. See below, pp. 87-8, 117-18.

qualifications over the years, but this is rather an acknowledgment of the high academic standards of the early Elizabethan chapter than a reflection upon their successors.<sup>19</sup>

Between 1603/5 and c. 1634 the greatest change was the appearance of a number of graduates among the unbeneficed clergy. Previously, men from the universities had occasionally been appointed to special preaching positions, often at Berwick, before progressing to greater things, but there were few graduates among the mass of unbeneficed clergy.<sup>20</sup> By the 1630s at least 10 ministers whose livings were no more than dependencies are known to have attended university and others, such as Cosin's assistant at Brancepeth, William Milbourne, were clearly men of education and ability.<sup>21</sup>

The qualifications of ordinands suggest that by the end of the period the pace of improvement was accelerating.

19. Christophers, 'Surrey Clergy', 53.

20. e.g. William Selby, preacher at Berwick c. 1590-1605. Cal. Border Papers, 1560-94, 368. Receipts etc. for Berwick, Mich. 1590. D.R. II.5, f.104. He later became rector of Ford, vicar of Berwick, and of Kirk Merrington, and a canon of Durham.

21. Sapientia Clamitans: Wisdom crying out to sinners to returne from their evill wayes, ed. William Milbourne, (London 1638), was a selection from the writings of Thomas Jackson and John Donne. Milbourne may also have been a mathematician of some note. S.S. lii. 221-3; J. Peile, Biographical Reg. of Christ's College, Cambridge, i. 302

Table iv.

Place and date of ordination	Number of ordinands	Number of graduates	Approx. %
Durham 1560-76	66	5	6%
Lincoln 1565-74	428	109	25%
Durham 1577-87	270	39	14%
Lincoln 1575-85	393	187	47%
Durham 1617-27	51	25	49%
Durham 1630	20	15	75%

The number of graduates ordained in Durham under the first two Elizabethan bishops was minimal.<sup>22</sup> Only four received orders from Pilkington, two of whom continued in the diocese and were immediately appointed to prebends. There was some improvement under Barnes, who ordained 39 graduates, in more or less equal proportions for service in the diocese and elsewhere. Compared with the figures for Lincoln, (admittedly outstanding in this respect, since so many Oxford graduates sought ordination there), those for Durham are very low, even under Barnes. By contrast just under half of those ordained by Neile, and three quarters of the single ordination list which survives from Howson's episcopate were graduates.

By the early 17th century it was impossible to obtain any unusual clerical preferment without a degree, no matter how well-tried the abilities and deserts of the candidate. The Marian statutes of the cathedral restricted tenure of the twelve stalls to those who held the degree of M.A. or above

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22. Figures for Durham are from the episcopal registers.

Those for Lincoln are from Foster, State of the Church, as discussed by Barratt, 'Condition of the Parish Clergy', 55.

and only twice was this rule broken, on both occasions in the early years of Elizabeth's reign.<sup>23</sup> When John Smaithwaite, rector of Elsdon, sought a canonry from Bishop James as a reward for his services to the church and government he prompted instead the pious reminder that

"the goad is not woorn, nor the Crowne obteyned but by running, and striving, and that none doth, or shall conregnare with Christe nisi qui compatitur."

More to the point,

".... the praebends in <sup>u</sup>~~D~~resme Church are but 12, and the statute there is, that none can be admitted, unlesse he be at least a Master of Arts, and Mr Smaithwaite never was anie university man, although by industrye and paines, god hath given him a good tallent."<sup>24</sup>

The necessity for formal proof of ability gave some credibility to the allegation made by Henry Thurscrosse in the course of a Star Chamber suit between John Craddocke, then archdeacon of Northumberland, and a local gentleman, Francis Brackenbury, that Craddocke

"hathe greatly abused bothe the universityes of Camebridge & Oxford in obtaininge the <sup>e</sup>~~d~~egree of a Mr of Arts unlawfullie in the Universitie of Cambridge, pretending & alledging that he was batchelour of Artes in Oxefoord divers yeares before,

23. S.S. cxliiii. 103; Marcombe, 'Dean and Chapter', 23.

24. S.P. 14/80/116. Bp. James to Sec. Winwood, 17 June 1615. Smaithwaite's son Edward did go to Oxford but never rose from the ranks of the parish clergy.

of which University he never was scholler. And by his false suggestion procured himselfe to be incorporated in that degree of Batchelour at Cambridge, & by that meanes had further grace to proceed Mr there."

As in other dioceses, progress towards a more highly educated clergy created new problems and abuses in its turn.<sup>25</sup>

For many who did attend a university, the experience proved to have a lasting significance, beyond the acquisition of those skills in the understanding and use of languages both ancient and modern increasingly considered to be the necessary equipment of the minister. One recruit to Cambridge from a Durham family, Samuel Ward, the future master of Sidney-Sussex College, kept a now famous diary of his university life.<sup>26</sup> Ward was no doubt atypical, perhaps in the intensity of his religious experience, certainly in the success of his university career. The attachment to his native county which is revealed in his diary he probably shared with many contemporaries, though not perhaps his sense of guilt at time wasted in "idle talk ..... of Durham matters".<sup>27</sup> His continuing concern with "Durham matters" prompted much correspondence with residents of the diocese and these letters throw considerable light on

25. Sta. Cha. 8/16/1. Similar cases occurred in the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield; O'Day, 'Clerical Patronage and Recruitment', 290.

26. Printed in Two Elizabethan Puritan Diaries, ed. M.M. Knappen, 103-23.

27. Ibid. 108-9.

the desire of erstwhile colleagues and pupils to keep in touch with university affairs. They looked to Ward to supply comment on and copies of recent publications, news of individuals, and of political or theological developments within the university, and personal and academic direction in their lives and ministries. Ward's most assiduous correspondent in the north-east was Robert Jenison, lecturer at All Saints, Newcastle. Between 1619 and 1632 Jenison wrote regularly to Cambridge, exchanging news of common friends, and seeking advice on a series of problems posed by his position in Newcastle and his conflict with the ecclesiastical authorities.<sup>28</sup> Earlier Clement Colmore asked Ward's assistance in sending books to Durham and organising the publication of his own work. A later correspondent, Joseph Naylor, archdeacon of Northumberland, sent word of the health of Ward's local family in exchange for similar help.<sup>29</sup>

The same desire to maintain contact is evident in the correspondence of Isaac Basire, like Naylor, a chaplain to Bishop Morton and rector of Egglecliffe, to whom friends from Cambridge continued to write with news of academic and social

28. R. Howell, Newcastle upon Tyne and the Puritan Revolution, 15-87; R. Howell, 'The career of Dr. Robert Jenison, a 17th century Puritan in Newcastle', Jnl. Presbyt. Hist. Soc., xiii, 14-25.

29. Bodl. MS. Tanner 70, ff. 43, 54, 56, 58, 91, 105; 78, ff. 321.

events.<sup>30</sup> It is difficult to find earlier evidence of such ties because so little private correspondence survives. The university and colleges of Oxford did, however, retain a sufficient hold on the affections of two eminent Durham clergy, Bernard Gilpin and Francis Bunny, to move them to make bequests of books and money. For Bunny, the university was the place "wherein I reaped whatsoever enabled me to be any-way profitable to the church or Commonwealth", Magdalen College was "my kind nurse".<sup>31</sup> The years spent at university thus provided the clergy of Durham with a circle of friends many of whose careers would follow a similar path to their own, with a source of advice on delicate problems of theology, spiritual direction, and ministerial conduct, and with a continuing contact with the literature and personalities of a major centre of their professional world.

Contacts established while at university were occasionally sustained within the diocese. The Pilkington and Lever brothers were of the generation of students and fellows of St. John's College, Cambridge, who had left England together under Mary.<sup>32</sup> In the early 17th century there were a number

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30. Correspondence of Isaac Basire, ed. W.N. Darnell, 23-4; D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 9.29, 33.

31. Gilpin's will is printed in full in S.S. xxxviii. 83-94. Bunny's is printed in part, *ibid.* 108-11; the original with inventory is in D.R. Prob. 1616.

32. H.C. Porter, *Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge*,

of graduates from Christ Church, Oxford, amongst the diocesan clergy, probably men who had attracted the attention of Bishops James, Howson, and Morton, all of whom had connections with the college. Bishop Howson's unexpected leniency towards Peter Smart, another Christ Church graduate, may have been prompted by college loyalties.<sup>33</sup> Apart from these two groups, however, it is difficult to establish any clear pattern, either of recruitment from the diocese to the universities or colleges, or back into the ranks of the local ministry. In the late 16th century the remoteness of Durham and Northumberland set them outside the area dominated by the university of Cambridge, traditionally the eastern half of the country. The long-standing connection between the priory and Durham College in Oxford may also have retained some influence even after the two institutions had been transformed.<sup>34</sup> Whatever the reason, it was not until the 1630s that Cambridge graduates significantly outnumbered their Oxford counterparts among the Durham clergy. Even then, more than a third of all graduate clergy had attended Oxford at some time. In addition, there were always a few men who studied outside England, a number at the Scottish universities, and one or two of wider experience, such as Robert Swift, chancellor to Pilkington, who studied law at Louvain, and Isaac Basire, a student of Rotterdam and Leyden before continuing his education in England.

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33. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1629-31, 363. Bp. Howson to Bp. Laud, 20 Oct. 1630. I am grateful to Mr. M.J. Tilbrook for suggesting this explanation.

34. William Bennet, a graduate of the college and former prior of Finchale, was a canon of Durham until 1579, vic. Kelloe until 1580, and Aycliffe at his death in 1583.

The case of John Smaithwaite, mentioned above, is a reminder that the non-graduate was not necessarily lacking in ability. A substantial group of able and trusted non-graduates can be traced in the records of Barnes's episcopate. At the beginning of 1578 the bishop set his clergy an academic exercise; they were to render an account of St. Matthew's gospel in Latin or English according to ability. In addition to those excused from the test on grounds of ill-health or urgent business, there were 35 for whose exemption no reason is given in the records. The evidence suggests that all were men of proven ability. Fourteen were graduates. Of the non-graduates, ten were amongst those appointed two months later to carry out special preaching duties in the diocese, another was chief surrogate to the diocesan chancellor.<sup>35</sup> In the early 17th century the successors of these men laid claim to the full authority of the Protestant teaching ministry, describing themselves as "ministers" or even "preachers" of the Word of God, as did their university-trained colleagues.<sup>36</sup> By the 1630s however, as a class they had virtually disappeared. The men who were regularly involved in diocesan administration or in pastoral work outside their own cures were then all graduates. The non-graduate clergy were mostly poorly paid curates, whose moral and social standing, as well as their educational qualifications, were below those of most of their colleagues, men

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35. S.S. xxii. 70-9.

36. The title was used e.g. by Smaithwaite and by Christopher Boake, minor canon, vic. Billingham, and active deputy to the chancellor and other officials.

of a type who posed the greatest problems of discipline for the ecclesiastical authorities throughout the period.<sup>37</sup>

The exercise on which the clergy were examined in July 1578 was part of a series of tasks required of them under Bishop Barnes. The national authorities had first approved the enforcement of methodical study by the less qualified of the lower clergy in the Advertisements of 1565. In the early 1550s John Hooper had established a precedent for such schemes at the quarterly meetings of clergy in his diocese of Worcester. From the beginning of Elizabeth's reign the ecclesiastical authorities in London adopted a similar expedient to improve clerical standards. The canons of 1571 required diocesan chancellors to ensure that all clergy who were not masters of arts or above engaged in study of the Scriptures in English and Latin. These ideas were taken up in the northern province in the late 1570s, when Archbishop Sandys arranged for meetings of the clergy of Yorkshire in their archdeaconries for study and examination, and Barnes and Bishop Chaderton of Chester followed his example.<sup>38</sup>

In his "Monitions and Injunctions" to the clergy and churchwardens of the diocese published at a synod in October 1577, Barnes laid down rules for general chapters to be held

37. e.g. William Wilson, cur. Kelloe c. 1626, on whom see below, p. 418 .

38. The development of these schemes and their operation are described by R. Peters, 'The training of the "unlearned" clergy in England during the 1580s; a regional example', Miscellanea Historiae Ecclesiasticae, iii. 184-97; P. Collinson, The Elizabethan Puritan Movement, 170-1; Christophers, 'Surrey Clergy', 70; W.J.Pressey, 'Colchester Archdeaconry Visitations, 1588', Essex Review, xxxii. 132-7.

in January and July every year;

"wherat, beinge assisted by our Archdeacons within their severall offices and by our Referendarye by us to be named and assigned, examynacion shalbe had of the progresse in learnynge and studyinge of the Scriptures of the Parsons, Vicars and Curates, Ministers and Deacons; and exercises and taskes shalbe enioyned to them and required of them, .....

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The proceedings were to begin with a sermon and the hymn "Come Holy Ghost"; prayers for the queen, the church, the commonwealth, "the good successe and increase of religion and of the Gospell", and the persecuted faithfull were to be followed by readings of the Royal Injunctions of 1559 and the bishop's own Monitions. After presentments had been received from the churchwardens, the final business was the examination of the clergy. At the diocesan visitation in the following January details were issued of the form of the task on which they were to be examined. The clergy were warned

'ad diligenter sua praeberere studia et industrias ad perlegendum et ita discendum Evangelium secundum Matthaeum, ita quod compotum et ratiocinum in contentis separalium capitulorum hujusmodi Evangelii, Latina lingua, in scriptis reddere valeant, in proximum Capitulum Generale mense Julii proxime tenendum, cum separaliter in ea parte examinati fuerint per dictum dominum Judicem et dicti domini Dunelmensis Episcopi Referendarium."

The requirement was later modified so that those whose Latin was not sufficient might give an account of the gospel in English, either in writing or from memory.<sup>40</sup>

At successive general chapters, the gospels of Mark and Luke were enjoined as set texts. Scriptural study was still required of the lower clergy in 1586, when the "juniores clerici" were instructed to memorise the epistle of St. Jude for the next synod.<sup>41</sup> The passages given to the Durham clergy were considerably longer than those set for their colleagues in other parts of the county. In the archdeaconry of London, non-preachers were given four or five chapters of the New Testament to study over six months. In the archdeaconry of St. Albans initially two chapters of one of the epistles to the Romans, and then only part of the first chapter, were set for the same period, although later this was increased to one chapter a month. In St. Albans each student was assigned to a licensed preacher for oversight and conference; the aim may have been to stimulate study in depth, rather than the general familiarity with Scripture which the Durham clergy would have gained. It is not clear who conducted the examinations at the general chapters in Durham; no record of the appointment of a "referendary" has survived. The use of a large clerical meeting for common instruction and edification was more characteristic of the northern province than of the south. There, the greater stress on individuals as teachers and taught perhaps reflected the queen's horror of the "propheysings",

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40. Ibid. 32, 44-5.

41. Ibid. 79, 97.

the meetings for mutual edification, sometimes officially sponsored, which were banned from the province of Canterbury in 1576.<sup>42</sup>

At York and St. Albans the authorities kept a careful record of their findings.<sup>43</sup> The records for Durham are less detailed and reflect the conscientiousness of the clergy rather than their abilities. There is no indication whether the account was given in English or Latin, although it was noted that Thomas Blenkinsop, curate of Norton, "reddidit comptum utrumque." The proportion of absentees from the two archdeaconries was similar; approximately a quarter of those cited, in each case. Of the absentees, rather more of those from Durham had acceptable excuses than had their colleagues from Northumberland. Of those who did attend, the Durham clergy were the more diligent. Only 23 from the northern archdeaconry completed the task within the time allotted, of 71 who were not excused on grounds of ability. They made a poor showing by comparison with Durham, where 39 out of 54 had their efforts approved. Sixteen Northumberland clergy made no attempt at the exercise but only eight from Durham. Most of those who defaulted or failed to complete in time for the July meeting were incumbents of the less valuable benefices or unbeneficed curates. There was no clear-cut division on the lines of wealth or position, however. Many poor and unbeneficed clergy were able to give a satisfactory account by the required date and among these were men from the most far flung and impoverished areas of the

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42. Peters, op. cit., 186-8; Collinson, op. cit. 171.

43. Peters, op. cit. 184-97; J. Purvis, 'The literacy of the later Tudor clergy in Yorkshire', S.C.H. v. 147-65.

diocese; Patrick French, curate of Cornhill, John Greenwell, rector of Edmundbyers, and James Forster, curate of Holy Island.<sup>44</sup>

Measures to improve the skill of the lower clergy in the use of the Scriptures were necessary only while men of insufficient learning were admitted to orders. An adequate supply of suitable trained ordinands depended upon the availability of schooling and higher education. The provision of schools and the contribution of the clergy to education in a wider context will be considered in a later chapter;<sup>45</sup> here it is only necessary to look briefly at the encouragement of learning as it was designed for the service of the church.

The bishops of Durham shared the contemporary awareness of the importance of schooling. Although he played no direct part in the expansion of educational facilities within the diocese, Bishop Pilkington established a free grammar school at Rivington, his birth-place, in Lancashire. The foundation was said to have been inspired Gilpin's endowment of the Kepier School at Houghton le Spring. Its explicit purpose was to prepare boys for the ministry. Each morning the pupils entreated the Almighty to

"send forth many diligent workmen into thy harvest,  
and of thy goodness accept out bounden duty and  
service, and frame us to serve thee; that we may apply  
our whole study and labour so that out of this school  
may proceed a number of faithful and true ministers,

44. S.S. xxii. 78-9.

45. See below, pp. 298-315

that by their labours and study thy holy name may  
be better had in reverence among all people . . . ."46

While Barnes left no such lasting monument to his concern for the training of a future generation of clergy, he endeavoured to carry out the instructions of his superiors to that end, as in the improvement of standards among serving clergy. The canons of 1571 directed that ministers who were not licensed to preach should undertake the elementary education of children in their parishes, advising the parents of the less able to set them to some suitable occupation

"and if they perceave any of them to be of that disposition, that by teaching and instruction they may atteyne to the knowledge of learnyng, they shall counsell their parents, to set them to schole, that beyng endewed with learnyng, they may one day become fitt for the holy ministrie of the mighty god." 47

The substance of this direction was included in Barnes's Monitions of 1577. Unfortunately it is impossible to tell how far the Durham clergy fulfilled this advisory and selective role.

The contribution of Barnes's successors to the provision of education is more difficult to trace. Most probably gave at least casual patronage to deserving young men. In August 1595, for example, Bishop Matthew's Clerk of the Receipt paid

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46. J. Pilkington, Works, (Parker Soc.), 669-70; Carleton, 'Life of Gilpin', 410.

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

£1 "to John Cooke a poore scholler at his goinge to Cambridge at my Lord's commaundment."<sup>48</sup> In the 17th century, Thomas Morton was celebrated as the sponsor of deserving students at the universities and in Durham he made a handsome contribution to the grammar school which had been founded at Bishop Auckland at the turn of the century, an establishment which perhaps also enjoyed the support of Bishop Neile.<sup>49</sup>

More consistent encouragement to learning and particularly to prospective candidates for ordination was provided by the dean and chapter. The grammar school attached to the cathedral provided the machinery of patronage; to it the chapter appointed eighteen boys, officially "poor and bereft of the help friends with dispositions (so far as may be) naturally apt to learn."<sup>50</sup> From the 1580s onwards a fair proportion of the scholars were sons of clergy connected with the cathedral and some later took orders and held cures in the diocese. There was also a less formal system of scholarships and exhibitions to Cambridge. It seems to have been customary to continue the allowances due to a scholar of the cathedral while he attended the university. Probably only one such

48. P.M. Horton, 'The administrative, social, and economic structure of the Durham Bishopric Estates, 1500-1640' (Durham Univ. M.Litt. thesis, 1975), 553.

49. The school was not founded by Morton, as suggested by R. Baddiley, Life of Thomas Morton, 105, but he did make a substantial grant to the school in 1638. Grants of 1625 and 1628 may also have been episcopal in origin. Digest of Endowed Charities of Durham (Gateshead and Sunderland) H.C. 351, pp. 1-2 (1904), 1xix.

50. S.S. cxliii. 143-5.

allowance was made at a time.<sup>51</sup> In the case of John Allenson, the revenues of a minor canonry were treated as a university exhibition. Allenson was appointed to the cathedral in 1580 on completion of his bachelor's degree. Two years later he sought and obtained permission to retain the appointment while returning to Cambridge to study for an M.A. The unusual generosity of the chapter no doubt owed something to his outstanding ability. On returning to Durham he took priest's orders in 1587 and served for some time as curate of St. John's, Newcastle. In 1611 he was appointed rector of Whickham and while there came to occupy a central place amongst the puritanically inclined ministers of Newcastle and its surrounds. During that time he was preparing an edition of the writings of a Calvinist of national fame, his former tutor William Whittaker.<sup>52</sup>

Individual clergy also had a duty to promote education for the benefit of the church. The wealthiest of them were required by the Royal Injunctions to contribute to the upkeep of university scholars. The holder of any benefice worth £100 or more was to provide a student with £3 6s. 8d. yearly and the same sum again to another student or to a grammar school for every additional £100 of ecclesiastical income.<sup>53</sup> Without

51. Scholars are listed in P.K. D. and C. Mun., Treas. Bks.; some can be identified in cathedral appointments in *ibid.* Act Bks.

52. D.N.B.; P.K. D. and C. Mun., Act Bk. 1578-83, 22 Mar. 1580, 20 Nov. 1582; Bodl. MS. Tanner 74, f. 246.

53. Visitation Articles and Injunctions ed. W. H. Frere and W. M. Kennedy, iii. 13.

doubt Bernard Gilpin far exceeded this minimum in his support of a succession of able young men, most of them from the Kepier school, through the universities. One of his colleagues, William Birch, who was deprived of his prebend in 1567 during the Vestiarian Controversy but kept his rectory of Stanhope until his death in 1575, remembered in his will "his" scholar, leaving him a legacy of £6, and a further £4 10s. to each of eight "poor and likely" scholars at Clare College, Cambridge.<sup>54</sup> Gilpin and Birch were both bachelors and few of their successors had the same freedom from family cares. Increasingly, educational provision became a matter of family concern as clerical fathers and uncles sought to provide young men with books and money for the necessary years of study.<sup>55</sup>

Encouragement also came from lay men and institutions. The corporation of Newcastle, for example, offered university exhibitions to boys from the town grammar school from the early 17th century. A number of the holders returned to serve as diocesan clergy; at least two, Francis Gray and Robert Bonner, as curates in Newcastle.<sup>56</sup> The schools founded by laymen and women, which will be discussed in Chapter V, by expanding educational facilities, promoted the cause of a learned ministry, although this was not always their primary and explicit aim.

Education was the instrument by which the Protestant pastor fulfilled his major role as interpreter and expositor of

54. Carleton, 'Life of Gilpin', 402-3; S.S. xxii, pp. cx-cxiv; see below, pp. 299-302.

55. e.g. wills of Roland Clerke, rec. Dinsdale (d. 1572), S.S. cxii. 64-5; Cuthbert Hill, rec. Knaresdale (d. 1613), D.R. Prob. 1616; Ralph Richardson, vic. Aycliffe (d. 1631), D.R. Prob. 1632.

56. A. Laws, Schola Novacastrensis, 152.

Scripture. The pastorate thus became an extended academic exercise, demanding fundamental skills in the classical and biblical languages, and a continuing acquaintance with theological learning. From this ideal of the ministry sprang the concern expressed by 16th- and 17th-century clergy such as Richard Rogers and Ralph Josselin that time should be made amidst the other cares of their lives for methodical and in Roger's case, unremitting study.<sup>57</sup> Books were the very stuff of study and it is in this context, as well as that of the general standard of clerical scholarship, that evidence of reading and book-ownership should be seen.

Far from the publishing centres, books could still be obtained in the north-east. In letters between Durham clergy and university acquaintances, there are references to new books to be forwarded from Oxford, Cambridge, or London. Incoming clergy and returning university students brought with them their libraries, however small.<sup>58</sup> There was also some turnover of books within the diocese itself; bequests of books were made to colleagues<sup>59</sup> and a number of widows and executors sold books with other household goods and belongings. Archbishop

57. Two Elizabethan Diaries, ed. M.M. Knappen, 57-9; R. Josselin, Diary. (Camd. Soc. 3rd ser xv), 23, 55, 60-6.

58. e.g. will of John Fairless, parish clerk and schoolmaster of Sedgefield (d. 1638), which mentions "all my sonnes bookes which he brought from Cambridge". D.R. Prob. 1639.

59. See below, pp.394-6.

Matthew had a library quite beyond the reach of most parish clergy but the sources of his collection, including bequests and purchases from a number of his northern colleagues were probably not atypical.<sup>60</sup>

Ownership was not the only means of access to books. A few references survive to loans of books and the practice was very probably widespread.<sup>61</sup> It is impossible to tell whether bishop, dean and officials fulfilled the requirement of the 1571 canons that they have certain books on 'open access' for all who wished to read them.<sup>62</sup> However, clergy connected with the cathedral could use the chapter's library which was expanded by bequest and by deliberate policy during the period.<sup>63</sup> If heed was paid to successive official orders, every parish church should also have possessed a reasonable library including biblical commentary, controversial and devotional works. Occasionally the clergy were charged with removing volumes from the vestry for their own use; in 1639 an allowance of 10s. was made against the value of the estate of John Cornforth, curate of Heighington, "for a booke prized in the inventory & since challenged to belong to the church." Some clergy were said to have sold books belonging to the parish but most only borrowed them, presumably to augment their own libraries.<sup>64</sup>

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60. J.B. Gavin, 'An Elizabethan Bishop of Durham: Tobias Matthew 1595-1606', (McGill Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1972), 307-8.

61. S.S. xxii, pp. cxxix-cxxx.

62. Canons of 1571, (Ch. Hist. Soc. xl), 30, 32, 40.

63. D.R. Prob. 1595, will of Robt. Richardson, rec. Redmarshall; S.S. xxxviii. 108-11; S.S. lii, p. xxi.

64. S.S. xxii. 25; D.R. Prob. 1639, will of John Cornforth.

As might be expected, books are a more common feature of clerical wills and inventories in the early 17th, than in the later 16th century. In only four of twenty two probate records surviving from the 1570s do they appear, whereas from 1600 onwards books are mentioned in at least half the records. The possession of books was never limited to the wealthiest or best educated among the clergy; one of the earliest wills which includes a bequest of books is that of Thomas Pentland, a minor canon and curate of St. Giles's, Durham, who died in 1574 leaving an estate of the moderate value of £36 4s. 8d. Not until the 1590s do curates again figure amongst the book-owners, and in that decade two out of four served Newcastle chapels and might therefore be expected to have had more opportunity and stimulus to purchase books than their rural colleagues.<sup>65</sup> Only in the third decade of the 17th century is it as likely to find a curate disposing of his library as a beneficed clergyman.<sup>66</sup>

65. D.R. Prob. 1574; D.R. Prob. 1597, will of John Moorhouse, cur. Newcastle; D.R. Prob. 1598, will of Clement Cockson, cur. St. John's, Newcastle.

66. At his death in 1603, Christopher Smith, minor canon and perhaps cur. St. Mary, South Bailey, Durham, left "a frame and tools for bookbinding"; presumably there was sufficient call for his skills to make this a profitable sideline. Much of his work must have been for the cathedral. The chapter paid him 60s. in 1596-7 for binding and gilding song books for the choir. D.R. Prob. 1603; P.K. D. and C. Mun., Treas. Bks 16, 17.

The value of clerical libraries did not follow the patterns of wealth or education. The least valuable collections were those of Thomas Blakiston, rector of the tiny parish of Dinsdale, one of the poorest benefices in County Durham, and William Bennett, vicar of Aycliffe and prebendary of the cathedral, both of whom left books worth 5s.<sup>67</sup> Valuations of between 10s. and £2 remained common in the 17th century but such estimates could conceal a wide selection of reading matter. The books belonging to William Massey, late vicar of Stranton were "for the most parte torne or yll bounde" and were consequently valued at a mere 13s. 8d. in 1588. There were fourteen volumes, ranging from Beza's Latin New Testament and the Epistles of St. Jerome, through works on Latin style and philosophical commentaries, to a dictionary for children.<sup>68</sup> Thirty five years later, the vicar of Tynemouth, William Robinson, died possessed of an equally varied library of twenty one works, which even then was only worth £1 5s.<sup>69</sup> Such estimates give perspective to the collections left by scholars; Francis Bunny and John Hutton left books worth £68 and £50 respectively in 1617 and 1611.<sup>70</sup> By any reckoning the library of William Morton, at his death in 1619 vicar of St. Nicholas's Newcastle and archdeacon of Durham, was extraordinary in its extent. Valued at £300, (a figure which may well have been reached for the sake of convenience rather than accuracy), it included 1,676 volumes,

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67. S.S. xxxviii. 201-3; S.S. xxii, pp. cxviii-cxxii.

68. Ibid. 311-2

69. D.R. Prob. 1623

70. S.S. xxxviii. 108-11; S.S. cxlii. 53-4.

specified in the inventory only by size, and a further eight bundles of treatises. The problem of valuation was so great that a special committee of three neighbouring clergyman and the master of the Newcastle grammar school was appointed to give an expert assessment.<sup>71</sup> Some 17th century clergy left a substantial portion of their whole estate in the form of books. In addition to Morton, Hutton, and Bunny, there were a number whose libraries, valued more moderately at between £6 and £16 for more than one tenth of their possessions, as assessed for probate. In the case of Richard Clerke, vicar of Berwick (d. 1607), the proportion was only just under half his total wealth.

Clerke's library is one of the few for which a full list of titles and usually of authors survives. There is only one other record of an extensive collection, that of Isaac Lowden, stipendiary vicar of Darlington and master of the grammar school there.<sup>72</sup> Where there is no full inventory, or no separate mention of books bequests often give an indication of

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71. D.R. Prob. 1620. Some idea of the size of Morton's collection is given by comparison with the c. 3,000 volumes owned by Archbishop Matthew, who possessed one of the larger private libraries in England in the early 17th century. Gavin, 'An Elizabethan Bishop of Durham', 299-300.

72. D.R. Prob. 1607, will of Richard Clerke; D.R. Prob. 1612, will of Isaac Lowden; the books mentioned in the inventories attached to these wills are listed in Appendix A.

the contents of a clerical library and some idea of the books which were most valued, for their material or intellectual worth. The largest single group mentioned, both in inventories and wills, are Bibles or excerpts from Scripture, biblical commentaries, and other works of divinity. Almost every list includes at least one copy of the Bible, from the "ould written Bible" belonging to Robert Lyghton, vicar of Long Horsley in 1584,<sup>73</sup> to the popular Latin edition of the New Testament by Beza, which appears throughout the period. More rarely the translation by Tremellius was specified. Surprisingly, the Geneva Bible does not often appear, although William Birch left "to my brother Thomas, to be an heir lowme, my Geneva Bible, there printed in English."<sup>74</sup> Also surprising is the comparative dearth of patristic works. They are specified in only a handful of cases and are scantily represented even in the most scholarly libraries. The works of Augustine were naturally the most popular; in 1623, for example, William Robinson, vicar of Tynemouth, left copies of the De Civitate Dei, De Tempore, and a commentary upon St. John.<sup>75</sup>

The works of the continental reformers of the 16th century were much more frequently mentioned. A number of clergy, including Gilpin, kept copies of Calvin's works, although only occasionally of the Institutes. The writings of Erasmus and

73. S.S. xxii, pp.cxxviii-cxxix.

74. Ibid. pp. cx-cxiv.

75. D.R. Prob. 1623.

Beza (in addition to the Paraphrases and the biblical translations) and lesser figures such as Ursinus were also popular. The library of Richard Clerke bears witness to the degree of interest in the continental reform. He owned volumes by Luther, Zwingli, Oecolampadius, Martyr, and Beza, in addition to commentaries, and collections of commonplaces by Marlorat, Musculus, Gualter, Ursinus, Hemmingius, and Piscator.

Contemporary controversy, particularly the continuing exchange between Catholic and Protestant also caught the attention of Durham ministers. The disputes of English church leaders with Catholic apologists in the years following the Settlement were staple reading. Jewel's controversy with Harding, and, to a lesser extent, Nowell's exchanges with Dorman kept their place amongst the books of the parish clergy throughout the period. Anti-romanist polemic, English or continental in origin, was always of interest and, no doubt, a source of encouragement in an area where Catholic survivals were so strong. In 1594 Robert Murray of Pittington bequeathed his copy of Martin Chemnitius's Examini Concilii Tridentii . . . . opus integrum: quattuor partes in quibus praecipuorum capitum totius doctrinae Papisticae . . . . refutatio . . . . collecta est to the cathedral library. Much the same ground was covered by Andrew Willet's Synopsis Papismi, owned by a Newcastle curate at the end of the 16th century and by a Berwick preacher in the 1620s.<sup>76</sup> The theme

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76. D.R. Prob. 1594, will of Robert Murray; D.R. Prob. 1629, will of John Jackson, preacher, of Berwick.

recurs in a popularised form in The pedigree of popish heretiques left by Isaac Lowden.<sup>77</sup> Interest was not confined to controversy between Catholic and Protestant. The works of Whitgift and Cartwright soon found their way into the north-east; a borrowed copy of Cartwright's Reply was in the library of William Birch two years after its publication. "Whitgift and Cartwright" continue to appear occasionally in later lists.<sup>78</sup> The 17th century controversies within the Church of England did not leave the same mark upon clerical libraries, although Arminian theology and ceremonial innovations were burning issues in the diocese in the 1620s and 1630s.<sup>79</sup>

By the end of the 16th century the place which had been occupied by the early Elizabethan controversialists was gradually being taken by contemporary divines, whose sermons, commentaries, and treatises, appear increasingly frequently from the 1590s. In 1598 Clement Cockson, curate of St. John's, Newcastle, owned volumes of sermons by William Cupper, Henry Smith, and John Udall, all probably published during the preceding decade. Those of Udall were no doubt recommended by the preacher's Newcastle connections, although it is not clear whether Cockson was at St. John's in 1590 when Udall was in the northeast. Thirteen years later, Isaac Lowden left copies of works by Dering, Playfare, and King, again mainly

77. See below, Appendix A.

78. S.S. xxii, pp. cx-cxiv; Carleton, 'Life of Gilpin', 410.

79. See below, pp. 410-16.

sermons. The writings of William Perkins made their first recorded appearance in the diocese just before, in the library of Richard Clerke.<sup>80</sup> Perkins was to remain a favourite among the Durham clergy as he was with their colleagues elsewhere, and his name appears more frequently than that of any other contemporary author for the rest of the period.

Another changing feature of clerical libraries was the virtual disappearance of liturgical and service books. A number of books appear in the earliest collections listed in detail which had received official approval or sponsorship, or were required for parish use. The library of Francis Trollope, vicar of Sockburn, who died in 1579, virtually reproduced the list given to the Durham churchwardens for provision in parish churches two years before. He owned a Latin Bible and a separate New Testament in English and Latin, a "book of service", the psalms in prose and metre, the Paraphrases of Erasmus in two volumes, the Homilies in two volumes, copies of the Royal Articles and Injunctions, Alexander Nowell's Catechism, and a book of Postills, presumably those by Hemingius specified by Barnes in his Monitions. Trollope may have made himself responsible for furnishing the church with these volumes, so that they remained his property, although used by the parish. There are very few later references to the service books or Injunctions, although occasionally the Paraphrases or Postills were specified and in the 1630s the rector of Ford left "a large homily book".<sup>81</sup>

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80. D.R. Prob. 1598, and see below, Appendix A.

81. S.S. ii. 426-7; D.R. Prob. 1631, will of Robert Rotheram, rec. Ford.

Scriptural texts and works of divinity were not the sole contents of clerical libraries. Both the more and the less scholarly needed aids to study, and in some cases to teaching, and dictionaries and grammars ranged from William Massey's "English dictionary for children, in vellum", to the Greek and Hebrew lexicons left by Clerke and Lowdon. A number of parish clergy owned works of philosophy; the treatises of Plato and Aristotle appear in inventories, as do contemporary works on logic and rhetoric. Scholars such as Birch and schoolmasters like Lowden no doubt found them of continuing use; others perhaps kept them as survivals from their university days. Evidence is also forthcoming of an interest in classical literature. In the later 16th century and the first decade of the 17th the works of Cicero, Livy and Ovid were frequently mentioned. Later the taste for contemporary devotional and expository works apparently outweighed the liking for the classics. The most lasting area of interest outside divinity was history; often represented as theology in action in works such as those of John Sleidan. In the 1570s Robert Lyghton still owned a "writtene Cronicle" but the histories of Sleidan and Paolo Giovo were among the books of Birch and Gilpin at much the same date. Secular histories remained popular; John Jackson of Berwick left a "History of the World" in 1629 and Robert Rotheram of Ford a "History of Florence" two years later. Apart from the histories and the writings of the continental divines, little interest was shown in affairs outside England. Isaac Lowden was unique in his possession of French and Italian Bibles and in the interest in Italian literature

which led him to acquire works by Petrarch and Dante.

The breadth of Lowden's interest was stimulated by the demands of teaching and professional concerns of other kinds were reflected in other libraries. Clement Colmore made specific bequests of books on common law, natural reading and reference even for a civil lawyer. More surprising was his possession of "English physic books"; there is no evidence that he ever practised medicine but he is the only Durham clergyman known to have owned works of this kind. Unfortunately there is no record of the library of Robert Bellamy, an earlier prebendary, rector of Houghton le Spring and master of Sherburn Hospital who was a trained and practising physician.<sup>82</sup> There was no need for a man to have a professional interest in order to own books on a subject. William Birch, although never even an official of the diocese, possessed a copy of the laws of the realm, and "seven new volumes of Civil Law"; other clergy are noted as having books of statutes.

The clerical lawyers provide several instances of parish ministers whose interests extended beyond their cures. They included the majority of diocesan chancellors, and in the early 17th century Gilbert Spence, vicar of Tynemouth, also appeared frequently in the church courts, in the capacity of a notary public. John Rudd, canon of Durham and vicar of Norton (1550-4 and 1559-78), was a more unusual figure; he was a noted cartographer.<sup>83</sup> John Vaux, curate of St. Helen's Auckland in the early 17th century, practised and published as an astrologer.<sup>84</sup> Surviving commonplace books kept by

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82. Borth. Inst. Hist. Res., Prob. Reg. 35/435; Marcombe, 'Dean and Chapter', 22.

83. See below, pp. 360-1; Marcombe, 'Dean and Chapter', 22.

clergy also reveal a variety of interests. Three are known from Durham in the early 17th century, all compiled by members of the cathedral establishment. More or less methodically, entries were made of quotations and examples which seemed to the writer peculiarly apposite and worthy of imitation or repetition. They were also notebooks for personal ideas, drafts of letters and of sermons. The commonplace book of Elias Smith, a minor canon, curate of St. Giles's, Durham, and from 1640 to 1666 headmaster of Durham school, shows a strong interest in current affairs, which after 1640 found expression in poetic attacks on the parliamentary and presbyterian cause.<sup>85</sup> Not all the verse was political and while some was probably Smith's own, there were also quotations from recent writers including Francis Quarles and John Donne. Contemporary events also concerned John Gray, another minor canon.<sup>86</sup> His book was far more orderly than that of his colleague and under headings such as "music" and "strange places" he found room for material of less immediate import, drawn from 16th and 17th century writers such as Bacon and Hakluyt. Gray was fascinated by geography and navigation; on one page he entered a careful diagram of an astrolabe. His knowledge of French was perhaps part of the same interest in matters foreign. Both men naturally gave space to the classical authors upon whom they had been reared, but nothing

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84. Venn; see below, pp.424-5 .

85. D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 125.

86. Ibid. 34

like the emphasis placed upon them by Thomas Carre, Peter Smart's successor in the chapter and vicar of Aycliffe.<sup>87</sup> Carre kept a record of propositions debated by himself and others at university and was especially fond of noting passages from the Greek authors in defence of philosophical and theological premises. Most of his notebook, however, was devoted to longer theological discussions, excerpts from the Fathers, and from 16th century reformers. No source is given for much of the writing and he may have been working out his own position on vexed questions of church government and practice. Obviously this was a useful exercise for an active parish minister; so too was the lengthy demonstration of the "right division" of a sermon.

The notebooks of Smith and Gray were by no means as weighty and they cannot be taken as evidence of more than the general knowledge and curiosity to be expected of educated men. The diversity and depth of scholarly and professional interests among the Durham clergy do not justify speaking of an intellectual renaissance such as Professor Dickens has described in the York church under Elizabeth.<sup>88</sup> Sermons, treatises, works of devotion - the tools and products of their trade - were the common elements of both clerical libraries and clerical writings. Few, like Vaux, published works of secular interest. The apparent singlemindedness of the Durham clergy in their attitude to scholarship perhaps gave greater benefit

87. Ibid. 34.

88. A.G. Dickens, 'Aspects of Intellectual Transition among the English Parish Clergy of the Reformation Period', Archiv fur Reformationgeschichte, xliii. 63-9.

as it gave greater emphasis to their ministry. The point should not be laboured, for the absence of other academic interests does not prove that the Durham clergy adhered to the rules of biblical study and prayer advocated by Rogers and others; a substantial proportion of them, however, were equipped as never before to understand and impart the teaching of the church.

### iii. Ordination and Recruitment

The most direct means by which the quality of prospective ministers could be controlled was the authority of the diocesan to exclude unsatisfactory candidates from ordination. Between 1558 and 1604 rules for admission to the ministry, based on the canon law requirements for the education, age, financial, and personal standing of deacons and priests, became increasingly strict.<sup>89</sup> An initial crisis in the national supply of clergy had forced the early Elizabethan authorities to lower their standards. In the first two or three years of the reign approval was given to the admission of laymen to ecclesiastical cures as 'readers' in an attempt to supply every parish with a minister of some sort. In Durham readers appear in the diocesan records as late as the 17th century, usually serving in the dependent chapelries of the northern

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89. This paragraph is based on the discussions of regulations for admissions to the ministry before and after the Reformation in P. Heath, English Parish Clergy on the Eve of the Reformation, 12-18; O'Day, 'Reformation of the Ministry', 55-75; O'Day, 'Clerical Patronage and Recruitment', 27-49.

archdeaconry.<sup>90</sup> Minimal educational demands were made of those entering the diaconate, as long as they could bring evidence of "honest conversation", although a knowledge of Latin was always required of candidates for the priesthood.<sup>91</sup> As the quality rather than the number of clergy became the principal concern, the regulations were tightened once again. A social distinction was introduced in the canons of 1571 which excluded "any that hath bene brought up on husbandrie, or some other base and handicraft labour." In the southern province in 1575 the prospective minister was required to give an account of his faith in Latin and the canons of 1604 made this a national standard, to be enforced by close examination by the bishop and other able and learned clergy.<sup>92</sup> The 1575 Articles for Canterbury Province also required testimonials to the candidate's moral character from men known to the bishop; by 1604 the recommendation was to be made either by the candidate's university college or by three or four "grave ministers".<sup>93</sup> In only one respect were the rules relaxed after the mid 16th century. Canon 32 of 1604 allowed the bishop discretion to reduce the customary period of a year between the diaconatâ and the priesthood, although not to admit to both orders on the same day.

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90. D.R. II.4, f. 91; D.R. VIII.2, ff. 85, 202; Alnwick Castle, Sion MS. Q.III. 2a. 5.

91. Visitation Articles and Injunctions, ed. Frere and Kennedy iii. 62-3.

92. Canons of 1571, (Ch. Hist. Soc. xl), 26; Canon 33 of 1604; W.M. Kennedy, Elizabethan Episcopal Administration, iii.196-8.

93. E. Cardwell, Synodalia, 132.

Candidates for ordination in Durham were examined by the bishop or his deputy but only occasional references to this process survive. It was more than a formality. In 1570 Thomas Swallowell, curate of Ebchester and Medomsley, was accused of participation in the revival of Catholic rites during the rebellion of the previous year. Ordained at the age of 39 in 1569 he was said to have

"crept into Orders, being unfitt for that function, as well for lyfe as learning ..... although he was staid of orders by Mr Lever, yet my lord afterward admitted him"

In this case Bishop Pilkington was more lenient than Ralph Lever, then archdeacon of Northumberland and probably the regular examiner of ordinands, whose decision proved, in the event, the correct one.<sup>94</sup> By the 1630s Bishop Morton was not content to leave the "sacred business" to others but made himself responsible for the examination of the candidates' academic proficiency.

"..... for a tryall of their Parts, he always appointed a set time to examine them in University learning; but chiefly in Points of Divinity; and in this he was very exact, by making them answer Syllogistically according to their abilities."<sup>95</sup>

The principal sources of information about episcopal

94. D. and C. Libr., Raine MS. 124, ff. 193-205. Lever is described in a marginal note in Pilkington's register as examinator of another candidate. S.S. clxi. 170.

95. Baddiley, Life of Morton, 95-6.

policy and the process of recruitment within the diocese are the lists of ordinands given in the registers of Pilkington, Barnes, and Neile, and a single list in the latter from Howson's episcopate.<sup>96</sup> More stringent rules governing qualifications for ordination were apparently accompanied by greater regularity and formality in the institution itself. All the bishops performed ordinations in person. Pilkington alone had the choice of delegation to a suffragan but presumably felt too uncertain of the reliability of Thomas Sparke to use his services. He ordained on sixteen occasions, following no chronological pattern and sometimes admitting only one or two candidates at a time. The ceremony was performed more regularly by Barnes, who usually held one or two "general ordinations" a year in Durham cathedral at which between 6 and 35 candidates were admitted. Like Pilkington he also ordained individuals at Auckland Castle apparently on demand. That practice had ceased by the time Neile became bishop. Only five ordination ceremonies were held during his episcopate, in 1618, 1619, 1621, 1622, and 1626. All were held in the cathedral and in the spirit of the canons of 1604 were attended by six or seven senior clergy, usually the chancellor, one or both archdeacons, and a number of prebendaries and episcopal chaplains. Candidates had to wait the canonical term of a year before progressing from the diaconate to the priesthood (a term used by Neile's registrar in preference to the description "minister" used by his predecessors under Pilkington and Barnes); the 16th-century bishops had occasionally ordained to both orders within a few months and sometimes

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96. The following discussion is based on the ordination lists in D.R. I.3-4; S.S. clxi. 140-82.

even on the same day. The pattern of greater regularity continued under Morton; though his ordination lists have not survived, he is known to have admitted candidates four times a year on the ember days.<sup>97</sup>

The numbers seeking ordination bore little relation to the needs of the diocese, as far as these can be judged from the turnover of benefices. The most that can be said is that supply always exceeded the demand for beneficed clergy.<sup>98</sup> A man ordained in Durham had no obligation to serve there and many candidates were destined for other dioceses. Pilkington ordained 66 men to one or both orders. The majority appeared at one of the five unusually large ceremonies held between 1567 and 1571, at which an average of 17 candidates were admitted. In most southern dioceses a peak in clerical recruitment occurred in the years immediately after 1558, when the shortage of ministers was greatest and the standards least rigid.<sup>99</sup> The later peak in Durham was probably the result of external events rather than local necessity. The see of York stood vacant from the death of Archbishop Young in June 1568 until the nomination of Grindal in April 1570; during the latter year the bishopric of Carlisle was also vacant.<sup>100</sup> On the other hand, a large number of the clergy recruited in these years remained

97. Baddiley, Life of Morton, 96; S.P. 16/412/45. i. Bp. Morton's certificate of state of diocese, 15 Feb. 1639.

98. This statement is based on figures from the surviving registers.

99. O'Day, 'Reformation of the Ministry', 57-8.

100. At Carlisle, however, the vacancy only lasted from May to June 1570.

in the diocese. Their careers can be traced in the detailed lists of both beneficed and unbeneficed clergy which have survived for almost every year of Barnes's episcopate.<sup>101</sup> Of Pilkington's 66 ordinands, about two thirds can be identified later serving cures in Durham. The proportion of those ordained between 1568 and 1571 is, if anything, higher, although there is no suggestion of a greater demand for new clergy at this time. If Pilkington was ordaining for all or part of the diocese of York during these years, it may be that previously a large number of Durham clergy had been recruited from York ordinands.

Barnes admitted many more candidates than Pilkington, 270 in all. There were still fluctuations. In 1582 and 1583 125 men took orders and, perhaps as a result, there were only 33 candidates in the last two years of his episcopate. While such fluctuations are difficult to account for, the high total may again be explained by events elsewhere. As bishop of Carlisle Barnes had frequently performed ordinations for the diocese of York and it seems that he was continuing to deputise for the archbishop. There is no record of any ordinations taking

101. D.R. II.1

102. Information supplied by Dr. D. Smith, Borthwick Institute, York.

place in York during this time.<sup>102</sup> Men from York formed the great majority of those whose diocese of origin is given in Barnes's ordination lists, 101 compared with 59 from Durham itself. A smaller proportion of the ordinands continued in Durham under Barnes than under Pilkington. Only 117 have been traced; perhaps more than half the candidates were ordained to titles outside the diocese and were never intended as recruits to the Durham clergy. The figure may be exaggerated; as the clergy lists do not survive after 1587 careers of the unbeneficed become more difficult to trace, but the basic argument holds good.

Numbers were smaller and steadier under Bishop Neile, who admitted 57 men to orders. There was some decline at the end of his episcopate; the last ordination, held in 1626, was the only one in five years, but there were only eight candidates. As the bishop's patronage of ceremonialist practices and Arminian theology became apparent and the division of clerical opinion more pronounced, fewer men may have sought ordination at Neile's hands. It has been suggested that while he was archbishop of York puritan recruits to the ministry looked elsewhere for ordination, a number of them turning to Morton of Durham.<sup>103</sup> As under Pilkington, a high proportion of those

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103. R.A. Marchant, Puritans and the Church Courts in the Diocese of York, 205. Seven York puritans are there said to have been ordained by Morton, but the source of information is not clear as there are no Durham ordination lists for that date. By 1639, however, Neile's archiepiscopal administration was so unpopular that he held no ordination that year, no candidates having come forward. S.P. 16/412/45. Neile to King, 6 Feb. 1639

who were ordained found livings within the diocese. Thirty three, just under two thirds of the total, are recorded later in Durham cures, and this must be taken as a minimum figure, there being no clergy lists equivalent to those of Barnes's episcopate.

The ordination held by Howson in 1630 may have been the first in Durham since 1626; two men who had entered the diaconate in 1626 only then became priests. At the single session in 1630 20 men received orders, a number which perhaps indicates a backlog of candidates. Some pressure may have come from York and Carlisle, where, as in Durham, these were years of episcopal change. The figures for ordinands who continued to serve in the diocese are of little help in clarifying the picture; only eight have been traced in Durham but the defects in the records for the mid 17th century make any interpretation very uncertain.

The progress towards a fully graduate clergy described above was accompanied by a change in the average age of ordinands. The majority of those admitted by Barnes whose ages are known received both orders between the ages of twenty seven and thirty. In contrast, most of those ordained in the 17th century were closer to the canonical minimum of twenty three deacons and twenty four for priests, echoing the pattern elsewhere in the country.<sup>104</sup> Many of Neile's ordinands took orders at the end of a university career, usually on completion of the degree of M.A., and the few older candidates were those who had studied for higher degrees. Only occasionally is there some account of the way in which the ordinands of the

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104. O'Day, 'Clerical Patronage and Recruitment', 298.

1570 s and 1580 s spent the sometimes lengthy interval between the end of their schooling and taking orders. Some served in a semi-clerical capacity as "epistolers", "gospellers", or even minor canons on the staff of the cathedral. Thomas Assheton spent three years as "lector" at Whittonstall in the parish of Bywell St. Peter before taking orders and a curacy in the city of Durham.<sup>105</sup> Others may have turned to a clerical career after that participation in lay trades so much deplored by critics of the Elizabethan ministry.

Recruitment into the ranks of the Durham clergy was not, of course, solely through ordination by the diocesan bishop. Some came to Durham after ordination in another diocese or from livings elsewhere in the country. The proportion of immigrants is impossible to assess although the general predominance of local men suggests that it was small. About forty men are known to have taken orders or to have held cures outside the diocese. Most were graduates and information about their careers is derived from the lists compiled by Venn and Foster, not entirely reliable guides. They include many of the relatives, friends, and protegés who appeared in the wake of the bishops. Another distinctive group was that of the notable dissenters, men such as the Elizabethan puritan

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105. D.R. II.1, f. 70.

John Udall,<sup>106</sup> or Anthony Lapthorne, whose nonconformity had troubled the authorities of the southern province in the 1630s.<sup>107</sup> These men arrived or were placed in Durham to exercise their talents out of harm's way. There were also several prebendaries or officials of other northern dioceses who added Durham appointments to prosperous collections of benefices. The rectory of Winston on the southern border of the diocese, for example, was held between 1591 and 1602 by Roger Acroyd, who was at the same time rector of Whalton in Northumberland and of two Yorkshire parishes, from 1597 to 1601 prebendary of Southwell and from 1600 to 1617 archdeacon of the West Riding. He was followed at Winston by Henry Thurscrosse, who also held a succession of parish livings in Yorkshire and resigned his Durham benefice in 1608 to become a canon of York and later archdeacon of Cleveland. Only a handful of men without peculiar claims to influence or distinction can be traced in Durham livings after serving elsewhere. In every case their earlier cures were in the northern dioceses. The greatest distance was travelled by Charles Farrand, perhaps vicar of Gainford in 1589, and certainly master of the hospital at Barnard Castle in the following year, who had previously been beneficed in Nottinghamshire.

106. After his ejection from Kingston, (Surrey), Udall spent approximately a year as a preacher in Newcastle c. 1589-90 until his arrest for complicity in the Marprelate publications. D.N.B.; C. Cross, The Puritan Earl, 256.

107. Lapthorne was expelled from Tretire, (Hærefs.), for nonconformist practices and subsequently, in 1636, appointed by Bp. Morton to preach at Ovingham. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1633-4, pp. 481, 579, 582, 1634-6, 108, 117, 122, 258. Proceedings of High Commission; 1638-9, 434. Bp. Morton to Sec. Windbank, 7 Feb. 1639.

Lack of evidence conceals the mobility of non-graduate clergy, at least within the northern dioceses. One such man was James Nelson, curate of Ryton at his death in 1596. His story draws together much that has been said about the background and recruitment of the clergy in this chapter. His will contains a partial account of his early history and temporary conversion to that "abominable heresy of papacy" under the auspices of a certain Mr James Harrington. A Cumbrian by birth, Nelson went up to Queen's College, Oxford, with the intention of entering the ministry. At the age of eighteen he was persuaded by Harrington to leave Oxford without taking a degree and to become a licensed reader in the chapel near Harrington's home in the parish of Kendal. Harrington also discouraged the young man from taking orders, "pursuading me that a change of religion wolde come, and then I were undone ...." The narrative breaks off at this point and there is no information about Nelson's escape from Kendal. He obviously repented of his weakness, and received ordination at Carlisle in 1588 or 1589. In 1593 he was curate at Morpeth and three years later died at Ryton, assistant to Francis Bunny, author of a number of anti-catholic works.<sup>108</sup> A northerner, ordained in an adjacent diocese, Nelson was typical of the provenance of the Durham clergy. He was one of the growing number of university educated ministers and yet his career serves as a warning against underestimating the standard of clerical education. Had his will not survived, he would have been counted as yet another non-graduate minister of no particular distinction. As a reader before his ordination he

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108. S.S. xxii, pp. cxxxi-cxxxiv; additional information supplied by Mr C.R. Huddleston.

was one of a class generally considered damaging to the ministry, but clearly only his qualifications, not his abilities, were insufficient. The apparent ease with which Harrington dissuaded him from taking orders says something about the continuing strength of Catholic hopes at least in the north-west. If young men and their advisors on the east of the Pennines shared his uncertainty about the security of a career in the established church, this is perhaps a partial explanation of the slow improvement in the formal qualifications of Durham ministers after the 1570s.

Nelson was apparently unaffected by any aspect of official policy to encourage the able or to dissuade the unsuitable to or from the ministry. The attitudes of bishops were responsible for some alteration in the number and type of ordinands and ministers but this was also the product of a changing social and educational context.<sup>109</sup> The interplay of the two can be observed but not entirely disentangled. University attendance presupposed a greater mobility; southern bishops appointed their southern dependents to desirable livings. The result of this interplay by the 1630s was a diocesan clergy for whom university training was almost a matter of course, although it did not indicate a greater ability than their predecessors'; for whom gentle background no longer guaranteed seniority or even a wealthy living and who had perhaps to travel slightly further in pursuit of preferment. The way in which that preferment was obtained forms the subject of the next chapter.

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109. cf. O'Day, 'Reformation of the Ministry', 56, 67-79.

## Chapter II

Preferment and Patronage.i. The Clerical Career.

The candidate for orders had to produce evidence of a title, some means to guarantee his maintenance as a minister immediately after ordination. Before the Reformation, titles were often assured by monastic houses. They could also take the form of private patronage; in 1565 Christopher Watson was ordained on the promise of a stipend of £5 from the lands of Sir Thomas Dacre.<sup>1</sup> From the later 16th century most candidates were ordained on the assurance of employment in a parish. In the 1560s and 1570s there were some 210 livings in the diocese of Durham, not counting assistant curacies. Over 100 were endowed rectories or vicarages. Twenty eight were independent stipendiary posts, described variously as vicarages or curacies and usually within the gift of the owner of the tithes without episcopal institution. A further 75 livings were dependencies in the chapelries of large parishes.<sup>2</sup>

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1. S.S. clxi. 148. In the same year William Duxfield was ordained priest on the title of the rectory of Bothal. Ibid. Under Neile a number of ordinands were described as curates of named parishes but there is no specific information about titles. D.R. I.4. passim.
  2. Number and types of livings calculated from B.L. Harl. MS. 594, ff. 186-95. Bp. Pilkington's return of 1563; S.S. xxii.

There were never sufficient clergy in the diocese to provide a resident minister in each of these livings; this is clear even without taking account of assistant curates. Even so, Durham suffered no drastic shortage of clergy in the mid 16th century, unlike many southern dioceses.<sup>3</sup> The problem in Durham was a chronic one, causing vacancies in certain types of poor or unattractive cure. In the 1560s Pilkington reported that three benefices had stood vacant for several years; Felton and Kirkharle, poorly endowed vicarages in Northumberland, and the even poorer rectory of St. Mary, North Bailey, in the city of Durham.<sup>4</sup> Felton had an incumbent by 1578 but no appointment was made to Kirkharle until the end of the century. With a brief interval, St. Mary, North Bailey, and the sister church in the South Bailey were served by curates until the Civil War.

More worrying than long-term vacancies in a handful of benefices was the situation in the dependent chapelries of Northumberland. According to Bishop Pilkington,

"..... There be many parishes in Northumberland speciallie where the vicars have verye small lyvings and iet some of them have five chappells, some foure, many three, and every one almost too and so farre distante from the parish church that it is not possible they shuld come to church and if they could the church wolde not holde the thirde parte of them. Theis chappells are as bige as parish churches and as many

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3. In some dioceses a third of all livings were vacant at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign. Barratt, 'Condition of the Parish Clergy', 11-12; O'Day, 'Reformation of the Ministry', 57-8.

4. S.P. 15/12/108. Return of vacant livings, ? 1565.

resortes to them and yet have no lyvinge at all  
and many of them want a priest....."<sup>5</sup>

As the century progressed, chapels fell out of use. At Belsay in Bolam and North and South Charlton in Ellingham there is no record of any formal clerical service after 1563.<sup>6</sup> The same is true of Dishington in Newborn, Bednell in Bamburgh, Fenton in Kirknewton, and Harbottle in Alwinton after January 1578. Pilkington blamed the lack of endowment and consequently of clergy to serve them; lack of demand from the laity may also have persuaded incumbents and tithe-owners to save the stipend of a curate or the trouble of serving the cure.

Some compensation for the consequent loss of opportunity for unbeneficed clergy was offered by the establishment of new livings outside the traditional pattern of ecclesiastical benefices. At the beginning of the period only three appointments in the diocese offered the unbeneficed minister some security beyond the immediate needs or whims of the incumbent or tithe owner. At the dissolution of the colleges at Darlington and Staindrop provision had been made for stipendiary assistants as well as "vicars".<sup>7</sup> The third position

5. Ibid.

6. B.L. Harl. MS. 594, ff. 193-4; there was an unlicensed preacher at Belsay c. 1619. D.R. VIII.2, ff. 63-5, 77-81, 149-58.

7. D.M. Loades, 'The Collegiate Churches of Co. Durham at the time of their Dissolution', S.C.H. iv. 71-2.

afforded far greater prestige and a better material reward, as well as setting a precedent for the future. In the early years of Elizabeth's reign a preacher was appointed to Berwick to serve the needs of the garrison and a preacher or lecturer assisted the vicar there throughout the period.<sup>8</sup> Lectureships were later sponsored elsewhere by individuals or town corporations. With schools, new and old, and charitable institutions they served to enlarge the horizons of clergy in search of a living.<sup>9</sup>

In the archdeaconry of Durham, where there were fewer chapelries, unbeneficed clergy were usually assistants. The conscientious incumbent of a large or populous parish might employ a curate to help with the daily duties of the ministry. Bernard Gilpin, for example, appointed a succession of assistants at Houghton le Spring.<sup>10</sup> Others used such posts to assist a relative or friend at the outset of his career or to provide for the service of a cure in case of old age or infirmity. Both considerations no doubt moved Richard Rivington, rector of Winston, to nominate his son Thomas to a curacy in the 1570s.<sup>11</sup> More frequently assistants were appointed by non-resident or pluralist incumbents in accordance with the canons and injunctions. Administrators, schoolmasters, and

8. S.M. Keeling, 'The Church and Religion in the Anglo-Scottish Borders, 1534-72' (Durham Univ. Ph. D. thesis, 1975), 109-14.

9. Teaching and preaching appointments are discussed below, pp. 257-86, 305-15.

10. Carleton, 'Life of Gilpin', 400-1.

11. In 1578-9 Richard Rivington was excused from the diocesan synod because of ill-health. S.S. xxii. 58, 75, 95.

university scholars all needed caretakers for their benefices, but the major determinant of the employment of curates was pluralism. In 1578 and 1603/5 just under half the parishes in which assistant clergy were to be found were held in plurality and in the 1630s, when the record is less full, they are only mentioned in such parishes. Pluralism rather than any dramatic shortage or series of vacancies also determined the number of beneficed clergy. When the practice was least in use in 1603/5 there were 97 beneficed parish clergy in the diocese, compared with 84 in 1578 and 85 in 1634.<sup>12</sup>

Clearly pluralism also affected the opportunities of those who sought preferment to the ranks of the beneficed clergy, restricting the market for the majority but bringing additional rewards to a few. The variety of forms which a career in the parish ministry might take can be traced in the episcopal registers, incumbency lists, returns to the Exchequer, and visitation lists. These give far more information about beneficed men than unbeneficed but even so they provide an outline of the movements and preferments of clergy within the diocese and hence of the expectations which a Durham ordinand or a minister coming into the diocese might justifiably entertain.

For some, these expectations must always have been low. More than a third of those named in the surveys of 1578 and 1603/5 are traceable in the diocese only as dependent or assistant curates. Although some may have found benefices outside the diocese, a substantial proportion could look forward to little in the way of independence or prosperity. A large group

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<sup>12</sup>. See below, pp.308-10.

of permanently unbeneficed clergy was characteristic of the whole period. Approximately a third of those ordained by Pilkington held no higher preferment, and the figure is closer to half of the ordinands of Barnes and Neile.

As elsewhere, the unbeneficed curates of Durham formed an unstable element in the clerical population.<sup>13</sup> Few of those named more than once or twice in the visitation lists served only in a single cure. Of 76 listed in 1578 who are known to have served only in dependent or assistant curacies, 41 held more than one such appointment, 14 of these serving in three, and 5 in four separate livings. The majority of these moves were completed within the seven years for which the visitation lists of Barnes's episcopate survive. Few bore any sign of being promotions. In one series of related moves in nine parishes between January and July 1578, only one curate was preferred to a benefice and one recent ordinand found a living.<sup>14</sup> In certain livings there was a very rapid turnover of ministers; between 1578 and 1584 there were twelve changes in the dependent chapelries of Earsdon, Cornhill, and Bewick. Independent curacies, where there was no endowed benefice to provide any overall stability, were particularly

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13. Barratt, 'Condition of the Parish Clergy', 50.

14. Leonard Hall gave up the curacy of Earsdon; Thos. Anderson asst. cur. Hartburn became cur. Earsdon; John Wood dep. cur. Lowick became cur. Hartburn; Thomas Savage dep. cur. Cornhill became cur. Lowick; Patrick French cur. Bamburgh became cur. Cornhill; John Naysmith asst. cur. Ellingham became cur. Bamburgh. No cur. was appointed to Ellingham but Robert Copperthwaite asst. cur. Houghton le Spring became vic. there. Dionysius Brerecliffe asst. cur. Cockfield became cur. Houghton le Spring; Bernard Meburne, newly ordained priest, became cur. Cockfield. S.S. xxii. 29-79.

subject to frequent changes in the ministry.<sup>15</sup> Similar instability characterised some parishes where the incumbent was usually a pluralist or non-resident. Bishop Wearmouth, for example, was served by five assistant curates in the decade after 1578.

Some of this mobility may be an illusion created by the need to assign the name of a minister to every cure in the visitation returns. Adam Beatie, listed as curate of Lucker in Bamburgh, in 1578, and of Kyloe in Holy Island in 1585, may not have changed his place of residence to serve the second cure, and perhaps served in any of the chapels of the two parishes. Others who appear to have moved from curacy to curacy did so to suit the convenience of a single master who held more than one living. John Marsh deputised for Leonard Pilkington in the parishes of Whitburn and Middleton in Teesdale, as did Edward Williams and George Hall for Thomas Burton at Stanhope and Kirk Merrington. In contrast, the moves of Robert Toyes, curate in the space of three years of Hartlepool in Hart, Stranton, Hamsterley, and Elwick, probably represent genuinely separate appointments, as his services proved unsatisfactory to a variety of employers or parishioners.<sup>17</sup>

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15. Alnwick and Chester le Street were exceptions to this rule.

16. NOT USED.

17. S.S. xxii. 53, 74, 95; D.R. III.3, f. 160.

The pattern of short and frequently changing curacies rarely lasted for more than a few years. After serving at Lucker and Kylloe, Adam Beatie became curate of Ancroft also in the parish of Holy Island, where he remained for at least twenty years. After two or three appointments to unbeneficed livings, hopes of preferment were perhaps fading and age and family ties eventually discouraged further moves. Towards the end of the 16th century and in the 17th the general mobility of the unbeneficed clergy was apparently declining. The lack of any later parallel to the visitation lists which survive from the 1570s and 1580s is partly responsible for this impression. In the first decade of the 17th century, however, a period for which records are available for the archdeaconry of Durham, fewer men are known to have held more than two or three curacies in succession and amongst those listed c. 1634 such a career is a rarity.

For some a curacy was merely a stepping stone to better things. Of those ordained by Pilkington and Barnes who later served in the diocese, between 20 and 25% progressed from one or more dependent or assistant curacies to an independent living. The figure for Neile's ordinands is somewhat lower, approximately 15%, but once again this is affected by the lack of complete lists of unbeneficed clergy. In every case the figure is a minimum. Many more clergy were instituted to benefices some years after ordination for whom there is no positive record of service in any dependent capacity. At least until the beginning of the 17th century, it was usual for a clergyman who would eventually gain a benefice or ind-

ependent living to serve only in a single curacy as a dependent or assistant. Those few of Neile's ordinands whose careers are known to have conformed to this pattern usually held two curacies. In the first years after ordination, therefore, the distinction between those clergy who would eventually obtain benefices and those who remained in dependent position was becoming less marked. Service in more than one curacy did not necessarily mean a longer wait for a benefice. For those both ordained and beneficed in the diocese the interval remained between four and twelve years, perhaps slightly longer than, for example, in Surrey.<sup>18</sup> Even after a much longer period, all hope of a benefice was not lost. A handful of men were appointed to independent livings twenty or more years after ordination, perhaps the most extreme example being that of William Case. The date of his ordination is not known, although he was born in 1550 and he appears first in the diocesan records as curate of St. Helen's, Auckland, c. 1577-82. No mention has been found of him between that date and 1600 when he was curate of Middleton St. George. Fourteen years later he was presented to the rectory of the same parish, where he remained until his death sometime after 1634.<sup>19</sup>

The curate who was appointed to a benefice where he had previously been an assistant or dependent or to an adjacent living reaped the benefit of local knowledge and connections. Such promotions were never, however, very common in Durham, nor do they seem to have increased in the 17th century as they

18. Christophers, 'Surrey Clergy', 146.

19. D.R. III.11, f. 177; D.R. V.12, ff. 203, 276; D.C.R.O. EP/Au St. H.2.

did, for example, in the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield.<sup>20</sup> They occurred most frequently in independent curacies with a number of dependent chapelries, where the difference between the two types of living was least apparent. In the archdeaconry of Durham certain chapelries also came to be associated with the dependencies of the former collegiate churches. The curate of Ebchester, for example, had often served in the chapelries of the parish of Lanchester. Appointment to an independent curacy was often the final stage in a clerical career. Few went on from these livings to endowed benefices, a marked contrast to the situation in some other dioceses where such appointments were frequently the best road to further preferment.<sup>21</sup>

Few positions in the diocese were notable as steps on the ladder to promotion. The lectureships and teaching posts which were increasingly available were the first appointments in some notable careers, including that of Peter Smart. Amongst those who began their clerical lives as curates, only the ministers of the chapelry of St. John in Newcastle seem to have been outstandingly fortunate in securing preferment. Five of the thirteen curates of this period moved to benefices in the diocese. The livings they obtained may be taken as representative of the benefices acquired by former curates. Humphrey Sicklemore was appointed to the vicarages of Warkworth and Felton, Martin Liddell to the vicarage of Ellingham, John

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20. O'Day, 'Clerical Patronage and Recruitment', 289.

21. Ibid.

Allenson to the rectory of Whickham, Edward Wiggham to the vicarages of Hartburn and Ponteland, and John Shaw to that of Alnham. All but Whickham were of modest value, and Allenson was a man of extraordinary abilities. Sicklemore and Wiggham were unusual in obtaining a second benefice. There were always a few former curates who obtained more than one preferment and even one or two pluralists among them, but the great majority settled in their first benefices, each the incumbent of a single living.

All that is known of the careers of the remaining clergy named in the three lists relates to the possession of independent livings. Throughout the period, there were a few parish clergy fortunate enough to acquire an independent position as soon as they were qualified by ordination to hold it. In the early years some even received institution before ordination.<sup>22</sup> Approximately a fifth of the ordinands of Pilkington and Barnes who are later found serving in the diocese received immediate appointments. By the second decade of the 17th century things were very different. Among Neile's ordinands, the only appointments of this kind were to independent curacies such as Holy Island; all incumbents of endowed benefices had to wait several years after ordination before they were presented.

Amongst the earlier ordinands were men whose arrival in the diocese was closely followed by appointment not only to some of the wealthiest benefices, but also to cathedral stalls and administrative posts where their abilities and qualifications were needed; men such as Robert Swift, Robert Bellamy,

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22. e.g. S.S. clxi. 146, 167.

and Clement Colmore. Benefices also came quickly to the sons of local gentry. Later, as we have seen, neither a degree, nor good birth were passports to a benefice, let alone to a choice living, and the prebendaries and administrators appointed by Neile served their apprenticeships as episcopal chaplains and secretaries.

Not surprisingly, those who found a first benefice most easily also had access to further preferment. Of those named in the three lists whose first appointment was to a benefice or independent living, between a third and half obtained one or more additional livings. Although second, third, or even fourth benefices most commonly went to senior clergy, some who made their careers only in the parishes secured similar preferment. The progress of William Duxfield, however, only seems to have been possible in the first years covered by this study. Ordained priest in either 1563 or 1565, he was presented to the rectory of Bothal in 1564, which he held until 1578, when he was deprived, presumably for pluralism and non-residence. In the meantime, he had also acquired the vicarage of Mitford (1570-2) and the rectory of Sheepwash (1571-87). In 1576 he was presented to the vicarage of Warkworth, but the presentation did not take effect. The year after he had lost Bothal, the dean and chapter of Durham presented him to the vicarage of Ellingham and just before his death in 1587 he added the vicarage of Chillingham to the list.

There was no parallel to Duxfield's career in the rest of the period, the tendency being rather towards a longer tenure of each benefice, whether held singly or in plurality. Of the benefices held by the clergy named in 1578, over 40% were

occupied by a single incumbent for a period of twenty years or more. Amongst the benefices held in 1603/5 and c. 1634, this was true of over 50%; a figure all the more striking in the latter case, since it includes those incumbencies which were cut short or interrupted by the Civil War. As in any diocese, there were a few men whose tenure of a single benefice was of extraordinary length. James Orpyn, for example, was presented to the rectory of Middleton St. George in 1532 and was only replaced in 1584, but only five or six clergy had careers as long or as settled.

Appointment to a parochial benefice was occasionally a step on the way to higher ecclesiastical dignity. A very few parish clergy ended their careers as bishops. Thomas Wood, rector of Whickham from 1634 until his ejection during the Civil War, became dean and then bishop of Lichfield after the Restoration. Favoured prebendaries might more justifiably hope for such a conclusion to their careers; Augustine Lindsell was bishop successively of Peterborough and Hereford. John Cosin returned to Durham after the Restoration as bishop from 1660 to 1672.<sup>23</sup> Another sixteen clergy served for some years in Durham or Northumberland parishes before appointment to canonries or archdeaconries in one of the northern dioceses. Twelve of the thirty seven canons appointed to Durham between 1570 and 1640 had previous experience of the parochial ministry within the diocese.<sup>24</sup> Most had also had university careers

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23. D.N.B. On Cosin's episcopate see J.D. Brearly, 'Discipline and local government in Durham diocese, 1660-72', (Durham Univ. M.A. thesis, 1974).

24. P. Mussett, Deans and Major Canons of Durham, (priv. print. 1974), passim.

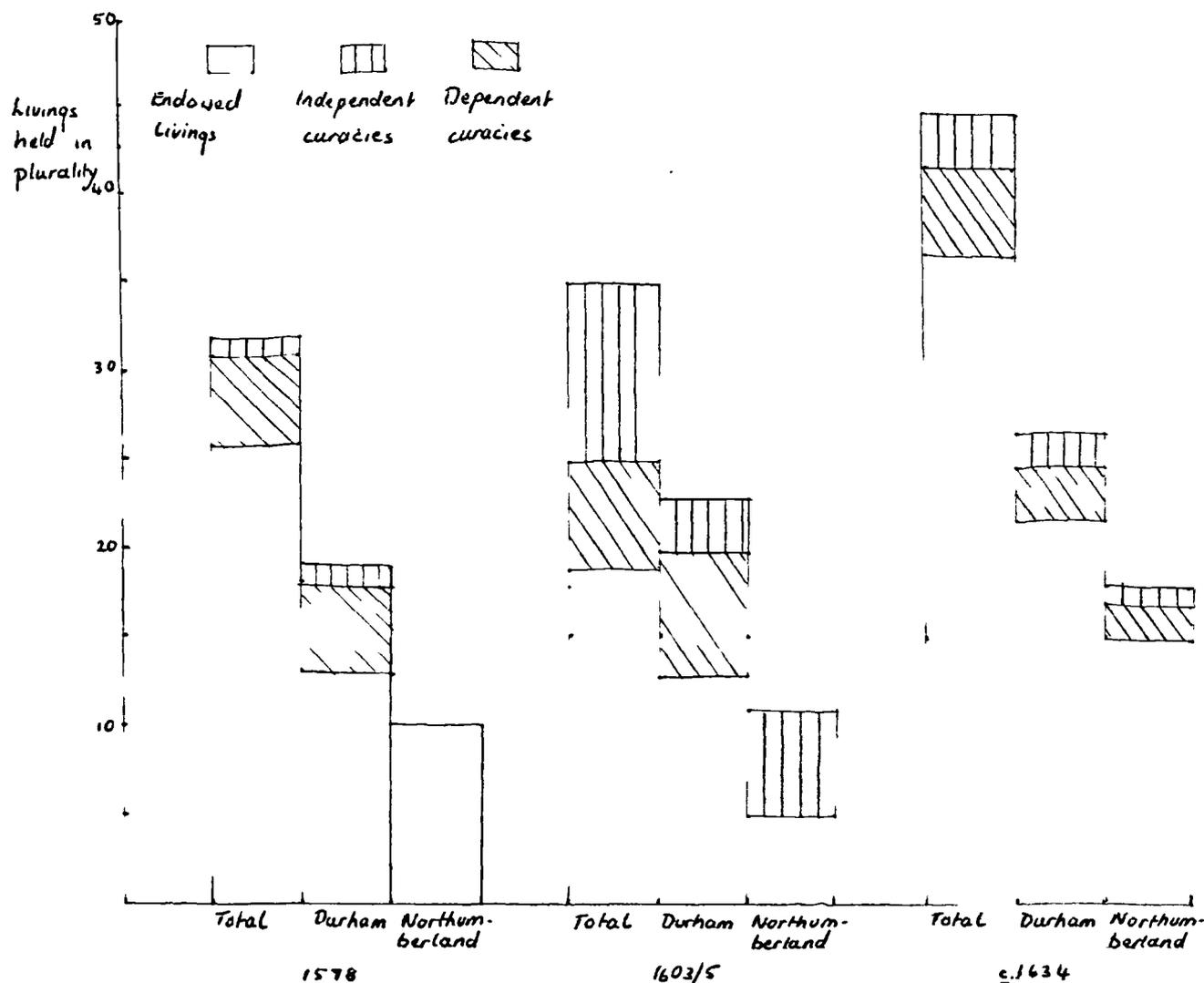
of some distinction or obtained their seniority through family connections or noble patronage. Two prebendaries, however, James Rand and John Calfill, served unusually long terms, of twenty years or more, in their parishes before being presented to cathedral stalls. Occasionally the diligent performance of his pastoral duties by a clergyman of ability met with recognition and material reward, apparently without the help of influential patrons.

ii. Pluralism and non-residence.

Some of the implications of pluralism for the clergy have been mentioned above. Where benefices were held in plurality, opportunities for preferment were restricted and the demand for unbeneficed clergy increased. For the laity, pluralism implied some degree of non-residence on the part of their minister and the service of a deputy. The effects on the parish were the same whether the pastor was serving another cure, away at university, or absent for some less justifiable reason. If his deputy were adequate, the parish might be as well served as by the incumbent himself. If the incumbent's concern was chiefly for his own profit, the curate might be the cheapest and least able of ministers.

To summarise the importance of pluralism and non-residence in this way is to simplify a complex and changing situation. Even the extent of pluralism was by no means constant. The following table illustrates the incidence of pluralism in 1578, 1603/5, and c. 1634.

Table v.



The overall picture is one of gradual increase. If, however, pluralism amongst the beneficed clergy alone is considered, a different pattern emerges. In 1578 24% of benefices in the diocese were held in plurality, a minimum figure since several clergy who held more than one cure before and after that date were then either suspended or had temporarily resigned their cures.<sup>25</sup> By the early 17th century the proportion had dropped

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25. e.g. John Magbray, vic. Billingham and Newcastle, and Arthur Shaftoe, vic. Stamfordham and Chollerton. S.S. xxii. 71-2.

to 18%, 19 benefices being affected. The trend was not maintained and by the 1630s over a third of all endowed benefices were held in plurality. The pattern is in keeping with that which has been suggested for the country as a whole, of a decline in pluralism in the late 16th century followed by a revival in the decades immediately preceding the Civil War.<sup>26</sup>

The later increase was almost entirely among the group traditionally identified and villified as collectors of benefices;<sup>27</sup> the favoured group of senior clergy and episcopal protégés who always dominated the wealthiest livings. The combination of a canonry with a parish living was a form of pluralism, although it only involved one cure of souls. The statutes of Durham cathedral assumed that many, if not all, members of the chapter would also hold parochial benefices.<sup>28</sup> Similarly the annexation of the rectories of Howick and Easington to the archdeaconries set a precedent for the combination of administrative office and a parish ministry. Many senior clergy also held more than one parish. In 1578 and

26. Barratt, 'Condition of the Parish Clergy', 137-8. In Surrey, however, the increase in pluralism had begun by 1603. Christophers, 'Surrey Clergy', 136.

27. e.g. in Bernard Gilpin's sermon addressed to Edw. VI. Gilpin, Life of Gilpin, 262-4.

28. S.S. cxliii. 111. Cf. Marcombe, 'Dean and Chapter', 271-308.

1603/5 eleven parochial benefices in Durham and Northumberland were held by six or seven senior clergy. Twelve shared twenty livings c. 1634; Ferdinand Moorcroft was then probably rector of Stanhope, vicar of Heighington, and stipendiary vicar of Staindrop, as well as canon of the 6th stall.<sup>29</sup> The senior appointments held by the pluralists of the 1630s were more varied than those of their predecessors, whose careers had generally been confined to Durham and the other northern dioceses. John Cosin, for example, a canon of Durham and rector of two Durham parishes, was not only archdeacon of the East Riding (1625-1660) but also master of Peterhouse, Cambridge (1635-44, 1660). Augustine Lindsell held only one parish, Houghton le Spring, in addition to his prebend, but he was also for four years Dean of Lichfield. Lindsell, Cosin, and most of their immediate colleagues served in the archdeaconry of Durham. The legal limit on the distance between cures held in plurality and the need to attend business in the city of Durham and at Bishop Auckland made livings in the southern archdeaconry both more acceptable and more convenient. There, also, was the highest concentration of wealthy livings in episcopal or capitular gift. Perhaps as a result, pluralism was never as extensive in Northumberland as in Durham.<sup>30</sup>

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29. Moorcroft resigned Stanhope on 25 Nov. 1625 and was presented to the same living the following day. Other evidence shows that he held the rectory until his death in 1641. D.R. I.4, pp. 83-4.

30. Only two Northumberland pluralists of that date were in particular favour with the diocesan or higher authorities; Yeldard Alvey, vic. Newcastle, 1631-45, and Eglington, 1627-48, and Gilbert Durie, vic. Berwick, 1613-c. 40, and Ellingham, 1623-c. 40.

Pluralism was by no means restricted to these men of influence. Minor canons and other cathedral staff filled the vicarages and curacies of the city of Durham and its immediate surrounds. Even unbeneficed clergy could hold or serve more than one living, to increase their own stipends or save their employers money. St. John's Chapel in Wear-dale was frequently served by the assistant curate of the mother church at Stanhope. In Northumberland it was common to assign more than one dependent chapel to a single curate; in 1605 this happened in five parishes. Holders of independent curacies or poor livings might also undertake an assistant or dependent cure. Richard Milner was curate of both Lanchester and its dependency of Eshe in the 1570s and 1580s and probably received the stipends assigned to both churches. A more unusual arrangement was that maintained by James Handley, vicar of Alnham from 1609 until his death in 1638, and perhaps also curate of the adjoining chapelry of Alwinton towards the end of his life. Before his appointment to Alnham he had been assistant curate in the parish of Middleton in Teesdale and he continued to reside and serve there, under a succession of wealthy rectors, while keeping a curate in his turn at Alnham.<sup>31</sup>

The humble pluralist usually had good cause to seek some augmentation of his income. There were, however, only two instances in Durham of that piecemeal union of parishes which has been seen as the contemporary solution to clerical poverty

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31. D. and C. Libr., Sharpe MS. 49, p. 172; Alnwick Castle, Sion MS, Q.III. 2a. 5; D.R. Prob. 1638, will of James Handley.

in adjacent livings.<sup>32</sup> In 1593 the parishioners of Witton Gilbert and of Kimblesworth agreed

"that ever hereafter it shall be lawfull for the said Parishioners of Kymblesworth in respect of their want of a church at Kymblesworth to come to the said church of Witton aforesaid to divine service and sacraments, and whatsoever other rites, viz. burials, weddings and churchings accordingly as the law requireth."

Provision was made for the consent of the bishop and the dean, as the two parishes were under the jurisdiction of the chapter, and for payments to Witton church by the people of Kimblesworth. The immediate purpose was to ensure that the parishioners of Kimblesworth could attend service when their own church was beyond repair, but the arrangement was equally convenient for the clergyman who served both cures. Lawrence Pilkington, a connection of the episcopal family, had done so even before this time, and they continued to be held jointly throughout the period.<sup>33</sup> A similar arrangement was made in the contiguous parishes of Bothal and Sheepwash in Northumberland, although there is no record of the parishioners using a single church. Both rectories were held by one incumbent from the 1570s; he received a substantial combined income of £260 by the 1630s of which only £20 was from Sheepwash.<sup>34</sup>

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32. Barratt, 'Condition of the Parish Clergy', 151-2.

33. Surtees, Hist. Durham, ii. 375.

34. D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 19.11.

The decline in pluralism at the beginning of the 17th century was chiefly amongst the poorer clergy and those who held endowed benefices of moderate value. By the 1630s, however, a number of such livings were once again held in plurality, although the increase was not as marked as among the benefices held by the senior clergy. The change was most evident in Northumberland, where over half the livings held in plurality at that time had been among the poorest in the diocese in 1535. Their value had increased extraordinarily in the intervening century and men such as Charles Oxley, vicar of Ellingham and Chillingham, received a very adequate income. There is nothing, therefore, to suggest that the general increase in pluralism marked a growing distance between the very poor and the very wealthy among the parish clergy.

That pluralism prevented a minister giving his full time and attention to a single cure of souls and so constituted an abuse was never disputed, although the practice was frequently excused on other grounds.<sup>35</sup> Within the diocese control of the abuse and its effects were the responsibility of the bishop and his officers, working within an increasingly clear framework of national and provincial regulation. Since 1529 those whose social or educational qualifications set them apart from the rest of the clergy could obtain the dispensations which had become necessary to hold in plurality any benefice valued

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35. R.M.Haines, 'Some arguments in favour of plurality in the Elizabethan church,' S.C.H. v. 177-9.

at £8 p.a. or above.<sup>36</sup> They included chaplains either to the monarch, privy councillors, members of the nobility, or bishops, the brothers and sons of knights or men of higher rank, and those who had attained the degrees at least of bachelor of Divinity or of Civil Law. The maximum distance between benefices was set at 26 miles by the Canons of 1571, and extended to 30 miles in 1604, when the late-16th-century requirement that the incumbent should reside for a "reasonable time" at each cure was reiterated. Regulations governing the quality of curates or deputies were perhaps stricter in the province of York than in the south. Archbishop Piers's provincial articles of 1590 required a "sufficient minister, well able to preach or catechise youth, and orderly distinctly and reverently to read prayers and administer the Sacraments". In the Orders for York of the following year it was stipulated that a "godly preacher" be maintained by all those lawfully absent from their cures. In contrast there was no requirement for a preaching curate in the southern province until 1603. The Canons then modified the York regulations, allowing absentee incumbents to claim that they could not afford to pay a suitably qualified man.<sup>37</sup>

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36. 21 Hen.VII, c. 33. There was some dispute whether the minimum of £8 p.a. referred to the valuation in the King's Books or the current value. Laud obtained a ruling that reference was to be the assessment of 1535. C. Hill, Economic Problems of the Church, 240-1. That seems to have been the practice in Durham throughout the period.

37. The development of the law on pluralities is discussed by Barratt, 'Condition of the Parish Clergy', 136-46. Regulations for the northern province are printed in W.M. Kennedy, Elizabethan Episcopal Administration, iii. 259.

Only six dispensations were granted for Durham during the 1560s, one of the lowest figures in the country at a time when there is nothing to suggest that pluralism in the diocese was unusually limited.<sup>38</sup> Although dispensations may not have been obtained, or recorded, some relevant qualification can be assigned to most of those holding in plurality in each of the three lists. The most common were the poverty of the benefice and the possession of higher degrees. Some of those with sufficient academic standing were also episcopal chaplains and thus doubly qualified. Chaplains to the nobility are more difficult to trace but in one case it is clear that such an appointment was merely a passport to a second benefice. Thomas Warwick added the vicarage of Morland in the diocese of Carlisle to his Northumberland rectory of Morpeth immediately after becoming chaplain to Lord Scrope in 1567.<sup>39</sup> Durham pluralists were rather more likely to offend against the regulation governing the distance between benefices than to be inadequately furnished with the means of exemption from the terms of the 1529 Act. In 1578 Leonard Pilkington and Richard Marshall both held livings within the diocese which were more than 26 miles apart; both, however, had been presented to these livings before the ruling of 1571 was made.<sup>40</sup> Later offenders usually held their second benefices outside the diocese.

The qualifications and service of pluralists and other

38. Barratt, op. cit. 146.

39. D. and C. Libr., Raine MS. 124, f. 50; Hunter MS. 6, p. 211; cf. Hill, Economic Problems, 231.

40. Pilkington was rec. Whitburn and Middleton in Teesdale; Marshall was rec. Stainton and vic. Corbridge.

non-residents were subject to careful scrutiny. When Arthur Shaftoe of Stamfordham and Chollerton proffered a dispensation granted by Cardinal Pole it was rejected by the bishop as invalid.<sup>41</sup> Shaftoe, however, kept his livings. Excuses for non-residence might also be found insufficient; William Tallentire, rector of Morpeth, and holder of livings in York and Carlisle, was unable to convince the Durham authorities that his university studies were sufficient justification for the neglect of his cure. When Henry Naunton, vicar of Gainford, proffered a similar explanation in 1576, it was accepted, perhaps because his college, Trinity Cambridge, was the patron of his living.<sup>42</sup> In the early 17th century the effects of non-residence were carefully noted and action taken against those responsible. Between 1595 and 1605 at least six cases were brought on grounds of neglect before the chancellor or his deputy in their visitations of Northumberland. The lack of hospitality, sick-visiting, preaching, and the decay of clerical property were all associated with clerical absenteeism and pluralism.<sup>43</sup>

To combat these problems the authorities could use the weapons of sequestration and ultimately deprivation of the incumbent. The extreme penalty was imposed on three known occasions between 1565 and 1575, a decade when pluralists came under heavy pressure in the diocese.<sup>44</sup> The incumbent might

41. S.S. xxii. 71-2; D.R. III.3, f. 117

42. S.S. xxii. 173; D.R. V.4, f. 136.

43. D.R. II.4, ff. 17-8; D.R. II.5, ff. 3, 13, 73, 143.

44. D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 5, 57; *ibid.* 6, p. 151.

take the initiative and resign, perhaps only temporarily while a legal qualification was established and adequate provision made for the service of a second benefice. John Magbray's resignation of the vicarages of Newcastle and Billingham, when prosecuted for neglect of the latter, lasted less than a year.<sup>45</sup> If the pressure were sufficient, the incumbent might give up his benefice permanently. After eight years of harassment William Talentire resigned the rectory of Rothbury in 1584.<sup>46</sup> The offender was also open to civil proceedings; the statute of 1529 provided that every infringement should meet with a fine of £20 to be divided between the Crown and the informer who reported the offence.<sup>47</sup> Information was laid in the Exchequer in 1574-5 against Leonard Pilkington, as rector of Middleton in Teesdale, Robert Swift, as rector of Sedgfield, and William Watson, as vicar of Bedlington, for offences under the Act. The informant, unfortunately unnamed, presumably hoped to gain his share of any subsequent fines.<sup>48</sup>

After the first decade of the 17th century, any efforts to control the effects of pluralism and its irregular practice are concealed by the scarcity of court and visitation records. All these measures, however, should be seen against the background of episcopal acceptance and even encouragement of pluralism within the bounds of the law. Episcopal and capitular patronage were responsible for the profusion of livings held by senior

45. S.S. xxii. 72

46. Borth. Inst. Hist. Res., High Comm. Act. Bk. VIII, f. 46.

47. 21 Hen. VIII, c. 33.

48. D. and C. Libr., Raine MS. 124, ff. 178-9.

clergy. Bernard Gilpin, an idealist in an extraordinarily wealthy living, could afford to condemn the practice out of hand.<sup>49</sup> Most of his colleagues expected a succession of benefices as the reward for their abilities and services, and were not averse to holding them in <sup>6</sup>plurality. The bishops in their turn used this as a means to establish and strengthen their following in the diocese. Neile, especially, was charged with confining his patronage to a favoured few who reaped excessive rewards for their loyalty. Peter Smart alleged that he maintained

"Schismaticall hereticall and traiterous Arminians and Papists, Cosin, Lindsell, Burgoin, Duncan etc., to heap livings and church dignities upon his creatures and favourites ..... seven or eight a peece, above all meane and measure."<sup>50</sup>

His concern, however, was principally with their theological allegiance. Pluralism was a good stick with which to beat an opponent, especially when wildly exaggerated, as in this case, carrying as it did the implication of neglect of pastoral duty. The basic practice even Smart did not attack and it continued largely unquestioned by the ecclesiastical establishment in Durham.

### iii. Patronage

The type, value, and number of a man's livings were determined by patronage. Every ecclesiastical living was in

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49. Gilpin, Life of Gilpin, 262-6.

50. P. Smart, 'A Short Treatise of Altars', quoted in S.S.  
xxxiv. 202.

the gift of an individual or corporation, the true and current owner of the right of presentation or appointment, to whose nominee the bishop was bound to grant either licence or institution, unless the candidate were manifestly unsuitable.<sup>51</sup> An advowson, even of the meanest living, was a piece of property to be valued and defended. So thought the vicar of Gainford and two local gentlemen, George and Percival Tonge, when they contested the right to appoint a curate at Denton at the end of the 16th century. Eventually the vicar was successful in his claim that Denton was a dependency of Gainford and thus rightfully in his gift.<sup>52</sup> Beneficed clergy were the most common patrons of their unbeneficed colleagues; in 1624, for example, Christopher Burwell was licensed as curate in the parish of Sedgefield on the petition of the rector, Marmaduke Blakiston.<sup>53</sup> At Haltwhistle, however, the lay impropiator, rather than the vicar appointed and paid the curate of the dependent chapel of Beltingham. In wholly inappropriate parishes the pattern was similar, although if the lay owner neglected his responsibility the parishioners might take it upon themselves to provide a curate as they did in the chapelries of the parish of St. Andrew Auckland in the 1560s.<sup>54</sup>

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51. The legal framework of the system of ecclesiastical patronage is described by R. O'Day, 'The law of patronage in early modern England', Jnl. Ecc. Hist. xxvi. 247-60.

52. D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 5, p. 141; Surtees, Hist. Durham, iv. 6.

53. D.R. I.4, f. 72.

54. E 178/3265.

The most striking feature of the distribution of the advowsons of benefices and independent livings in the diocese was the predominance of episcopal patronage. In the 1560s of 107 advowsons whose true owners have been identified, 31 belonged to the bishop of Durham.<sup>55</sup> The parochial benefices to which the bishop presented were wealthy as well as numerous, especially in the archdeaconry of Durham. They included six rectories valued at over £50 p.a. in 1535, among them Houghton le Spring, then said to be worth £124 p.a. The bishop's patronage in Northumberland was less extensive, but still accounted for approximately one fifth of all benefices in the archdeaconry, most of them of at least moderate value. The bishop also presented to the two archdeaconries, with the rectories of Howick and Easington annexed, and to the twelve prebends in Durham cathedral. As a result episcopal control over the diocesan clergy was probably considerably greater than in many other parts of the country.<sup>56</sup>

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55. The discussion of the ownership of advowsons is based on information from county histories, episcopal registers, institution books, (P.R.O. indices to E 331, bps.' certificates of institutions), parliamentary surveys, (Lambeth MSS. Comm. XII a/13/120-197; Comm. XII a/4/67-181). Included in the 31 livings in episcopal gift are two where the identity of the de iure patron is not entirely clear. Long Newton is said to have been in the gift of the Conyers family before the Rebellion of 1569 but the bishop collated in 1562. Mackenzie and Ross, County Palatine, ii. 66; S.S. clxi, p. 144. The advowson of Kirkwhelpington was granted with others to the earl of Northumberland in 1557 but there also the bishop collated in 1565. Cal. Pat. 1557-8, 188; S.S. clxi, p. 148.

56. e.g. in the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield. O'Day, 'Clerical Patronage and Recruitment', 212.

Even where the bishop himself was not the patron ecclesiastical influence was strong. Most livings within the Officialty were in the gift of the dean and chapter of Durham, who presented to eleven benefices in Durham and a further seven in Northumberland.<sup>57</sup> The archdeacon of Northumberland held a single advowson, that of the rectory of St. Mary in the North Bailey of the city of Durham, although he rarely exercised the right of presentation. In Northumberland, the bishop of Carlisle was patron of four benefices, among them the key vicarage of Newcastle and the less important but valuable rectory of Rothbury. The dean and chapter of Carlisle presented to the vicarages of Corbridge and Whittingham. University colleges and charitable foundations also exercised a quasi-ecclesiastical influence. The master and brethren of Sherburn House presented to the three small parishes of Sockburn, Bishopton, and Grindon in south Durham and the hospital at Greatham held the rectory and advowson of the parish. Only one benefice in Durham was in the gift of a college; Gainford, to which Trinity College, Cambridge, presented. In Northumberland, Merton College held the advowsons of Ponteland and Embleton and Balliol College that of Long Benton.

The remaining benefices, just under half the total, were subject to lay patronage. The greatest lay patron in the

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57. Including Ellingham, the advowson of which was granted to Northumberland in 1557, but to which the priory and chapter presented before and after that date. Cal. Pat. 1557-8, 188; S.S. clxi. 139, 148.

diocese, as in the country as a whole, was the Crown.<sup>58</sup> Fourteen benefices in Northumberland and eight in Durham were in the monarch's gift, the majority vicarages of little value. In 1570 the Crown also held two much more valuable livings, Middleton in Teesdale and Simonburn, for which there was considerable competition.<sup>59</sup> The only other layman with extensive ecclesiastical patronage in the diocese was the earl of Northumberland. When the Percy estates and titles were restored in 1557, the grant included the advowsons of Long Houghton, Ellingham, Alnham, Chatton, Warkworth, Long Horsley, Kirkwhelpington, and Newburn, all in Northumberland. The earl does not seem to have exercised his rights in all the parishes but in the 1560s he presented to at least four and possibly five of them.<sup>60</sup> Three other noble families held advowsons. The Nevilles presented to the rectory of the South Bailey in Durham and to Brancepeth. The lords of Ogle and Bothal were patrons of Bothal itself and of the adjacent living of Sheepwash. Morpeth rectory was in the gift of the Dacres. The remaining lay patrons were for the most part gentry whose estates lay in or near the parishes to which they presented. In Northumberland advowsons were sometimes shared between two or three families. At Alston the living was by turns in the gift of the Hilton, Archer, and Whitfield families, and the right of presentation was shared between Ogles,

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58. Barratt, 'Condition of the Parish Clergy', 388;

Christophers, 'Surrey Clergy', 191.

59. See below, pp. 111-15 .

60. Cal. Pat. 1557-8, 188. The right of presentation is known to have been exercised at Alnmouth, Chatton, Long Horsley, Long Houghton.

Dentons, and Collingwoods at Ingram. Less usual was the division of the advowson at Tynemouth from the beginning of the 17th century. The earl of Northumberland and Sir Ralph Delaval were joint owners of the rectory and on at least one occasion they also joined to present a single candidate to the vicarage.<sup>61</sup>

Lay influence was stronger in the donative livings, wholly inappropriate parishes whose curates needed only an episcopal licence to serve, than in endowed benefices where the incumbents received institution from the bishop. The largest number of such parishes was held by the Crown. The former collegiate churches of St. Andrew Auckland and Lanchester were often leased to lay farmers, as were other similar livings. These and other donatives were thus in the gift of local noble or gentry families, most prominent amongst them the Forsters of Adderstone and of Bamburgh. In the late 16th century Sir John Forster appointed ministers to Bamburgh and Carham as the Crown's lessee. He was also farmer and patron of Hexham and its chapelries.<sup>62</sup> There were also five independent chapelries within the Officialty in the gift of the dean and chapter and appointment to the curacy of Ebchester was by the master and brethren of Sherburn House.

In Durham during this period, there was no exchange with the Crown to increase the episcopal share of advowsons and impropriations at the expense of landed estates, as at York,

61. Alnwick Castle, Sion MS. Q.II. 6.2; D.R. I.4, p. 56.

62. D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 7.2; Cal. Pat. 1566-9, pp. 250-4; Hist. Northumberland, 93-4.

or to substitute less desirable livings for the wealthy benefices previously in the gift of the bishop, as at Worcester.<sup>63</sup> Such redistribution as there was affected almost exclusively advowsons held by laymen. Initially the patronage of the Crown was considerably increased by the confiscation of the estates of the rebels of 1569, including the advowsons held by Westmorland, Northumberland, and Dacre. From this confiscation, however, the only permanent gains made by the Crown were the advowsons of Morpeth and Brancepeth. Presentation to the church of St. Mary in the South Bailey, as to its sister church, was a rare occurrence and its acquisition was of little significance. Most of the Percy livings were returned and by the 17th century the earl of Northumberland's patronage was, if anything, more extensive than it had been in the 1560s, since the advowson of Ilderton and a share in Tynemouth had been added to those formerly held by the Percy family.<sup>64</sup>

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63. Barratt, 'Condition of the Parish Clergy', 354-5;  
C. Cross, 'The Economic Problems of the See of York',  
Land, Church, and People (Ag. H. R. Suppt. 1970) ed.  
J. Thirsk, 69-73.

64. The date of the return of Percy patronage has not been traced in every case; the return of advowsons and the acquisition of new patronage was apparently complete by the second decade of the 17th century.

The purchase of Tynemouth by Northumberland and Sir Ralph Delaval is one instance of the passage of Crown patronage into the hands of the local nobility and gentry before the Civil War. In Durham, presentations to the rectory of Cockfield were made by the Ewbanke family from 1629. The re-endowment of a vicarage at Staindrop in 1635 was accompanied by the transfer of the advowson to Sir Henry Vane. At Stranton, a Yorkshire family, the Dodsworths, were named as patrons in the Commonwealth survey of ecclesiastical livings of 1649-50. In Northumberland, Tynemouth, Chillingham, Simonburn, Warden, and Whalton all passed from the Crown's control, some as early as the 1570s. When George Hume, earl of Dunbar, was established as a major landowner in the north-east at the beginning of the 17th century by the Crown, he also acquired the advowsons to a number of livings in Northumberland including Simonburn.<sup>65</sup> Most of those who gained by grants and sales were men of lesser standing and stronger local connections. The same was true of those who acquired rights over the independent chapelries previously belonging to the Crown. Alwinton passed through the hands of Dunbar and his Howard successors to the families of Widdrington and Selby and Castle Eden and Chester le Street were similarly disposed of to county families.

Although the patronage of perhaps twenty benefices and independent livings changed hands by sale or grant during the period, in addition to those where the rights were transferred by marriage or inheritance, there seems to have been very little confusion over the de iure ownership of advowsons.

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65. On Hume's career in the north-east see S. Watts and S. J. Watts, From Border to Middle Shire, 138-56.

Only two instances of such confusion are known. In 1580 the master and brethren of Sherburn presented George Swallowwell to the vicarage of Kelloe but the bishop refused him institution since the vicarage had already been collated to Roger Wilson.<sup>66</sup> Four years later the registrar entered a marginal note beside the record of the institution of Humphrey Green, presented by the Crown to Long Horsley. At the last vacancy, he recalled,

"the Right Honourable Henrie Erle of Northumberland and Sir John Forster wer the parties that severallie maid title and upon inquisition yt was found then to belong to nether partie. Imediatlie after Humphrey Greene procured the said presentacion from her Majestie and after did resigne the said vicaragdge etc. doubting of the right for that the Erle prosecuted the triall."

The earl was apparently successful, since two years later his presentation of John Barker was accepted without objection.<sup>67</sup>

On many occasions the right of presentation was exercised or influenced by someone other than the de iure patron.<sup>68</sup> A formal grant of the next presentation might be made by the true owner or the patron might fail to present a satisfactory candidate within the stipulated period, allowing the right to lapse to the bishop and ultimately to the Crown. Of the 250 presentations to benefices recorded in the three surviving registers 29 were made by someone other than the original patron by one of these means. Less formal influence could also be brought to bear when the candidate found someone to recommend

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66. D.R. I.3, f.88.

67. Ibid. f. 15.

68. Cf. O'Day, 'Law of Patronage'; R. O'Day, 'The Ecclesiastical Patronage of the Lord Keeper, 1558-1642', Trans. R.H.S. 5th ser. xxiii. 89-105.

him to a patron.

The incidence of grants of the next presentation to a living cannot be assessed with any precision without a full series of registers or presentation deeds. On the available evidence, they were most common in Durham in the years immediately following the Settlement. Eight of the forty four appointments made in the first nine years of Pilkington's episcopate were of this kind. Only two were by virtue of grants made by the monasteries before the Dissolution, a major source of grants pro hac vice elsewhere in the country at the time.<sup>69</sup> There were six such presentations among the fifty made between 1570 and 1579 and grants pro hac vice accounted for only two appointments in the whole of Barnes's episcopate. The practice became slightly more common once again under Neile but even so no more than a tenth of presentations during his episcopate were made by virtue of grants of next presentation. During the first two decades after the Settlement there was also most uncertainty over rights of presentation, much of it the product of grants of patronage for a single turn. When a vacancy occurred in the rectory of Rothbury in 1566, the owners of several outstanding grants laid claim to the next presentation and the bishop ordered an inquisition to be held to establish the precedence of these claims.<sup>70</sup>

Direct evidence of any payment or other benefit in exchange for such grants is difficult to find. No-one seems to have found the cash value of an advowson consistently more

69. Barratt, 'Condition of the Parish Clergy', 366.

70. D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 6, pp. 159-63.

attractive than the exercise of the patronage itself. The major ecclesiastical patrons, the bishop and the dean and chapter of Durham, made very few grants of next presentation. Only one grant by a bishop is recorded in the registers, that by Bishop Barnes to his brother John and Richard Frankeleyne of Yorkshire, which resulted in the presentation of Robert Bellamy to Houghton le Spring. The legality of the grant is doubtful since the Canons of 1571 forbade bishops to transfer rights of presentation to livings in their gift.<sup>71</sup> The few grants that were made by the dean and chapter were usually to members of the chapter and by the 1630s most specified the clergyman who was to be presented.<sup>72</sup> The dean and chapter of Carlisle and to a greater extent the bishop were more willing to dispose of their patronage in Durham. The bishop was patron of Rothbury, the example of the confusion which could arise from grants of the next presentation quoted above. During Pilkington's episcopate all but two nominations to livings where the bishop of Carlisle owned the advowson were made by grantees. Distance perhaps discouraged the senior clergy of Carlisle from a more active interest in the exercise of their Durham patronage. The same explanation may be given for the frequent grants of the advowson of Long Benton made by Balliol College. The poverty of the living may also have affected the decision, as other university colleges themselves presented to benefices in the diocese. Apart from one or two grants made by the hospitals, the rest were made by lay patrons. None made a

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71. P.K. D. and C. Mun., Chap. Act Bks. 1578-83, 1619-38, 1639-61, passim.

72. *Ibid.* 1619-38, passim.

habit of granting away patronage; the general impression is that lay patrons were rather less inclined to make such grants than their ecclesiastical contemporaries.

The majority of those who received grants of presentation pro hac vice were laymen. Occasionally the true patron passed the right to another member of his family; in 1625, for example, the presentation to the sinecure rectory of Middleton St. George was made by William Killinghall by grant from the head of his family.<sup>73</sup> Rights were also transferred from patrons outside the diocese to local men. George Marley obtained the advowson of Elton from the Erringtons, a Yorkshire family, in 1621. Marley was described as a yeoman in the episcopal register and only by such a grant could men of less than gentle rank directly influence the nomination of parish clergy. Another group excluded from de iure patronage within the diocese were merchants and tradesmen. Surprisingly few grants, however, were made to men of mercantile or urban background.<sup>74</sup>

Although there was obviously a market for advowsons, some patrons failed to use their rights and so allowed the presentation to lapse after six months to the diocesan and, if there were further delay, successively to the metropolitan and the Crown. There were no archiepiscopal presentations during the period and the Crown presented to only two benefices in the diocese on these grounds between 1559 and 1616. The bishops, especially Pilkington and Barnes, found their own patronage

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73. D.R. I.4, pp. 81-2.

74. e.g. Long Benton was in the gift of a Newcastle merchant in 1571 and of a citizen of London in 1621. S.S. clxi, p. 168; D.R. I.4, p. 40.

considerably augmented by the lapse of others' rights. Especially remarkable was the extent to which the dean and chapter allowed their patronage to fall into the bishop's hands. In the early years this may have been the result of differences within the chapter over the selection of candidates. The most Protestant prebendaries were perhaps willing to trust Pilkington to present men whom they would consider suitable.<sup>75</sup> By the 17th century the chapter showed no such hesitation and Neile only once presented to a capitular living. Bishop Pilkington also presented to livings in the gift of each of the university colleges and hospitals. Lay patrons were usually more careful in the exercise of their rights; only one lay advowson is known to have reverted to the bishop on more than one occasion.<sup>76</sup>

Failing direct contact with the patron of a living, the clergyman in search of a benefice might still hope that others would intercede on his behalf. The bishop, the chapter, and the colleges all had numerous candidates to hand amongst their dependents, protégés, and members and were thus less likely to be open to recommendations from outside. Of the other patrons, those at a great distance from the diocese were most amenable

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75. Marcombe, 'Dean and Chapter', 317-8.

76. The Strother family allowed the presentation to the vicarage of Kirknewton to lapse to the bp. in 1579 and 1581, perhaps as they pressed their claim to treat the living as a donative. D.R. I.3, ff. f, 9; Sta. Cha. 8/266/11.

to such suggestions. Thus in April 1617 one of the earl of Northumberland's officers, Thomas Fotherley, informed his absent master of the recent death of the vicar of Long Houghton. The archdeacon of Northumberland, John Craddock, had since approached Fotherley, asking him to obtain the benefice for "a poore scholler of his".

"If your Lordship have not disposed of it alreadie, I desier to have the preferring of this man to the same. It is a thing of small value, yett I could procure xx<sup>li</sup> for it; which I will pay Mr[sic] for at the next Auditt".

Even before this, another servant, Captain George Whitehead had begged the earl to send down "an advowson in my name", promising to be "as good a husbände to make a good bargaine for your honour as I may"; the bargain would be all the better the sooner the advowson was forwarded. Unfortunately it is impossible to tell which if either petitioner was successful.<sup>77</sup>

The greatest and in many ways the most distant of lay patrons was the Crown and recommendations to livings in the royal gift are the best recorded. Most of those in the diocese were at the disposal of the Lord Keeper, either because they were valued at less than £20 p.a. in 1535 or because they had lapsed to the Crown during the vacancy of the see. The records of the Lord Keeper's patronage for two periods, 1559-82 and 1596-1616 include the names not only of the appointees but also of those who supported their candidacy.<sup>78</sup> The

77. Alnwick Castle, Sion MS. Q.III. 2.a. 5; Q.III. 2.k. 3.

78. B.L. Lansd. MS. 443-4; Bodl. MS. Tanner 179; and see O'Day, 'Ecclesiastical Patronage of the Lord Keeper', passim.

earlier registers list both those who petitioned the Lord Keeper on behalf of a clergyman and those who offered a recommendation, presumably of his talents and character. In the case of Durham benefices the same person was usually named on both counts. The later records mention only the individual or institution offering the recommendation. The precise role of those named in obtaining the benefice is difficult to establish. It may be that those on whose "commendation" an appointment was made were in fact little more than referees, while the petitioners took or were persuaded to take the initiative in securing a living for a favoured cleric. There is a marked contrast between those who were active in exerting influence and offering advice over Crown presentations in the diocese in the earlier and later periods. Between 1559 and 1582 ecclesiastical recommendations accounted for over a third of the appointments. Episcopal influence was at its height in the three years before Pilkington's death, perhaps a little later than was generally the case, since the episcopate as a whole intervened most frequently in Crown patronage in the late 1560s. Barnes, on the other hand, apparently made no recommendations. Several appointments were made at the petition of "Mr Lever"; the reference is probably to Ralph Lever, archdeacon of Northumberland for part of the period, and well placed to know of both candidates and vacancies. His brother Thomas, master of Sherburn House and sometime prebendary of Durham, was also active in the disposal of Crown patronage.<sup>79</sup> A similar

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79. O'Day, 'Ecclesiastical Patronage of the Lord Keeper', 104.

proportion of Crown livings was granted at the petition of local gentry or officials, such as Sir Ralph Sadler, Sir George Bowes, and Lord Eure. Of the remaining appointments all but three were made on the recommendation of individuals known to have had either connections with the north-east or family ties with the presentee.

Ecclesiastical influence was less prominent in the later period. The bishops of Durham and Carlisle each recommended a single candidate. Thomas Bell, rector of Elton, put forward the name of Henry Bell, probably a kinsman, for the vicarage of Stranton and "certain preachers" supported Thomas Johnson in his candidacy for the vicarage of Alnham. More important were the recommendations made by the universities of Oxford and Cambridge or their constituent colleges and in one case by the rector and academy of Edinburgh. The proportion of presentations made on lay recommendation did not change but local families were rather less active. The Eure family continued to sponsor candidates and one unusual testimonial came from the burgesses of Alnwick. Instead, a number of Durham livings went to clergy recommended by influential individuals who had no ties with the diocese, such as Lord De La Warre, who helped Gabriel Price to the vicarage of Hart.

Clergy and their patrons sought to influence appointments to other Crown livings. In the south west corner of County Durham was the large parish of Middleton in Teesdale, where the rector received a valuable income in tithe from lead mines. Leonard Pilkington was presented to the living by the Crown in 1561 and remained there until his death in 1599. Perhaps in view of Pilkington's advancing years, Clement Colmore sought the assistance of Sir Francis Walsingham in 1585 to obtain a

grant of the advowson. He already had the support of the earl of Rutland. He was successful in his suit and the right of next presentation was invested in William Colmore of Birmingham, probably his brother. Clement was presented to the rectory as soon as it became vacant. To obtain such a prize from the Crown, it was obviously necessary to look for assistance from the highest quarters.<sup>80</sup>

On another occasion the patron rather than the prospective incumbent took the initiative in seeking to control an appointment. Between 1595 and 1597 Lord Eure, warden of the Middle March, carried out a veritable campaign in order to ensure that his nominee should be presented to Simonburn, the richest living in Northumberland. He first showed an interest in September 1595 when he submitted to the Queen a petition for the reform of his march, including the suggestion that the advowson be permanently attached to the warden's office. A precedent had been set by the exercise of the right of presentation by his own grandfather when warden. The incumbent of the moment was, he suggested, liable to deprivation as a pluralist, leaving the way open for an immediate appointment, this time of a preaching minister.<sup>81</sup> The plan found no favour with the government but when the rector died a year later, Eure immediately wrote to Burghley, seeking the appointment for his son's tutor, Robert Crackenthorpe. Eure also asked

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80. Cal. Border Papers, 1560-94, p. 203. Colmore to Walsingham, 9 Oct. 1585; 1595-1603, pp. 127-8. Rec. Middleton to Ld. Burghley, 30 Apr. 1596.

81. *Ibid.* 1595-1603, p. 58. Eure to the Queen, Sept. 1595.

for a grant of the sequestration of the rectory, which he promised to administer in a manner that would "doe the man muche good at his first entrie towardes the payment of his first fruites."<sup>82</sup> When writing to Burghley on other matters, the warden reminded him of the presentation and at the end of September, on hearing that there was competition for the benefice, renewed his pressure. Lady Warwick favoured the claims of a "younge batchelour of arte", Mr Ewbanke. Eure expressed his certainty that Ewbanke would receive the advancement he deserved in due time but contrasted his present age and standing with that of his own candidate, "a batchelor of divinitie . . . . . a worthie member of the churche and necessarie in this cuntrie". Nevertheless, if the matter were to be decided otherwise, he would, of course, submit himself to the Queen's decision.<sup>83</sup>

The warden's plans were disrupted in the following month by Crackenthorpe's unwillingness to serve in Northumberland

"deeminge his body unable to live in so troublesome a place, and his nature not well brooking the perverse nature of so crooked a people."

Another candidate was immediately forthcoming; George Warwick, an M.A. of six or seven years standing "of my sonne his acquaintance and commended to me by Mr Dr Robinson for his sufficiency in all respects."<sup>84</sup> As the rival candidate had been satisfied elsewhere, Lady Warwick was unlikely to continue her

82. Ibid. p. 183. Eure to Ld. Burghley, 1 Sept. 1596.

83. Ibid. pp. 187, 192. Same to same, 10 Sept., 1596,  
27 Sept. 1596.

84. Ibid. p. 208. Same to same, 24 Oct. 1596.

objections and soon Eure was able to assure Burghley that she favoured Warwick's appointment.<sup>85</sup> Eventually, four months after the vacancy occurred, and one year and four months after Eure had first mentioned the appointment, George Warwick was presented to Simonburn by the Crown in January 1597. Within two years, the place was again vacant and this time William Ewbanke M.A. was appointed on the recommendation of John Carey, acting governor of Berwick and one of Eure's associates in the government of the north-east.<sup>86</sup>

The whole incident not only shows a local nobleman and office-holder anxious to control a valuable ecclesiastical appointment but also reveals the qualities which Eure, at least, thought most notable in a clergyman and most likely to appeal to a great officer of state. For both of his candidates he put forward the arguments of age and learning as qualifying them for the preferment and making them the more deserving of it. Eure was a friend of one of the most notable lay patrons of zealous Protestant ministers, the earl of Huntingdon, and his concern to secure the services of a learned preacher in the Northumberland uplands is reminiscent of the earl.<sup>87</sup> It was also in the tradition of his own family.

85. *Ibid.* pp. 214, 230. Same to same, 4 Nov. 1596, 31 Dec. 1596.

86. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1594-7, p. 353. Presentation of George Warwick; 1598-1601, p. 217. Presentation of William Ewbanke, 23 June 1599.

87. C. Cross, The Puritan Earl, 131-42 and passim.

In 1575 and 1576 his father had petitioned for the appointment of Robert Dixon to Cockfield and Anthony Garfurth to Washington by the Crown; both were appointed by Barnes to undertake preaching tours in the diocese in 1578.

Most of the clergy appointed by the Crown on the initiative of laymen between 1559 and 1582 were at least competent; only one failed to satisfy his examiners in the exercise on St Matthew's Gospel in 1578 and a number were men of considerable education and ability. In the later period, lay influence was still being exercised in favour of men of a generally high calibre. Seven of the nine clergy recommended to the Crown by laymen at this time were graduates, a very high proportion considering the general standards of education among the beneficed clergy at the beginning of the 17th century.

In contrast the academic standards of the men presented to benefices by lay patrons either in their own right or by virtue of a grant of an advowson for a single turn were generally lower than among those of their contemporaries who were appointed by an ecclesiastical patron. Far more important were local connections. A few clergy presented by laymen are known to have been born within the diocese. Some had influential family ties which no doubt helped them to a benefice. There are few instances of a patron presenting one of his own family, although William Carr nominated Thomas Carr M.A. to the rectory of Ford in 1582. More commonly lay patrons presented clergy

who were already serving in the diocese, in some cases appointing them to a second living to be held in plurality. The appointment of William Duxfield to the two rectories of Bothal and Sheepwash by members of the Ogle family was unusual since few lay patrons had a second living to bestow and rarely did both go to the same minister. More typically Duxfield had originally been selected from the ranks of Durham ordinands. Many other clergy presented to their livings by lay patrons are known to have served in the diocese as curates or at least to have been ordained in Durham some years earlier. There is little to surprise in the strong local bias of lay patronage. The diocesan clergy were in the best position to hear of vacancies and to make themselves known to those who held the advowsons. Except for the very greatest, such as Northumberland, the interests of the patrons themselves were circumscribed and their clerical protegés, whether relatives, tutors, or domestic chaplains, were by definition men who were serving or had served in the area. The only important exceptions were appointments made via the Crown, used by local officers to bring preachers into the diocese and later by laymen without local connections to obtain whatever benefices were available for clergy who sought their patronage.

The first use of episcopal patronage was to provide for relatives, chaplains and other favoured clergy, usually men of good academic standing, on whom the bishop could rely in

local administration and politics, both ecclesiastical and secular.<sup>88</sup> Toby Matthew and William James, who both succeeded to the see from the deanery perhaps felt less need and had less opportunity than most to create a new group of episcopal supporters, since they knew so well the affiliations of their former colleagues and had few demands from outside the diocese to satisfy. The use of patronage even by a bishop new to Durham was limited by the availability of livings within his gift, but both Barnes and Neile took the opportunities offered by the chances of death or resignation to build up a following in the diocese. Smart's strictures on the prominence of episcopal favourites could as well have been directed against Barnes, as he sought to counter the radical tendencies of some of his predecessor's administrators and officials. Barnes began by collating the rectory of Haughton le Skerne to his brother John in 1578. Eight years later, the bishop's son Emmanuel, already a prebendary, was appointed to Washington. Egglescliffe was collated to another prebendary and episcopal chaplain, Robert Bellamy, while John Bold, a newcomer to the diocese, received first the rectory of Ryton and then, before being instituted to that living, the archdeaconry of Northumberland. The livings of Stanhope and Kirk Merrington went to Thomas Burton, Barnes's chancellor in the diocese of Carlisle, who accompanied him to Durham to fill the same office.

Bishop Neile placed in the cathedral and the parishes men who would support and further his innovations in ceremonial and discipline.<sup>89</sup> In 1620 his brother William became

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88. The exercise of patronage by bps. of Durham and the conflicts to which it gave rise are discussed by D. Marcombe, 'The Durham Dean and Chapter; old abbey writ large?', Continuity and Change, R. O'Day and F. Heal eds., 135ff.

89. A. Foster, 'The function of a bishop: the career of Richard Neile, 1562-1640', *ibid.* 45-8.

rector of Redmarshall and soon afterwards two chaplains, Gabriel Clerke and Andrew Perne, were appointed variously to the archdeaconry of Durham and the rectory of Elwick and to the vicarage of Norham and the rectory of Washington. In 1624 John Cosin, also an episcopal chaplain, succeeded Clerke at Elwick, a year after Augustine Lindsell had been appointed to Houghton le Spring. John Lively, brother of the bishop's secretary, was appointed to Kelloe in 1625 and Yeldard Alvey, the Arminian vicar of Newcastle in the 1630s, became vicar of Eglington in 1627.

This use of episcopal patronage was reinforced by the addition of some important Crown livings. The benefices of Middleton in Teesdale and Brancepeth were reserved almost entirely for men who were or would become senior administrative officers and members of the chapter. In the 17th century the group established by Neile retained the Crown's favour after his translation, a circumstance which caused considerable problems for later bishops. Pressure was occasionally placed on them by the Crown or by leading politicians to add to the preferments of this circle; Alvey's appointment to Newcastle, for example, was eased by royal intervention.<sup>90</sup>

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90. S.S. lii. 207-10. Bp. Howson to William Laud, 28 Nov. 1631. Cosin was similarly helped to Brancepeth by the interest of Laud and the duke of Buckingham; Cal. S.P. Dom. 1625-6, p. 562. Presentation of Cosin; 1628-9, p. 187. Cosin to William Laud.

Academic standards among other recipients of episcopal patronage were still good. A number of the non-graduate preachers of 1578 received their benefices from Pilkington or Barnes and both appointed to parish livings graduates who had no connections with the cathedral or the administration. Some were later to join the ranks of the senior clergy, as did James Rande. Those not distinguished by their education or abilities were for the most part men promoted from amongst the serving clergy of the diocese to the less valuable livings. In the 17th century the distinction is less clear. A far higher proportion of Neile's appointments were of graduate clergy than in the earlier period, probably more than can be accounted for by the general rise in the standards of clerical education. Local connections, even previous service in the diocese, are hard to trace because of the scarcity of records for the early 17th century. It is however possible, that the bishop's patronage was increasingly given to men from outside the diocese, perhaps brought to his notice by their university connections.

The position of the senior clergy was occasionally buttressed by preferments from the dean and chapter. George Cliffe held the rectory of Billingham, Ferdinand Moorcroft was vicar of Heighington, and William James of Kirk Merrington, all on the presentation of the chapter. These were, however, unusual appointments. The dean and chapter rarely appointed to parish livings from its own ranks; the moderate value of most of the livings was not sufficient to attract the senior clergy. A number of canons who did hold livings in the gift

of the chapter were appointed by the bishop by lapse. The chapter made far greater use of its patronage, both of benefices and of curacies, to provide livings for the junior clergy of the cathedral, the minor canons, schoolmasters, and readers of the epistle and gospel. Some of these combined curacies within the city of Durham or the immediately surrounding area with a cathedral appointment. Others progressed to independent livings or benefices, sometimes still keeping minor canonries. The masters of the schools attached to the cathedral were particularly well provided for by the dean and chapter. Francis Kay, headmaster of the grammar school from 1579 to 1593, was appointed to Heighington in 1584 and in 1593 to Northallerton in Yorkshire, livings which were occasionally held by prebendaries. Mark Leonard, master of the song school, went on to successive appointments to Edmundbyers and Monk Hesledon in 1609 and 1629. The chapter could determine the whole career of a junior member of the cathedral staff. Just under half of those whose preferment was noted in the surviving chapter act books of 1578-83 and 1619-39 were presented or appointed by the chapter to their<sup>91</sup> only cure or to all the livings they are known to have held. Others received preferments from both the chapter and the bishop but it is not clear whether this represents any congruence of episcopal and capitular patronage or whether it is

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91. P.K. D. and C. Mun., Chap. Act Bks. 1578-83, 1619-38,  
passim.

yet another indication of the extent of episcopal influence.

The university colleges were also disposed to use their patronage in the interest of their own members. From 1575 Gainford was held by graduates and fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge. John Lively became vicar there in 1628, after holding the benefice of Over in the diocese of Ely, also in the gift of the college.<sup>92</sup> At Embleton, the living was usually held by a former fellow of Merton. At Long Benton and at Ponteland, however, the authorities of Merton and Balliol were apparently less concerned to keep the presentation in their own hands or to appoint from their own ranks.

It was not difficult for a patron to find a candidate with some recommendation of kinship or ability. For the clergyman, making contact with a patron, especially one who had a benefice at his immediate disposal, was a much greater problem. Members of a college or cathedral had a natural advantage. Others, as has been seen commended themselves to senior churchmen who were either patrons or would act as middlemen, securing appointments from the greater patrons. The archdeacons were particularly well suited to act as intermediaries since they had the closest contact with the serving parish clergy from the time of their ordination. Clergy in less senior positions might yet wield some influence in the right quarters. Amongst the Hunter MSS. is a letter, unfortunately unsigned, written in 1623 to Mr Marlow, domestic chaplain to Sir Claudius Forster of Blanchlands. The writer was a clergyman, who entreated his "reverend and loving brother", (although he had never met him), to further his cause with Sir Claudius for the curacy of Bamburgh. There was

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92. Lively's ministry at Over is described by M. Spufford, Contrasting Communities, 295.

another suitor for the same position but Marlow's correspondent had obtained the approval of the bishop, "provyding Sir Claudius be content and yourself refusing it." He had also sought letters of recommendation from Sir Matthew Forster, addressed to Sir Claudius, in which Sir Matthew

"passed his Word for my fidelitie in preaching dutie, in Cariage towards my superiors, and my love and charitie towards equalls and inferiors, especially to his Worships tenants and servaunts. As to his Worship's stipend, I will according to my place (oportet unde virorum) as diligently and reasonably as any in this Country or ellswere without disparagement to any by the grace of God."

He therefore desired Mr Marlow to speak to Sir Claudius on his behalf when the latter returned to Blanchlands and in the meantime to instruct the bailiff that he might serve the vacant cure until a permanent appointment was made.<sup>93</sup>

In order to obtain a benefice, it might be necessary to make preparations well before a vacancy occurred. Grants of the next presentation, made while a living was still occupied, were made on this basis, especially when the clergyman who was to be appointed was named. Close watch might also be kept where a vacancy seemed imminent. Thomas Oxley, one of a Northumberland clerical family, later held the living of Chigwell in Essex. In 1637 he wrote to a Cambridge friend in great indignation, complaining of the close scrutiny to which he had been subject during a recent illness by certain acquaintances who hoped to influence the next disposition of his living.

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93. D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 7.2.

"I toulde you I ever thought that Robinsons visit was to no other end, but to see whether I was sicke enough, and left (as I now perceve) his agent Mr Everard ..... to see me once or twice a weake, and to certifie how I did frame; hath approved himself a mere spectator and I should not have slept if I had not made him know it. I hope he will see by my letters, yt ther is both life and spiritt in me as yet." <sup>94</sup>

Because a living offered an income, and one for which, if Durham was no different from the rest of the country, there was increasing competition after the beginning of the 17th century, both clergy and patrons were bound to view these appointments as marketable property. Clearly this was how the agents of the earl of Northumberland viewed the presentation to Long Houghton. Both in seeking presentation from a patron and in any attempt to control the disposition of ecclesiastical livings, the clergy must have been drawn towards simony whether by direct payment or by agreements over the leasing of glebe lands or the commutation of tithe. A study of the court records for a number of representative years has brought to light only one prosecution for simony.<sup>95</sup> The rarity of such cases, however, is no assurance that simoniacal transactions did not take place. In the 1640s the parishioners of Ponteland petitioned against the many failings of their vicar, Thomas Gray, including the

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94. Ibid. 7.5.

95. See below, pp. 429-30 . Edward Calston, vic.

Chatton was prosecuted for simony in 1578. D.R. III.3, f. 105.

means by which he had obtained the living. He was alleged to have resigned the vicarage of Edlingham to Charles Oxley, his predecessor at Ponteland, paying an additional £200 "or some such like summe of ready money, part of his wifes portion" for the exchange.<sup>96</sup> The rarity of complaints against simony may indicate either that the practice was too widespread to merit comment or that the transfer of rights of patronage was usually arranged within the law. Ecclesiastical dominance of patronage may have helped to curb the most blatant forms of simony, since lay patrons were generally the worst offenders in this respect.<sup>97</sup>

The exchange between Gray and Oxley is an example of the way in which the clergy might move to suit their own desires rather than waiting on the wishes of a patron. Exchanges of livings were most common amongst the senior clergy who held episcopal benefices and presumably obtained the bishop's willing consent. They were not unknown amongst the lower clergy. William Murray and Richard Thursby exchanged the benefices of Elton and Pittington in 1621, so that each returned to his native parish. They probably settled the matter between themselves before seeking the permission of the dean and chapter as patrons of Pittington. The subsequent presentation to Elton took place by virtue of a grant pro hac vice no doubt secured for the purpose. The consent of the patron was, of course, essential; otherwise he might take steps to protect his rights.

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96. The petition . . . . by the Parishioners of Pont Island against Dr. Gray, 1642.

97. Christophers, 'Surrey Clergy', 194.

In 1573 the bishop of Carlisle instructed his attorney to "protest . . . . of myn utter dissentinge from any maner of exchaunche betwen talentire parson there [Rothbury] and any other." 98

A similar arrangement must have been made with the patron when a living was kept within the family; for example when Joseph Wood succeeded his father William as vicar of Greatham in 1627. Such an agreement, however, gave far less control over the disposal of the benefice than the purchase of the next presentation. A few grants were made to parish clergy in the 16th century but no pattern can be traced in their use. In the 17th century advowsons were acquired to provide for clerical sons, enabling them to avoid the worst problems of competition for benefices. Although still settled in Essex at his death, Thomas <sup>24</sup> left to his son Amor the advowson of Whalton in Northumberland and either Amor or his uncle of the same name was appointed to the rectory in the 1640s.<sup>99</sup> Similarly Clement Colmore purchased the next presentation to the rectory of Brancepeth "with the purpose to have the same bestowed upon one of my sonnes, Richard or Matthew Colmore as themselves shall agree or as myselfe shall nominate . . . ." The purchase was made in the name of his son-in-law, Christopher Fulthorpe, and by the terms of Colmore's will he was to present "whichever of them shall agree betwixt themselves to accept it."<sup>100</sup>

98. S.S. clxi. 173.

99. Venn.

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

Such grants perhaps represent a growing desire among the lower clergy to exercise some control over their own appointments. The initiative in presentations to benefices had, however, always been divided between clergy and patrons and it is difficult to judge their relative importance. The bishops, the chapter, and the university colleges all had dependents whose interests they wished to promote and the predominance of ecclesiastical patronage in the diocese may have given de iure patrons a more active role in the selection of candidates than elsewhere. There is more evidence of clergy or their friends actively canvassing lay patrons. The qualifications which might secure a patron's favour were two; learning and local connections. A few exceptional laymen made their contribution to the establishment of a learned clergy in the diocese but in most cases the minister who served in a neighbouring parish, who was of a local family, or had some immediate call upon a patron's goodwill, was most likely to obtain the presentation.

## Chapter III

Clerical Financesi. Impropriation and the Value of Benefices

Within the diocese there were livings scarcely worthy of that name and benefices where the incumbent could live in considerable style and comfort. Comment on the finances of the parish clergy, however, almost invariably stressed the inadequacy of their income and its consequences for clerical and thus religious standards. The return of vacancies made c. 1565 excused the lack of incumbents at Felton, Kirkharle, and St. Mary in the North Bailey on the grounds that "the livings of them all are so small that no man can lyve on them".<sup>1</sup> The explanation most frequently advanced for clerical poverty was the annexation of parish revenues by the holders of impropriations. In a report to the earl of Huntingdon, president of the Council in the North, on the state of Berwick and the surrounding area in 1587, Robert Ardern pointed out that

"..... the greatest number of the parishes in the said Country be impropriat wherby they either belonged to some Bishoprick, or were of Religious houses in that Shire or within Yorkshire, so as the vicars livings or parsonages be very small and none of any learninge doe seeke the same ....."<sup>2</sup>

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1. S.P. 15/12/108. Return of vacant livings c. 1565.
  2. 'Berwick upon Tweed and the neighbouring parts of Northumberland on the eve of the Armada', M. C. Cross ed., Arch. Ael. 4th ser. xli. 133.

More than fifty years later, an anonymous defender of Bishop Morton excused his failure to establish a preaching ministry in Northumberland, since

"the meane provision [for the majority of cures] being either stipendiaries of impropriations, or poore vicarages in severall lay-Patrons gifts is too true a cause for the want of Preaching in those places, and the just reason why some of the Ministers are constrained to live otherwise than men in that holy calling ought to do . . . . ." <sup>3</sup>

There was no novelty in the complaint. Under Edward VI Bernard Gilpin had expressed himself forcefully on the subject, attacking those gentry who

"began first with parsonages, and seemed to have some conscience towards vicarages; but now their hearts be so hardened, all is fish that cometh to the net. Gentlemen are parsons and vicars both, nothing can escape them . . . . Your grace may find also, where gentlemen keep in their hands livings of forty or fifty pounds, and give one that never cometh there five or six pounds."

Impropriations, he argued, discouraged able men from the ministry and so endangered the future of the church;

"For by reason livings appointed for the ministry, for the most part are either robbed of the best part, or clean taken away; almost none have any zeal or devotion to put their children to school, but to learn

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3. A Vindication of the Bishop of Durham, (1641), 7-8; the author answered charges of negligence and hostility to Protestant preaching made by J. Fenwick [?], The Downefall of the Hierarchy, (1641).

to write, to make them apprentices or else have them lawyers." <sup>4</sup>

Those who saw impropriation as an especial problem for the church in the north-east were fully justified. In 1603 the diocese was said to include 135 parishes, in 87 of which the livings were impropriate. The proportion was higher than in any other diocese in England or Wales. Improvements affected over half the parishes in only six other dioceses, two of them in Wales.<sup>5</sup> There was a sharp contrast between the archdeaconries, however. Only 35 of the 67 parishes listed in the archdeaconry of Durham in 1563 were affected; in Northumberland the endowment had been wholly or partially diverted in more than three quarters of the parishes.<sup>6</sup> In both, most livings where impropriation had taken place were endowed vicarages, in which the incumbent received the small tithes and perhaps some share in the glebe and great tithes. In some parishes, as Gilpin pointed out, the whole endowment was held by the impropiator, who paid a stipendiary minister. A few stipendiaries still enjoyed the title of vicar, as did the incumbents of Berwick, Carham, Norham, Staindrop, Darlington, and St. Oswald's in the city of Durham. Many more were curates of independent chapelries, of which there were seven in the northern archdeaconry and fourteen in the south.

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4. B. Gilpin, 'A Sermon preached before King Edward VI, 1552', in Gilpin, Life of Gilpin, 271-2, 276.

5. The national average of impropriate livings was 43%. Figures from B.L. Harl. MS. 280, f.157, tabulated by R.G.Usher, The Reconstruction of the English Church, i. 241.

6. B.L. Harl. MS. 594, ff. 187-95.

The greatest disparity between the profits of the proprietor or farmer of the rectory and the income of the serving minister was to be found in wholly inappropriate livings. Among the extreme examples were the former collegiate churches. The revenues of St. Andrew Auckland, Darlington, Lanchester, and Chester le Street all compared very favourably with the average value of a parochial benefice in 1535, although it must be remembered that each supported several clergy. At their dissolution stipendiary curates replaced the collegiate clergy. The income of St. Andrew Auckland at the time was £172 1s. 2d. p.a., from which £44 was reserved for the payment of a vicar for St. Andrew's and three assistants to serve the dependent chapels. The proportion of the revenues set aside for the provision of clergy in the other parishes was higher but the stipends were similar. At Lanchester £20 was reserved from a total of £73 10s. for a vicar and one assistant.<sup>7</sup>

The relative value of an endowed vicarage and a rectory naturally varied in accordance with the original division of revenues and the worth of tithes in each parish. The revenues of proprietor and incumbent can be compared where both are

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7. D. M. Loades, 'The Collegiate Churches of Durham at the time of their Dissolution', S.C.H. iv. 65-75; E 178/3265.

recorded either in the Valor Ecclesiasticus of 1535 or in the parliamentary surveys of 1649-50.<sup>8</sup> Most of the information available relates to county Durham but a number of churches appropriated by the predecessors of the dean and chapter of Durham and the dean and chapter of Carlisle in the northern archdeaconry are also fully recorded. The rectory of Bedlington, for example, was valued at only £9 in 1535, the vicarage at £13 6s. 8d. By contrast, the local gentleman who owned the great tithes of Hart received from them an annual income of £194 in 1650, while the vicar had only £63 p.a. Monastic appropriations by houses other than Durham priory, which were for the most part in lay hands after the Dissolution, tended to leave a smaller proportion of the revenues for the incumbent than did those still held by the dean and chapter or the hospitals in the later 16th century. There were, however, exceptions; in 1650 the dean and chapter or their lessees were thought to receive over £220 p.a. from the tithes of Berwick, while paying the vicar a stipend of £20.

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8. Valor Eccl. v. 301-30; Lambeth MS. Comm. XII.a. 6/480-578, possessions of dean and chapter of Durham; Comm. XII.a. 13/120-97, parishes in Northumberland; Comm. XII.a. 4/67-181, parishes in county Durham; Arch. Ael. 1st ser. i. 53-60, impropriations held by the dean and chapter of Carlisle. The Northumberland survey is printed in Arch. Ael. 1st ser. iii. 1-10. An abstract from the Valor is given in Appendix B.

The dean and chapter of Durham held the rectories of nine Northumberland and perhaps ten Durham parishes, mostly within the officialty. The dean and chapter of Carlisle, the bishop of Carlisle, the hospitals, and university colleges held a further fourteen impropriations. Curiously, the bishop of Durham does not seem to have had any interest in impropriations within the diocese, in spite of his extensive estates and patronage. In the other fifty parishes in which the proprietor has been traced, the rectories were held by laymen, originally as lessees from the Crown, but increasingly as time passed in their own right. Some of the most valuable rectories held by the dean and chapter of Durham, including Norham and Holy Island, were shared with the recipients of Crown grants or leased at the Crown's behest to prominent laymen.<sup>9</sup>

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9. Holders of impropriations have been traced through county histories and through tithe cases; the latter are not an entirely reliable guide as it is not always clear whether the reference is to the tithe owner or farmer.

The Valor provides as <sup>n</sup> assessment of the value of Durham livings some thirty years before the beginning of our period and makes possible comparison with clerical incomes elsewhere in the country. It has been suggested that the value of livings was seriously underestimated in 1535. The assessments for Durham can be set against valuations of benefices in the bishop's gift made for Cuthbert Tunstall at the beginning of his episcopate in 1530.<sup>10</sup> The differences between the two lists are not consistent. The annual value of most rectories in Tunstall's list is well below that of the Valor; Ryton, for example, is set at £26 13s. 4d. instead of £42 16s. 8d. and Redmarshall at £10 rather than £17 18s. In a few instances the value is higher than that given in the Valor and several estimates are very close to those of 1535. Most of the vicarages mentioned are assessed very similarly in both lists. The purpose and method of Tunstall's valuation are not known and there is no indication of any consid-

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10. C. Hill, Economic Problems of the Church from Archbishop Whitgift to the Long Parliament, 110-111 argues that the assessments of 1535 were below the true worth of the livings. The case cited is that of the rectory of Houghton le Spring, said to be worth £400 in the 1560s. The statement about its Elizabethan value occurs in the 18th century Life of Gilpin by W. Gilpin (p. 189). It is not made in the Life published in 1628 by George Carleton, one of Gilpin's pupils, although Carleton did comment on the unusual wealth of the living. See below. pp. 191-2. Valuations of c. 1530 are from S.S. clxi. 1-3.

eration which might have moved the assessor to state any but the true value. Since the Valor includes the great majority of livings in the diocese, it seems best to use the figures there given, while bearing in mind their possible distortion.

Table i. Value of livings in 1535

	Under £5	£5-£10	£10-£15	£15-£20	£20-£30	£30-£40	Over £40
Durham	8	9	6	8	5	4	8
Northumberland	11	18	10	5	6	3	2
Total	19	27	16	13	11	7	10

The most striking feature of the valuations of 1535 is the disparity which existed between the rectory of Houghton le Spring, said to be worth £124 p.a., at one extreme and at the other the rectory of St. Mary in the South Bailey worth a mere 10s. p.a. Very wealthy and very poor livings were unusually common. The majority of livings in dioceses for which detailed studies have been made were valued at between £5 and £13 p.a.; in Durham only 43 of 101 benefices fell into this category.<sup>11</sup> Within the diocese 17 endowed benefices brought their incumbents less than £5 p.a. and 28 were valued at more than £15 p.a., 10 of them at over £40 p.a. More significant is the proportion of livings which provided what contemporaries considered a sufficient income. All rectories worth less than £6 13s. 4d.

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11. Cf. Barratt, 'Condition of the Parish Clergy', 192; W.G. Hoskins, 'The Leicestershire Country Parson in the 16th century', in Essays in Leicestershire History, 1-2; F.Heal, 'Economic Problems of the Clergy', in Church and Society in England: Henry VIII to James I, F. Heal and R. O'Day eds., 103-4.

according to the Valor and all vicarages worth less than £10 p.a. were excused the payment of first fruits on the grounds of poverty. In the diocese of Durham 7 rectories and 34 vicarages were thus exempt. Forty four livings fell below Cranmer's estimate of £10 p.a. as an adequate income for "a divine of some learning" in 1530.<sup>12</sup> Once again it is necessary to distinguish between the two archdeaconries. In Northumberland 29 of the 55 livings were valued at less than £10 p.a. in contrast to 17 out of 47 livings in Durham. Only two Northumberland benefices were worth more than £40 p.a., the rectory of Rothbury and the vicarage of Newcastle, valued at £57 6s. 8d. and £50 respectively. Three other rectories, Howick (with the archdeaconry of Northumberland), Simonburn, and Morpeth were all worth between £30 and £40 p.a. In Durham, 8 livings were worth more than £40 p.a.; Houghton le Spring, Easington (with the archdeaconry of Durham), Bishop Wearmouth, Sedgfield, Stanhope, Brancepeth, Haughton le Skerne, and Ryton; the first 4 were all valued at more than £70 p.a. Four more livings were worth between £30 and £40 p.a.

Throughout the diocese the average value of rectories was well above that of vicarages. There were, however, a few vicarages amongst the most profitable benefices; in addition to Newcastle, Gainford and Norton in county Durham were both worth more than £30 p.a. Conversely, a number of rectories had escaped impropriation because of their extreme poverty, including the two city churches of St. Mary in Durham, and Dinsdale, Winston, Middleton St. George, and Emundbyers on the boundaries of county Durham. Knaresdale, Whitfield, and

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12. Usher, Reconstruction of the Church, 237.

Kirkhaugh, some of the poorest livings in Northumberland, were also small and remote. Another, the rectory of Ilderton, was sufficiently near the Scottish border to be vulnerable to the effects of war and raiding, although it was not considered to be worthless in time of war, as were some parishes on the west of the Pennines.<sup>13</sup>

In the surveys prepared for the parliamentary authorities between 1649 and 1650 the annual revenue of each benefice was usually given in round figures. The figures are considered to be accurate although imprecise and this appears to be as true for Durham as for the rest of the country.<sup>14</sup> Comparison with the assessments for ship money made c. 1634 show a sharp fall in the value of a few livings, most of them in Northumberland and most of them, presumably, suffering the effects of war.<sup>15</sup>

13. S.M.Keeling, 'Religion and the Church in the Anglo-Scottish Borders, 1534-72', (Durham Univ. Ph. D. thesis, 1975), 63.

14. Barratt, 'Condition of the Parish Clergy', 188.

15. Several lists of assessments relating to all or part of the diocese survive; the figures vary slightly from one to the other. D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 11.6, 19; 22.4, 17, 19, 25; S.P. 16/345/97. Schedule of rates assessed .... the Clergie, Jan. 1637. Hill, Economic Problems, 112 suggests that the inclusion of the value of the clergy house may have made the assessments unrealistically high. In most parishes in the archdeaconry of Durham the benefice house had been included in the 1535 valuation, and the two sets of figures are therefore comparable.

In most livings the increase in value which had taken place in the preceding century was maintained between the 1630s and 1649. The average increase in the worth of endowed livings between 1535 and 1650 was notably even. The value of both rectories and vicarages was multiplied between  $4\frac{1}{2}$  and  $5\frac{1}{2}$  times, and thus kept pace with prices which rose perhaps three or four times during the same period.<sup>16</sup> In much of the rest of the country, rectories increased in value more quickly than did vicarages; an increase of between three and five times has been suggested as usual for vicarages, between four and seven times for rectories. The contrast is usually explained by the rectors' retention of the great tithe on grain which enabled them to benefit from rising food prices.<sup>17</sup> In Durham the distinction was rather between richer and poorer benefices, the latter increasing in value more quickly than the former. Livings valued at more than £15 p.a. in 1535 were generally worth between two and four times as much by 1650 although there were one or two instances of extraordinary increases in value. The rectory of Ford, for example, was set at £24 in 1535 and at £250 in 1650. Livings valued at less than £10 in 1535 were worth between five and eight times as much in 1650 and rectories and vicarages worth no more than £3 or £4 p.a. according to the Valor had increased in value anything from seven to thirteen times. In Northumberland, especially, the increases are probably to be explained by the unprecedented peace of the Borders following the union of the crowns. Although the full tranquility for which James VI and I had hoped proved elusive, by the early 17th century border

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16. E. Phelps Brown and S. Hopkins, 'Seven Centuries of the Prices of Consumables, compared with Builders' Wage Rates', Economica, new ser. xiii. 312-13.
17. Hill, Economic Problems, 109-13; Hoskins, 'The Leicestershire Country Parson', in Leicestershire History, 16-17; Barratt, 'Condition of the Parish Clergy', 197.

society had become more amenable to the rule of law and the raids of Scots and dalesmen were ceasing to threaten the lives and property of the inhabitants. The change was far less marked in county Durham and the varying increases in the value of livings in the southern archdeaconry is probably related to the sources from which incumbents drew their revenues, of which more will be said below.

Few poor benefices had become prosperous in the century after 1535, however. The rector of Middleton St. George still only received £45 p.a. in 1650; the vicar of Long Benton then had an income of £25. Unlike the clergy of 1535, those of the mid 17th century had wives and families to support; it is open to doubt whether these made a positive contribution to the economy of the clerical household.<sup>18</sup> When contemplating acceptance of a cure in Essex in 1641, Ralph Josselin considered that £80 p.a. would be a "competency" on which he and his family could live in reasonable comfort.<sup>19</sup> The great majority

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18. It is generally argued that marriage and the family put a new strain on clerical finances. P.Tyler, 'The Status of the Elizabethan Parish Clergy', S.C.H. iv. 85; Hoskins, 'The Leicestershire Country Parson', in Leicestershire History, 17. F.W.Brooks, 'The Social Position of the Parson in the 16th century', Jnl. Brit. Arch. Assoc. 3rd ser. x. 37 suggests that the extra labour provided by the family was valuable in "an essentially peasant economy". Hill, Economic Problems, 208 distinguishes between rural and urban livings; in the latter the family proved more of a burden. The distinction is perhaps best drawn between those clergy personally engaged in agricultural and those not.

19. R. Josselin, Diary (Camden Soc. 3rd ser. xv) 10.

of livings in the diocese of Durham were worth less than this in 1650, some considerably less. Additional financial burdens and the claims to a greater social standing which accompanied higher educational qualifications must have cancelled much of the effect of extraordinary increases in the value of the poorest benefices, leaving their incumbents as aware as ever of the distance between themselves and their wealthy colleagues.

ii. The Payment of Curates and Stipendiaries.

Those at the bottom of the clerical ladder had little hope of any similar rise in income during the period. Stipendiary vicars and curates who assisted in parish churches or served chapelries almost all depended upon the good will of their employers and paymasters for any increase in their stipends. It is difficult to establish the financial position of stipendiary and unbeneficed clergy before the middle of the 17th century. The provision for stipendiary vicars in the former collegiate churches was not insufficient at the time of their dissolution; the new incumbents received between £13 and £20 p.a. The vicars of Norham, Berwick, and St. Oswald's all received similar sums from the dean and chapter; £20 p.a. in the two North Durham parishes and £16 p.a. in the city.<sup>20</sup> The payments, however, were not increased until the 1630s and the official stipend probably remained the same throughout the period. Assistant or dependent curates were very poorly paid even in the early 16th century. The clergy appointed to the chapels for the collegiate churches were amongst the best paid of the

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20. Loades, 'The Collegiate Churches', S.C.H. iv. 71-2;

S.S. cxliii. 59.

unbeneficed clergy, receiving between £6 and £8 p.a. The stipends assigned by the dean and chapter were lower, between £3 and £6 p.a.<sup>21</sup> Like those of the stipendiary vicars the payments remained unchanged. The curate of St. Margaret's in the city of Durham was paid approximately £5 p.a. in 1541, 1635, and 1650. By the latter date, the first for which a reasonably full list of the value of unendowed livings is available, the average wage of a stipendiary vicar or independent curate was just over £12 p.a., that of a dependent curate between £4 and £12 p.a. That was rather higher than the average of £8 17s. 11d. received by curates in Lancashire and Cheshire at the same time but it still left thirty four clergymen with an annual stipend of £10 or less.<sup>22</sup>

Impropriators and incumbents were thus unwilling to part with their profits to make adequate allowance for the ministers who assisted or deputed for them. In some cases, such an attitude was understandable. The vicars of Warden and Woodhorn, whose incomes in 1650 were £46 and £68 p.a. respectively, would have found it difficult to provide for the two chapels in each of their parishes if every curate were to be paid more than £10 p.a. Even the vicar of Newcastle, with an annual income of £100, might have had problems in maintaining curates in all five chapels dependent upon the church of St. Nicholas had not the Common Council of the city and others proved willing to contribute to the provision of clergy. Some incumbents, however, defaulted on their responsibilities although perfectly able to discharge them. In the early 17th century it was

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21. Loades, 'The Collegiate Churches', S.C.H. iv. 71-2; S.S. cxliii. 57.

22. Hill, Economic Problems, 113. Livings described as stipendiary in 1650 but not earlier, e.g. Ford, have been excluded from the calculations.

reported that the rector of Sedgefield, Marmaduke Blakiston, "duringe his Incumbencie at Sedgefield hath utterlie neglected to serve the cure at Embleton, or to finde a Minister or Curate ther for that purpose, in so much that the inhabitants have been forced to goe sometimes to one Church and sometimes to another to heere divine service and sermons upon Sondayes and other festivall dayes ....."

Since Blakiston held canonries in Durham and York and also the archdeaconry of the East Riding in addition to Sedgefield, there should have been little cause for his neglect.<sup>23</sup>

Complaints were more commonly levelled against lay impropiators for not providing curates or for employing unsuitable men who would accept a minimal wage. This was the theme of many of the laments over the extent of impropriations quoted above. In 1602 it was even suggested that those who farmed the rectories of Hexham, Holy Island, Tynemouth, and Bamburgh from the Crown should be compelled to provide preachers but the suggestion bore no fruit.<sup>24</sup> In the first years of the 17th century, the chancellor's deputies frequently took action against lay farmers of rectories for allowing chancels to 'decay'. Considering the extent of impropriation, the offence was probably no more widespread among lay farmers than neglect of churches and clerical houses among incumbents.<sup>25</sup> More damaging was the

23. D.R. V.12, f. 119. A similar case at Haughton le Skerne in 1625 involved another prebendary, Henry Ewbanke. D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 5, p. 159.

24. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1601-3, 214. Information of the Estate of Northumberland, ?June 1602.

25. D.R. II.4, 5, passim.

lack of concern for the long term interests of the church shown, for example, by an officer of the earl of Northumberland in 1605. On receiving warrants for the repair of the chancels of Tynemouth and Woodhorn he wrote to his master that

"I have caused them to be alredy vewed by workmen, and they demaunde so great a some, as I will not meddle to deale therin without the advice of some of my fellow Commissioners, for I thinke it fitt by cause your Lordship haythe the one of the Rectoryes but for lyfe & the other Sir Ralph Delavell is ioynt purchaser with your Lordship that a sclender repaying will serve your present tyme wherby a great deale of money be saved, and soe may the conty be satisfified."<sup>26</sup>

The same order of priorities was held by the farmers of the rectory of Alwinton, against whom the curate promoted a case before the ecclesiastical commission in 1627. He alleged that they had not repaired the chancel, had allowed an alehouse to be kept in what had once been the minister's residence, and during the Easter communion had collected their dues in a manner which disrupted the service.<sup>27</sup>

A few more fortunate curates of chapelries maintained or established rights to some part of the endowment. Ten of the stipends listed in 1650 were augmented by some part of the tithe or offerings or the equivalent paid by the farmer. Few were

26. Alnwick Castle, Sion MS. Q.II.62. George Whitehead to the earl of Northumberland, 12 Oct. 1608.

27. S.S. xxxiv. 6-8; similar cases from St. Mary in the North Bailey and St. Margaret's, Durham, are quoted in *ibid.* 82-100.

as fortunate as the incumbent of Witton Gilbert who received all the tithes of the chapelry although he was always described as a curate. His income was still only £26<sup>28</sup> in 1650 and there is no evidence that those who received an endowed income were amongst the more prosperous of the unbeneficed clergy. Income from such a source was more elastic than a stipend but there were disadvantages. Fighting to maintain rights could be an expensive and time consuming business. John Vaux, curate of St. Helen Auckland, successfully asserted his right to certain corn and hay tithes as the successor to one of the prebendaries of the college of St. Andrew. The suit was long and complex and provoked counter-accusations from his opponents; the sum involved was no more than £3 or £4.<sup>29</sup>

### iii. The Sources of Endowed Income.

Incumbents of endowed benefices received their income from glebe lands and property, from tithe, and from the various offerings customary in every parish. Some idea of their relative importance is provided by the Valor, in which the value of various dues is specified for a number of parishes in Durham. Unfortunately there is no comparable information for Northumberland for which only the nature and overall worth of the benefices is given.

Customary offerings included payments for extraordinary services performed by the clergy (mortuary dues, small sums for marriages and baptisms), and miscellaneous items such as 'surplice fees'. The rates varied from parish to parish but were

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28. Surtees, Hist. Durham, ii. 370.

29. D.C.R.O. EP/Au. St. H. 2, 33. Vaux was probably encouraged to pursue the suit by his other quarrels with the parishioners involved. S.S. xxxiv. 36-42.

rarely more than a few pence. Those who desired special privileges, for example burial in the chancel, might have to pay more heavily. Registration of baptisms, marriages, and burials became compulsory just after the compilation of the Valor and some incumbents charged 1d. for entering at least baptisms in the register.<sup>30</sup> By the 17th century some enterprising clergy had obtained a higher rate for their services. In the 1630s the churchwardens of Barnard Castle noted that mortuary dues stood at 9d.

"for every corpse man-born upon the bier .... and for every corpse brought upon the head now 5d., but in memory of man 5d and 3d. (But twenty years ago, when Mr Dickon [i.e. Archdeacon] Cradock was Vicar of Gainford, and one Mr Sinclair Curate of Barnard Castle, he did raise and execute ye said fees.)"<sup>31</sup>

In addition to the casual income, offerings were traditionally made to the clergy, perhaps as many as four times a year, sometimes in a single payment at Easter. A small monetary payment in lieu of personal tithes, *i.e.* those on the profits of a man's labour, was often associated with the Easter offering. In the 1620s servants of households in the North Bailey in Durham paid 2d. each to the farmer of the rectory, a payment which probably fulfilled both obligations. Personal tithes

30. Most examples of rates come from the 17th century. D.R.

Miscell. Depos. 1636-7, f. 17; Northumberland County Hist. xi. 120; N.C.R.O. Middleton MS. b. 13/1/1.

31. Surtees, Hist. Durham, i. 85.

as such are only specified in two parishes in the Valor, Ryton and Haughton le Skerne, and in neither case is their value stated separately from that of other oblations.<sup>32</sup> They probably formed part of the offerings mentioned in most other parishes since these would otherwise have accounted for an extraordinarily large proportion of the income of the Durham clergy. They were unusually important, even supposing personal tithes to be included in the totals. In the diocese of Worcester offerings provided, on average, 6% of the total clerical income and personal tithes a further 10%. In Durham the average from both sources was 20% of all revenues.<sup>33</sup> Although offerings and personal tithes brought substantial sums to the rectors of Ryton, Gateshead, and Wolsingham, amongst others, they formed a larger proportion of the income of endowed vicarages and were of greatest importance in the poorer livings.

A further 20% of clerical income in the 1530s was derived from glebe, the house, buildings, land, and agricultural rights of the incumbent. Only one Durham living, the rectory of Kimblesworth, apparently had no glebe in 1535. The vicar of Gainford held only the garden and yard attached to his house. The most valuable glebe property belonged to some of the wealthiest benefices. The rectors of Houghton le Spring, Sedgefield, and Easington drew an income of £18, £12, and £14 p.a. respectively from their glebe lands. Not

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32. Personal tithes did not disappear in this period even in rural areas; they were one of the many causes of conflict between vicar and parishioners in Lesbury in the 1620s. D.R. VIII.2, f. 195.

33. Barratt, 'Condition of the Parish Clergy', 287, 298 et seq. The importance of glebe as a source of income is stressed e.g. by Heal, 'Economic Problems of the Clergy', in Church and Society in England, 104.

every rich living had extensive glebe, however, and such property was proportionately more important to the holders of impropriate livings. Where tithe, offerings and glebe are valued separately in the Valor, the latter provided on average only 11% of rectors' income, compared with 32% of that of vicars.

More detailed information about glebe is contained in terriers, most of them compiled in the 17th century. A few terriers for the diocese survive from before the Civil War, rather more from the years immediately following the Restoration. They are not enough for generalisation but they illustrate the variety of clerical holdings. In the mid 17th century the rector of Egglecliffe claimed 190 acres of farm land, 13 cottages standing in a further 33 acres, and the parsonage house and outbuildings. At Stanhope in 1663 the glebe was of similar extent; a plan of the parish shows the situation of more than 253 acres of land.<sup>34</sup> At the other end of the scale the vicar of Kirknewton, also an upland parish but a much smaller one, had only 3 acres of arable, in addition to his house and grazing rights for 6 cows, a bull, 60 sheep and 3 horses.<sup>35</sup> Most terriers describe a mixture of arable, meadow, and either inclosed pasture or rights on the town moor. Some incumbents, like the rector of Egglecliffe, drew an additional income in rents from cottages or houses. In a small urban parish, such as St. Mary in the

34. D.R. Glebe terriers, Egglecliffe, mid 17th cent. (?); Stanhope (plan), 1663. These large rectorial estates may be compared with the holdings of lesser gentry e.g. in Yorkshire, some of whom held as little as 50a. J. T. Cliffe, The Yorkshire Gentry, 31.

35. Northumberland County Hist. xi. 120.

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South Bailey, all the glebe property might be of this kind.  
The rector of Bishop Wearmouth was lord of a manor with several copyhold tenants. There was a mill on the land belonging to Sedgefield rectory; from that and the rent of 14 houses the incumbent received £190 p.a. in 1650, a substantial part of his total income of £500. Of more doubtful value was the coal mine on the glebe at Whickham

"which has heretofore beene wrought out and wasted and ..... the profitts therof are very uncerteyne and dothe sometymes render losse. It being to the best of knowledge worth twentye pounds this last year.

[i.e. 1649/50] "

By that date the rector probably profited more from the charges imposed on the owners of the valuable mines held under the Grand Lease, who had access to the river Tyne only by crossing his lands.<sup>37</sup>

The income from glebe became increasingly important to the parish clergy between 1535 and 1650.<sup>38</sup> Once again, it is only possible to assess the situation in Durham itself as the parliamentary survey of Northumberland rarely gives a detailed account of the revenues of a benefice. By 1650 nearly 35% of the income of the parish clergy was derived from glebe and the proportion was only marginally greater in impropriate than in unimpropriate livings. In all but a very few cases the glebe had increased in value far more quickly than other sources of clerical income. An extreme

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36. D.R. Glebe terriers, Durham St. Mary the Less, c. 1633.

37. S.S. clxxxv. 147, 192; Lambeth MS. Comm.XII.a. 4/108; Acts of P.C. 1616-7, 271-2.

38. In this, the diocese of Durham followed the general trend. Barratt, 'Condition of the Parish Clergy', 201-2.

example is the vicarage of Seaham, where lands worth 13s. 4d. in 1535 were valued at £22 in 1650. Increases such as those at Sedgefield, from £12 to £166, Redmarshall, from 10s. to £4, or Norton, from £6 13s. 4d. to £60 were not uncommon. The change in the balance of the finances of the parish clergy has been explained by the rapid rise in the value of land and by the direct exploitation of the glebe to provide both for the clerical household and for the market at a time of inflation. There is, however, no obvious correlation between the size or early value of the glebe and the comparative rise in the value of benefices. It was not necessarily those with the largest area of glebe or that which formed the greatest proportion of total revenue which increased in value most rapidly. The circumstances of the living, the quality of the land available for cultivation or pasture, the care and skill of successive incumbents as farmers and managers of land and property dictated the fortunes of each benefice.

In most endowed benefices the largest single element of revenue was the income from tithe. The division of tithe between rectors and vicars was for the most part on the usual lines of the great and small tithes. The grain tithe almost inevitably belonged to the rector or impropriator; the Valor gives only one instance where the grain tithe of a particular township was reserved to the vicar. The tithe on hay was often held at least in part by the vicar; of thirteen vicarages of which a detailed account is given in the Valor, six had some right to the hay tithe. Nowhere, however, was it worth more than £2 p.a. The comparative value of tithes given in the Valor also follows the usual pattern, grain being the most valuable, then hay and wool. In one Weardale parish, Wolsingham, the income from wool and lambs was greater than that from

the grain tithe. Unfortunately no details are given of the neighbouring rectory of Stanhope, another upland parish where the balance of agriculture may have produced a similar result. As elsewhere, the tithe on wool and lambs was especially important to the incumbents of impropriated parishes.

Although tithes on minerals were not recognised in common law, they were claimed by a number of incumbents in this area of lead and coal mines.<sup>39</sup> The extraordinary increase in the value of the rectory of Middleton in Teesdale from £25 17s. in 1535 to £200 in 1650, (£220 in 1634), may well have been the result of the exploitation of lead mines within the parish. In the late 16th century the tithes were sufficiently valuable for Leonard Pilkington to seek the aid of Lord Burleigh in obtaining either the payment enjoyed by his predecessors in the rectory or a composition "reasonablye to my contentacion."<sup>40</sup> A ninth part of the ore from lead mines in Weardale was due to the bishop and a tenth to the rector of Stanhope.<sup>41</sup> At Houghton le Spring the rector had reached a satisfactory agreement with those who mined the Rainton coal pits; he received forty wain-<sup>42</sup>loads of coal, worth £3 a year and delivered by the pit workers. Although there were conflicts between incumbents and owners or lessees of mines, the general practice of exacting a tithe on minerals was not apparently contested.

39. Hill, Economic Problems, 84-6.

40. Cal. Border Papers, 1595-1603, pp. 127-8. The parson of Middleton to Ld. Burghley, 30 Apr. 1596.

41. S.S. clxxxiii. 157.

42. D.R. V.7, ff. 278-84.

It is impossible to assess what proportion of tithe was affected by arrangements like that for the Rainton pits or by the substitution of cash for payment in kind. No example has been found of the commutation for monetary payment of all the tithes of a parish during the period although an agreement to that effect was made at Long Newton in the 1640s.<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, all terriers of clerical revenues make some mention of prescriptions exempting certain parishioners from payment in kind. Such agreements were made between the clergy and the inhabitants of a township or individuals who owned or occupied certain lands within the parish. Many prescriptions were for a few pence only, due from small units of land. Monetary payment was also often substituted for the whole range of tithes due from parks or demesne lands. Where the tithe on a single product was commuted, it was usually that on hay. In Durham and Northumberland, however, unlike the diocese of Worcester, the hay tithe was usually replaced by a cash payment rather than by rights to meadowland.<sup>44</sup> After hay, commutations were most commonly of tithes on the less valuable livestock; agreements sanctioned by custom were in any case necessary to resolve the problems of tithing fewer than ten beasts. Payments in cash or of set amounts of grain or flour frequently replaced the full tithe on the produce of mills. Practice in Durham thus bears out the suggestion that commutation was used principally where the collection of tithe in kind presented prac-

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43. D.C.R.O. D/Lo/F 192.

44. Barratt, 'Condition of the Parish Clergy', 220-1, 252-3.

A full discussion of commutation and its implications is in *ibid.* 250-65.

tical difficulties.

The process of tithe collection in a single parish is illustrated by the accounts kept for the rectors of Houghton le Spring in the 17th century.<sup>45</sup> "Tithe hay silver" amounted to £8 11s. in the six months before September 1629. Careful note was kept in a "breving book" of payments due from each parishioner for petty tithes. In some cases there was a prescription for the whole range of dues, in others the sum depended on the number of hens, pigs, geese etc. according to a fixed rate. A further levy of between £2 and £5 was made on each of the five corn mills. The Houghton tithe accounts also show how far the incumbent in so well endowed a parish might determine the form of his own income. By making agreements with parishioners for payments in lieu of the small tithes on their holdings and charging a rent for the corn tithe instead of collecting in kind, the rector obtained his revenues almost entirely in money rather than produce.

To do so removed the problem of the disposal of goods received as tithe. On the other hand a fixed rate of commutation could rapidly become anachronistic in an era of inflation. The existence of prescriptions and modi, the customary agreement replacing kind with cash, were seen at the time and have been since as a major threat to the financial viability of the church and above all of the lower clergy.<sup>46</sup> There was no long

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45. Houghton le Spring Tithing Bk. 1629-41. Thanks are due to the rector, the Revd. P. G. C. Brett, for making available this and other parish documents in his custody.

46. Usher, Reconstruction of the Church, i. 230-3; Hill, Economic Problems, 92-6.

term threat contained in the arrangements made by the rector of Houghton le Spring, which lasted only during his incumbency. The surviving terriers indicate that the valuable tithes on grain and wool were rarely commuted, except for the term of a single incumbency. As a result, the major sources of clerical revenue probably suffered little harm in Durham. Where cash did replace kind, the only loss was usually a potential improvement in a minor part of the clerical income as the price of foodstuffs increased.

Discussions of glebe and tithe and their relative value only provide a partial account of the nature of clerical finances, since it was by no means inevitable that the profits would go directly to the incumbent. Every beneficed clergyman had the option of farming his revenues and receiving a rent for the whole. Along with impropriation, the practice of leasing the profits of ecclesiastical livings was frequently blamed for the poverty of the clergy in the later 16th and early 17th centuries. A statute of 1571, later reaffirmed, sought to check the undoubted abuse of long leases of the revenues of a benefice which "be the chiefest Cause of the Dilapidations and the Decay of all Sprituall Livings and Hospitality, and the utter impoverishment of all Successors Incumbent in the same."<sup>47</sup> What little evidence there is

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47. 13 Eliz. I, c. 10 restricted the term of leases of ecclesiastical property to 21 years or 3 lives. Hill, Economic Problem, 114-6.

suggests that the Durham clergy rarely risked such decay, at least in relation to glebe. The great majority of beneficed parish clergy were also practical farmers. Of 68 whose probate inventories have been traced between 1570 and 1640, only 15 make no mention of agricultural implements or stock as part of the estate. Of these 2 were vicars of Newcastle, (each of whom kept a single cow) and 3 were incumbents of the stipendiary vicarages at Berwick and Tynemouth and had no glebe to farm.<sup>48</sup> Clerical farming was not necessarily limited to the glebe lands but clergy who cultivated their personal estates are unlikely to have neglected the opportunities offered by their benefices.

There is no similar measure of the involvement of clergy in tithe collection. Much of the agricultural produce mentioned in probate records must have come to the clergy as tithe and occasionally it is so described. Large amounts of grain or wool stored in clerical barns at certain times of the year reflect the seasonal payments. Depositions before the consistory court in Durham and other judicial bodies illustrate the practicalities of tithe collection. The incumbent rarely took part in assessing and organising the tithe to be taken from individuals. That was usually the job of his servant, son, or, if there was one, an assistant curate. Curates were

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48. Wills and inventories of the following; Gilbert Spence, vic. Tynemouth. S.S. cxlii. 18-23; D.R. Prob. 1607; William Morton, rec. Easington and vic. Newcastle. D.R. Prob. 1620; Henry Power, vic. Newcastle. D.R. Prob. 1623; Richard Clerke, vic. Berwick. D.R. Prob; 1607; William Robinson, vic. Tynemouth. D.R. Prob. 1623.

frequently witnesses in tithe cases, both as supporters of their masters' interests and because they were better acquainted than most with the details of tithing practice in the preceding years. In 1601 Henry Ewbanke, rector of Elwick, sent his son Christopher and curate Peter Fisher to assess and collect the tithe of lambs from Christopher Chilton. They reported their suspicion that Chilton had cheated them of the full tithe and in the ensuing suit Fisher not only gave evidence about this incident but also about the rector's receipt of tithes during the five years of his curacy.<sup>49</sup> Occasionally the court records also illustrate the disposal of goods acquired as tithe: the conflict between Henry Bell, vicar of Stranton, and Henry Brasserton over the tithe due on the latter's bee-hives was precipitated by the anxiety of another parishioner to whom Bell had promised the sale of the hive he intended to exact as his due.<sup>50</sup>

Records of the frequency and nature of leases of ecclesiastical profits are rare. There is nothing to compare, for example, with the visitation of Worcester in 1584 which revealed that the revenues of more than one third of the benefices in the diocese had been alienated.<sup>51</sup> Where the details of a lease are known, it was often short and the rent not unrealistically low. In the 1570s, for example, William Massey of Stranton leased out the tithe hay of three closes in the parish for three years, with the proviso that if he should die before

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49. D.R. V.7, ff. 133, 146. Cf. D.R. V.4, ff. 58-9, 61-2, 153.

50. D.R. V.7, f. 143.

51. Barratt, 'Condition of the Parish Clergy', 206.

the expiration of the lease his executors were to pay the lessees 10s. for each remaining year and recover the tithe for his successor.<sup>52</sup> The agreement of 1627 between Isaac Marrow, rector of Elsdon, and Thomas Ogle which brought the rector the "valuable consideracion" of £200 for three years' lease of the tithes and dues of the parish was a reasonable bargain since the entire living was valued at £120 p.a. in 1634 and the absentee incumbent was thus freed from the problems of tithe collection.<sup>53</sup> Ill effects were more likely to proceed from his absence than from financial loss. Some leases were, however, less favourable to the clergy. In 1602 the annual rent of the rectory of Whitfield was set at just under £16, a sum probably well below the true value of a living worth £8 in 1535 and £80 in 1650.<sup>54</sup>

iv. The Defence of Clerical Income.

The ecclesiastical authorities naturally encouraged the lower clergy to adopt a responsible and far-sighted attitude towards their revenues. One weapon which they put into the hands of the parish minister in defence of his income was the terrier of clerical rights and properties. The clergy were thus forced to enquire closely into their rights and to provide a standard for future reference. The earliest surviving terriers date from the early 17th century; there was

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52. Inventory of William Massey. S.S. xxxviii. 311-12.

53. D.R. V.12, ff. 69-72.

54. Will of Edmund Troutbecke, rec. Whitfield. D.R. Prob. 1606.

greatest pressure on incumbents and parish officers to produce an account of

"all Glebe lands, Meadows, Gardens, Orchards, Houses, Stockes, Implements, Tenements and Portions of Tythes within or without your Parish, which belong unto your Parsonage or Vicarage and in whose hands it doth remaine"

in the 1630s. Failure to do so was frequently reported at visitations in response to the careful enquiries of the bishop, chancellor, or archdeacon.<sup>55</sup> Some incumbents responded with enthusiasm. In compiling terriers of his two vicarages of Gainford and Kelloe in 1634 and 1635, John Lively set down with great precision the size of the vicarage house and its outbuildings, the extent and location of lands belonging to the livings, the prescriptions on tithes of hay and other products "pretended" by certain parishioners, his accepted rights to other tithes, and the customary and agreed payments for tithing of animals and perishable goods and for extraordinary services. He even gave an account of his dispute as vicar of Kelloe with the master of Sherburn hospital over lands which he claimed were

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55. Terriers were first required in 1571 and the order was reiterated in 1603. D. M. Barratt, Ecclesiastical Terriers of Warwickshire Parishes, (Dugdale Soc. xxii), pp. xiii-xiv. The earliest surviving Durham terrier is from Stanhope, dated 1608. D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 10.8. A terrier was required by archidiaconal visitation articles for Durham in 1636; D. and C. Libr., Hunter MS. 67.8. There is evidence of attempts to enforce provision in the fragmentary records of visitations in the 1630s. P.K. D. and C. Mun., Dioc. Chan. Vis. 1634-7, 1635-6, 1637, passim.

part of the glebe. The aggressive note is very strong but Lively's successors must have been grateful for so clear a statement of their potential rights.<sup>56</sup>

Few clergy actively sought to extend their holdings by such controversial claims. Partly as a result, cases concerning glebe rarely came before the ecclesiastical courts, a circumstance which also perhaps reflects a general respect for the rights of the parochial clergy to the lands attached to their benefices. In only one parish where comparison is possible was the extent of the glebe markedly less in 1650 than in 1535.<sup>57</sup> The incumbent's rights were at greatest risk when a general redistribution of holdings took place, especially during the process of inclosure. Like any small landowner, the clergyman was at the mercy of greater men in these circumstances.<sup>58</sup> When one of the earl of Northumberland's officers inclosed a common pasture at Alnham in 1612, the curate, John Spence, shared the resentment of his parishioners and joined with them in removing the fences, taking a leading part in the ensuing quarrel with the earl's representative.<sup>59</sup> Once inclosure had taken place, there might be confusion between the glebe and the incumbent's personal holdings. When the town fields of Lesbury were divided in 1623 the vicar, Patrick Mackilwayne, was allotted a close of 110 acres of arable. A few years later the lay impropiator

56. D.R. Glebe terriers, Gainford, 1634; Kelloe, 1635.

57. Bishop Middleham.

58. Hill, Economic Problems, 100-6.

59. Sta. Cha. 8/227/12.

challenged the standing of the close as glebe, exempt from the payment of the rectorial tithe. Other parishioners claimed that in return for its use as glebe, Mackilwayne had promised to "yerelie maintayne and kepe a Bull and a Bore or Brawne at his proper costs and chardge for and to thuse of his neighbours and parishioners ....."<sup>60</sup>

Alteration in the use or division of land could also prejudice the income from tithe. The scope of an existing prescription might be extended, the tithe might become due to the rector instead of the vicar or vice versa. Bishop Matthew was presumably contemplating the harm so done when he commented to Cecil in 1597 that one of the best ways of improving clerical income and thus clerical standards was to "revise the statutes for tillage".<sup>61</sup> How far his comment was prompted by the experience of the Durham clergy is impossible to tell. Only a few cases have been found which were brought before the diocesan courts in an effort to secure tithes from newly inclosed or reclaimed lands or where there had been some change of use. The process of inclosure also provided an opportunity for those who owed tithes to press for the establishment of a modus. General commutation was not necessarily prejudicial to clerical rights, at least in the short term, if the incumbent took care to state these in full and specify what he considered a just exchange. Ralph Tunstall, rector of Long Newton, drew up such an account in 1641. He listed his receipts from the most valuable of the tithes to be commuted, that on corn, for six of the previous thirteen years and

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60. D.R. V.12, ff. 170-2; R. A. Butlin, 'Enclosure and Improvement in Northumberland in the 16th century', Arch. Ael. 4th ser. xlv. 152.

61. Hist. MSS. Com. 9, Hatfield, vii, p. 453. Bp. Matthew to Ld. Burghley, 29 Oct. 1597.

suggested that the rate be set at a "middle proportion between the two extremes" of £81 12s. 10d. and £93 10s. 8d. Also listed were all other dues and payments, such as the "offal", the gleanings from the harvest, the value of which had not yet been assessed, and existing compositions which would be continued. If the agreement took into account all these considerations, Tunstall's financial position should have been little affected, although inflation might have brought problems to his successors.<sup>62</sup>

The careful incumbent always kept close watch over his revenues; the accounts of the rector of Houghton le Spring served that purpose. Most clergy probably kept some form of account book to keep track of the diverse sources of their income. Francis Bunny, rector of Ryton, from 1578 to 1617, had a separate record for the Easter offerings and so-called 'outen-tithes' due from each parishioner.<sup>63</sup> Careful accounting, however, could not always ensure payment. If persuasion failed, the only course open to the clergyman in pursuit of his rights was litigation. Disputes over tithe were by far the most common of all conflicts over ecclesiastical revenues to come before the ecclesiastical courts. Although this is not the place for a general survey of tithe litigation, the account of clerical finances would not be complete without some indication of its extent and nature.

62. D.C.R.O. D/Lo/F 197.

63. Ibid. EP/Ry. 10, 11, 12. Ryton tithe accounts 1593-4, 1595, 1609-10; J. Bailey, 'Books of Easter Offerings, Small Tithes, and 'Outen' Tithes of the Parish of Ryton', Arch. Ael. 2nd ser. xix. 39-48. Examples of clerical tithe books from other dioceses are given by O'Day, 'Clerical Patronage and Recruitment', 349; D.M. Gransby, 'Tithe Disputes in the Diocese of York, 1540-1639', (York Univ. M. Phil. thesis, 1966), 28-30.

As a guide to the volume of tithe litigation and the involvement of the clergy an analysis has been made of business before the Durham consistory court during three five year periods, 1577-82, 1595-1600, and 1629-34. The precise dates were dictated by the survival of the consistory act books.<sup>64</sup> In all three periods, the amount of clerical litigation was considerable. Between 1577 and 1582 clergy brought more tithe cases than did laymen. The contrast was less marked in the later periods but even then between 40% and 50% of all tithe litigation was initiated by clergy. Parish ministers were responsible for the great majority of cases; only a few were brought by institutions or appropriators. The pattern in Durham was thus very different from that in Yorkshire, immediately to the south. There tithe litigation by the parish clergy has been characterised as "peripheral" before the 16th century and of little importance even then when compared with the volume of lay tithe causes. In the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield, clerical tithe litigation accounted for approximately a third of all tithe causes in the early 17th century, a figure closer to that of Durham, but still well below it.<sup>65</sup>

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64. Records used were D.R. III.3, 4, 5, 11, 12; D.R. V.3, 4, 7, 12.

65. Gransby, 'Tithe Disputes in York', pp. iv-v; O'Day, 'Clerical Patronage and Recruitment', 338.

The volume of litigation, measured by the number of individuals prosecuted, increased from 287 cases in 1577-82 to 411 in 1595-1600 and 633 in 1629-34. The later totals may be artificially high, inflated by the catastrophic harvests of the 1590s and 1630s, but this is not a sufficient explanation, especially as the problems of grain supply were far more serious at the end of the 16th century than in the later period.<sup>66</sup> The number of cases brought by the clergy did not increase quite so quickly; 179 individuals were prosecuted by the clergy in the first five years, 189 between 1595 and 1600 and 299 between 1639 and 1634. Multiple prosecutions by both lay and clerical tithe owners were more common in the 17th century. Lay tithe farmers more usually initiated actions against more than a handful of defaulters but in 1632 John Boutflower, vicar of Kirkwhelpington, prosecuted twelve parishioners.<sup>67</sup> There was rarely any question of concerted opposition; the tithe owner was merely taking action against all those with debts outstanding when he collected his dues at the stated times.

The most active clerical litigants of the early years were the most prosperous. Rectors from the wealthy livings of county Durham (although not the senior clergy who also held

66. M. James, Family, Lineage, and Civil Society, 7-9; W. G. Hoskins, 'harvest Fluctuations and English Economic History, 1480-1619', Ag. H.R. xii. 45-8. The volume of tithe cases in the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield corresponded to the state of the Harvest. O'Day, 'Clerical Patronage and Recruitment', 339-40.

67. D.R. III.11, f. 282.

parochial benefices), took a particularly prominent part. Their less affluent colleagues were probably discouraged by the cost of a court case, especially when the sums at stake were small. By the 1630s the distinction had disappeared. The incumbents of Brancepeth<sup>e</sup>, Sedgfield, and Ryton, many of them members of the cathedral group, were still marginally more active in pursuing tithe defaulters than their fellows. A larger number of clergy in less valuable benefices were also willing to take legal action. By the beginning of the century, incumbents of the very poorest livings in Northumberland, the rectories of Knaresdale and Ingram and the vicarages of Kirknewton and Kirkwhelpington, had started prosecuting defaulters in the church courts. The initiative was the more remarkable because the clergy of Northumberland were generally less litigious than their colleagues in Durham. Unbeneficed clergy are also found in greater numbers amongst the tithe farmers who prosecuted defaulters in the 17th century.

The nature of default on tithe payment was as diverse as tithe itself. Where the great tithe was at issue, most cases arose from alleged concealment of titheable produce or the harvesting of a crop without setting out the tenth part. Tithes on livestock and especially on wool and lambs were the most common subject of litigation. The potential for confusion and conflict was apparently endless and often related to the customs of the individual parish. Prescriptions on all or part of the tithes of a single township were also common sources of conflict, often between an incumbent and a group of parishioners.

Most of the parishioners involved were naturally men and women of relatively humble standing. Differences with the local gentry were also pursued into the courts. On occasion even a curate, such as Francis Brackenbury of Croxdale, might challenge the leading gentry of his chapelry, in his case the Salvin family. As prominent recusants, the Salvins were perhaps more vulnerable than most.<sup>68</sup> Even if there was no direct challenge to the landlord, his interest might be engaged on behalf of his tenants. As William Orde pointed out to the earl of Northumberland, in discussing the claim of the rector of Rothbury to tithes in kind from the tenants of Rothbury forest, "the more free they are from other men, the higher will the Rent be advanced to your Lordship".<sup>69</sup>

Where there was an impropriation there was also scope for conflict between the rector, lay or clerical, and the vicar or curate. Several instances have been found of parish clergy prosecuted by the lay farmers of the great tithe. An extended quarrel arose from rival claims to tithe hay in the parish of Kirknewton. The vicar, Emmanuel Trotter, took his claim before the Council in the North. The Strother family, owners of the rectory, retaliated with a suit in Star Chamber. Trotter alleged that he had been forcibly prevented from collecting what was due to him. He had no intention of extending the rights of his vicarage beyond their customary

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68. D.C.R.O. D/Sa/L 29-30.

69. Alnwick Castle, Sion MS. Q. VII. 1. William Orde to the earl of Northumberland, 23 Feb. 1607.

limits but the impropiators, also patrons of the living, had sought to disendow the benefice entirely. They had hoped, according to Trotter, to add the vicarial revenues of £30 p.a. to the rectory, already worth £300, and reduce the minister to the status of a stipendiary.<sup>70</sup>

No single cause can be identified for the increase in tithe litigation. It is not clear, for example, whether the laity were less willing to pay their tithes than they had once been. The clergy, like the lay tithe owners, were determined not to lose any part of what was due to them and of necessity argued that every default followed a long period of quiet and uninterrupted payment according to custom. Throughout the period they were spurred on by the effects of inflation and the needs of their families. They were also encouraged in the defence of their rights by the hierarchy. This sponsorship reached its peak under Laud, the friend and patron of many senior clergy of the diocese in the 1630s. Approval from above, hand in hand with improved educational and professional standards, no doubt increased clerical self-confidence in the face of lay obstruction. Already in a better financial position than their predecessors, incumbents of even the poorest livings in the diocese became increasingly willing to appear as plaintiffs in the consistory at Durham or, if necessary, before provincial and national courts.

v. Augmentations and Other Sources of Income.

Lasting augmentations of ecclesiastical livings in the form of additional or new endowments were rare. In Durham they were made only in the 17th century, usually under the patronage of Bishop Morton. The bishop advocated augmentations not only in his own successive dioceses but also on a national scale.

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70. Sta. Cha. 8/266/11.

He canvassed legal opinion on the duty and right of bishops to enforce the payment of adequate stipends by impropiators and may have prompted Laud to take up the cause of incumbents of impoverished livings. It proved more difficult to put his ideas into practice. His only certain achievement in Durham was in St. Andrew Auckland, the parish in which stood the episcopal residence of Bishop Auckland. The stipend of the 'vicar' or principal curate at St. Andrew's was increased from £16 to £30 p.a.; those of the ministers of the dependent chapels from £6 to £30 p.a. The source of the augmentations is not clear. Morton's secretary and biographer, Richard Baddiley, implied but nowhere clearly stated that the payment was made from the bishop's own pocket. Pressure may have been put upon the Crown farmers of the college lands to improve the stipends.<sup>71</sup> The dean and chapter of Durham had applied similar pressure some years earlier when they made the presentation of John Hume to the vicarage of Branxton dependent on the augmentation of his stipend and the restoration of glebe lands, tithes, and oblations detained by Sir William Selby, the farmer of the rectory.<sup>72</sup>

Morton's failure to make greater progress has been variously attributed to the interruption of his episcopate and

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71. Hill, Economic Problems, 322, 327; W. Hutchinson, History and Antiquities of Durham, i. 499; J. Walker, Sufferings of the Clergy, ii. 18. Walker says that the stipend of the curate of Bp. Auckland was increased from £16 to £30 p.a. but as there was no provision for a curate there at the dissolution or in 1650 this seems to be a mistake.

72. P.K. D. and C.Mun., Chapter Act Bk. 1619-38, f. 63.

to the hostility of the gentlemen who held or farmed impropriations. Both explanations no doubt contain some truth but the local gentry were not uniformly indifferent to the problems of the clergy. In 1614, well before Morton's episcopate, the holders of the manor of Trimdon, Humphrey and Thomas Wharton, made over to the curate of Trimdon chapel, a dependency of Kelloe, and his successors a house and garth and an annual income of £20, charged upon the manor and administered by four trustees.<sup>73</sup> Another former collegiate church, Staindrop, was later re-endowed by Sir Henry Vane, then resident at Raby Castle. It was the most substantial augmentation undertaken during the period. The vicarage was established in 1635 and Vane was licensed to endow the living with lands and tithes to the value of £57 p.a. He was also granted the impropriation of the dissolved college, valued at £58 10s. 7d., which still carried the obligation to pay the stipends of £16 13s. 4d. and £6 13s. 4d. set apart for the vicar and his assistant at the dissolution. Vane presented valuable furnishings to the church over the next few years, spending in all considerably more than the income from the impropriation: his only material gain was the advowson of the new vicarage. He immediately appointed Nathaniel Ward M.A. who became a close friend, cooperating with Vane in the govern-<sup>74</sup>ment of the parish and in the running of the household at Raby.

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73. Surtees, Hist. Durham, i. 108.

74. Ibid. iv. 136; D.R. I.4, ff. 114-15; D.N.B.; Venn; Walker Rev.; Notes and Queries, 2nd ser. viii. 76; xii. 426; Cal. S.P. Dom. 1639-40, 535. Nathaniel Ward to Sir Henry Vane, 10 Mar. 1640; 1640, 27. Same to same, 13 Apr. 1640.

In one group of livings, additional income had been provided for the parish clergy on a less formal basis over a far longer period. The dean and chapter of Durham gave financial assistance to the clergy of the officialty, many of them incumbents of poor or wholly inappropriate livings, either adding to their stipends or making them grants of tithes, lands, or other concessions. Direct augmentation was rarely employed as far as the parochial clergy were concerned, although some benefitted from the additional payments made to minor canons and other junior officials of the cathedral. The only living where the incumbent regularly received additional payment was the chapelry of St. Hild in South Shields; in the 1630s the curate was paid £6 13s. 4d. beyond his usual salary. Occasionally an extra stipend was paid to a clergyman to help during a hiatus in his career. In 1627 Mark Leonard, rector of Edmondbyers and perhaps still at that date master of the song school, was granted £5 p.a. until the vicarage of Monk Hesledon should fall vacant. In the following year Thomas Smith was allowed £10 p.a. until a suitable vacancy should occur.<sup>75</sup>

The most common and probably most effective form of augmentation made by the dean and chapter took the form of grants to the incumbent of all or part of the tithes of parishes where they held the rectory. The vicar paid rent to the dean and chapter and in return recovered something of the position of rector. In some parishes, notably Ellingham and

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75. The dean and chapter made similar augmentations under Elizabeth; Ralph Lever even proposed the return of impropriations to the parish clergy. Marcombe, 'Dean and Chapter', 314-315. Information about later augmentations is from P.K. D. and C, Mun., Treas. Bks. 25, 26; Chapter Act Bk. 1619-38.

St. Oswald's, Durham, the lease became a customary part of the vicarial income, renewed at each presentation. Glebe lands were also regularly leased to incumbents and were eventually looked upon as theirs by right. The churchwardens of Billingham drew up a terrier of the vicarage glebe in 1629 and concluded their survey with a description of a farm

"belonging to ye said vicaridge, holden by lease of ye <sup>the</sup> right worshipful deane and chapter of Durham, having bene verie aunciently possessed by ye vicar ther but after warde by false dealing alienated from ye <sup>the</sup> vicaridge which ferme of laite was (by law) recovered again to the said vicaridge by ye now incumbent Christopher Boake to his great travail and charge which ferme (we hope) can now hereafter be continued in ye church, for the vicars better maintenance which we heartilie desire." 76

Leases to individual clergy but not to their successors or to men who did not hold officialty livings were not augmentations of quite the same order but nevertheless offered the opportunity of financial benefit. Another form of relief which the dean and chapter offered was a grant of timber, often made to both canons and parish clergy with the stipulation that it was to be used for the repair of church property.<sup>77</sup>

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76. D.R. Glebe terriers, Billingham, 1629.

77. P.K. D. and C. Mun., Chapter Act Bks. 1578-83, 1619-38, 1639-60, passim.

In one living which had not received augmentation from the chapter by the end of the period, the incumbent conceived a grandiose scheme on similar lines. In the late 1630s the vicar of Berwick, Gilbert Durie, submitted to the ecclesiastical authorities, and to anyone he thought might bring influence to bear, various plans for the improvement of his benefice.<sup>78</sup> The chief cause of the religious factions which divided Berwick, according to Durie's analysis, was the vulnerability of the vicar and the "weake and poor meanes which he hath for his maintenance." He received a stipend from the dean and chapter as impropiators of £20 p.a., worth no more than twenty marks after the payment of procurations and other dues, and an additional annual pension of £40 from the king. The pension derived from the payments which had been substituted by the Crown at the dissolution of the Berwick garrison for a levy previously made on the soldiers' pay. Originally designed to maintain the vicar and a preaching assistant, it was now paid irregularly to the vicar only and could not be relied upon. Durie's first suggestion was that the revenues from a lectureship recently established in the town by the Mercers' Company should be diverted to the vicarage. Later he evolved a more sophisticated scheme. He would give up his royal pension and in return receive the lease of all the tithes of the rectory, at present divided

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78. S.P. 16/352/13.i. True relation of the distracted state of the church of Berwick, 1637; S.P. 16/375/67. The estate of the vicarage of Berwick upon Tweed, und. 1637; S.P. 16/406/100. Proposal for augmenting the income of the vicar of Berwick, und. 1633; Podl. MS. Tanner 144, ff. 122-3. A project for reducing the church of Berwick to due conformitie ..... und. Durie was almost certainly the author of all these.

between two prominent citizens, William Saltonstall, who held the salmon tithe, and John Rosden, who held the land tithes, estimated by Durie to be worth £40 or £50 and £30 p.a. respectively. For these he would pay the dean and chapter the same rent as Saltonstall and Rosden "and so this course whuld nothing prejudice the impropiation onelie they shuld alter the tenants, in which case what more kyndlie tenant can they have then the vicar of the place." The expelled tenants were to be compensated by the Crown, which would cover the cost by the sale of property in the town originally used by the garrison and its officers and now granted to the Corporation who, again according to Durie, failed to make any profitable use of it. The chief stumbling block to the scheme w s the unwillingness of the Corporation to give up the property. The vicar could suggest no remedy except royal pressure. Should the dean and chapter prove recalcitrant or excessively careful of their tenants' rights, however, their title to the rectory should be challenged in law, on the grounds that Berwick was "extra regnum" and therefore their right "cannot be eodem iure as they hold ther other possessions by". The whole design came to nothing as events forced Durie from Berwick before his ideas gained a sympathetic hearing in the right quarters. The wholesale exchanges of property which he suggested would in any case have conflicted with too many individual and institutional interests to have been undertaken easily. The scheme was,

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however, in essence no more than a refinement of the methods of augmentation already employed by the dean and chapter. What was novel was that a parish clergyman was of his own accord sponsoring so ambitious a proposal.

For most clergy, any income additional to the profits of their livings derived from personal possessions or activities. Tithes leased from the dean and chapter, from other impropiators, or, in the case of curates, from the incumbent, were only one form of property in which they could invest. More than a third of those for whom wills or inventories survive left some land or other real property. The involvement of the clergy in agriculture demonstrated by probate inventories extended well beyond the cultivation of glebe. Unbeneficed clergy who held no land by virtue of their ecclesiastical position are amongst the earliest for whom there are records of private land and property holding. Thomas Pentland, for example, a minor canon and curate of St. Giles's church in Durham, held a burgage and an acre of meadow in Gilesgate at his death in 1574.<sup>79</sup> Of 32 unbeneficed curates whose inventories survive, 19 left estates in which at least a quarter of the total value came from agricultural goods and implements. Unlike their colleagues in Surrey, the Durham clergy showed no sign of withdrawing from active farming in the 17th century.<sup>80</sup> Even at the end of the period, many (including both unbeneficed curates and some of the most prosperous clergy in the diocese) still derived a substantial part of their wealth from agriculture. Some

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79. Will of Thomas Pentland. D.R. Prob. 1574.

80. Christophers, 'Surrey Clergy', 249.

proved enterprising farmers and landlords. Charles Slingsby, rector of Rothbury, met with opposition from other tenants when he sought to put his son in possession of lands leased from the earl of Northumberland and recently enclosed from the common.<sup>81</sup> The potential damage to clerical income from enclosure was thus balanced by the possible profits.

Most but not all clerical holdings were of farm land. As Pentland's will demonstrates, a few clergy had urban holdings, some of them extensive. Gilbert Spence, vicar of Tynemouth, left to his wife and family in 1607 his dwelling house in the North Bailey in Durham, "my chamber houses of the blessed virgin Mary                      nigh St. Oswald's Churche", and another house "commonlie called the Aucreage" in the suburbs of the city.<sup>82</sup> More commonly, the holding was of a single house in which the minister, beneficed or unbeneficed, resided. The variety in the extent of property held privately by parish clergy was as great as the differences in their ecclesiastical incomes. Some curates rented small parcels of aricultural land for a few pence a year. Richard Marshall, the wealthy rector of Stainton le Street who died in 1588, had estates and numerous tenants in Yorkshire and Northumberland.<sup>83</sup> Only the wealthiest could afford to establish large freehold estates. However, the substantial provision made for their families by Francis Bunny and Leonard Pilkington was imitated by humbler

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81. Alnwick Castle, Sion MS. Q.VII. 1. William Orde to the earl of Northumberland, 23 Feb. 1607.

82. S.S. cxlii. 17-23. Cf. will of Michael Walker, cur. Barnard Castle. D.R. Prob. 1614.

83. S.S. xxxviii. 318-22.

colleagues who carefully specified the rights of widows, sons, daughters, and more distant relatives to the lands and leases which they left.<sup>84</sup>

A handful of clergy are known to have put surplus income to other uses. Probate inventories frequently included lists of the debts owed to the deceased, showing that many clergy died the creditors of their neighbours. Many of the debts were small; they were often arrears of tithes and other dues or payments for purchases or rents. In several cases more substantial sums were involved, loans made by the clergy to their colleagues, local gentry, or other neighbours. Unfortunately it is impossible to discover what, if any, was the return on these loans. The largest sums were made available by men such as Henry Ewbanke, a former prebendary and rector of Whickham, who in 1628 was owed a total of £332 10s. 10d. A number of wealthy curates in the 1620s and 1630s were creditors for sums between £20 and £100 which formed a substantial part of their total estates.<sup>85</sup>

More strictly commercial ventures seems to have attracted very few of the parochial clergy. Their involvement was usually limited to contending for the payment of tithe on the products of trade and industry. Although some of the most important mines were on lands belonging to the dean and chapter or the bishop, the church played little part in the exploit-

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84. Bunny's will is printed in S.S. cxii. 108-11; the inventory is in D.R. Prob. 1617. Pilkington's will is printed in S.S. xxii. pp. cxxxiv-cxxxix.

85. Will of Henry Ewbanke. D.R. Prob. 1628; of John Cornforth, cur. Heighington. D.R. Prob. 1639; of Thomas Haigh, cur. Woodhorn. D.R. Prob. 1637.

ation of coal.<sup>86</sup> A few parish clergy showed, an interest in the trade beyond the collection of the mineral tithe. For some, involvement was inevitable. The rector of Whickham, for example, had to decide how the coal mine on his glebe should most conveniently and profitably be used. Thomas Lindley, rector of Cockfield from 1617 to 1629, was one of the sublessees of a mine in his parish, an inheritance from his father.<sup>87</sup> Lindley found the partnership sufficiently worthwhile not to sell off his interest immediately. The inheritance of a commercial interest was crucial in concerning the lower clergy in such ventures. Robert Jenison, the Newcastle lecturer, was the son of one of the leading families of the city and so inherited the privileges of a merchant. While not allowing his business activities to distract him from his calling, he exercised the privilege to acquire shares in several ships, "so imploying (or rather) others for mee, what I can spare out of the overplus of my wives portion". His activities gave a rival preacher the opportunity to attack him, playing on the hostility existing in the city against one who was "a merchant, a cole-owner, a shipowner, & whatsoever might beare any shewe to disgrace mee." The attack so worried Jenison that he sought the advice of his mentor Samuel Ward, putting the case to him thus; "supposing a minister have somewhat to spare, whether he may no imploy it in shipping etc."<sup>88</sup>

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86. James, Family, Lineage, and Civil Society, 86-96; J.U.Nef, The Rise of the English Coal Industry, ii. 3-4.

87. Mackenzie and Ross, County Palatine, ii. 213; D.R. I.4, f. 104; E 134/21 Jas. I Mich. 17.

88. Bodl. MS. Tanner 72, f. 260. Jenison to Ward, 20 Mar. 1627; f. 294. Same to same, 13 Oct. 1628.

No such heart-searching was necessary before engaging in additional pastoral duties which provided a casual income or even before taking up some occupation or profession closely associated with the church and capable of combination with a clerical career. Preachers could earn a few extra shillings by exercising their talents in parishes where there was no resident preaching minister. They could also give funeral sermons; the rate in the late 16th century was between 5s. and 10s. according to the skill and eminence of the preacher. In most parishes the clergyman was one of the few necessarily literate inhabitants and he could assist his parishioners in preparing formal documents from marriage contracts to wills, for which again a fee might be charged.<sup>89</sup> The most popular additional occupation was teaching. Clergy were encouraged to participate in education and the opportunities for them to do so were increasing, as will be seen in Chapter V. Openings for clerical lawyers were more restricted and a more specialised training was necessary. Until 1627 the office of diocesan chancellor was held by a succession of civil lawyers, who had also taken orders and held at least one parochial benefice in the diocese.<sup>90</sup> Although numerous parish clergy acted as agents or surrogates for the ecclesiastical courts and collected the fees so due to them, only one is known to have practised as a proctor. Gilbert Spence of Tynemouth was also a notary public and as active in the church courts as his lay colleagues

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89. e.g. will of Humphrey Handcock. D.R. Prob. 1579;

E 134/5 Jas. I East. 4.

90. See below pp.353-55 .

during the last years of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th centuries. Clergy who practised medicine were far more unusual; Robert Bellamy, a prebendary and holder of a number of livings in Durham and Northumberland in the 1570s and 1580s before he resigned to become master of Sherburn Hospital in 1589, is the only known example of a cleric who was also a qualified and practising doctor.<sup>91</sup>

vi. The Taxation of the Clergy.

Like his parishioners, only (it was frequently argued) to a far greater extent, the clergyman was liable to a variety of dues and taxes.<sup>92</sup> The least important, although not the least vexatious, were payments due for ecclesiastical purposes within the diocese. Every rector was responsible for the upkeep of the chancel of his church and both rectors and vicars were obliged to maintain the houses and property attached to their livings on pain of censure and even sequestration while they were incumbents or the payment of dilapidation to their successors. In some parishes the clergy were also responsible for the provision of bread and wine for the communion.<sup>92A</sup> Regular contributions were also due to the officers of the diocese. Synodals and procurations were traditionally paid by the parish clergy to the bishop or his deputy at synods and visitations, replacing the older obligation to offer hospitality to the visitor. The amounts were small; according to

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91. D.R. III.5, 6, passim; Venn; Marcombe, 'Dean and Chapter', 22.

92. F. Heal, 'Clerical Tax Collection under the Tudors', in Continuity and Change, R. O'Day and F. Heal, eds., 113; Hill, Economic Problems, 189-92.

92A.e.g. Pittington, S.S. lxxxiv. 37.

the Valor the usual payment for both was 2s. although some livings paid as much as 10s. or 12s. Most were by this date owed to the archdeacon, although the Valor still specified payments to the bishop by some incumbents and later in the century there may have been some return to the practice of a general contribution to the bishop levied at the rate of a few pence in the £ according to the 1535 valuation. Fees had to be paid for the issue and renewal of licences to curates, teachers, and preachers. The cost depended on the diocesan bureaucracy. In 1619 John Cosin was secretary to Bishop Overton, who had recently been translated from Coventry to Norwich. He made an opportunity to write to his successor as episcopal secretary in Coventry advising him on the profits to be made from the position.

"Your best course as mine was, in your Lords visitation, when their Instruments are consigned, to sit with the Register, & demaunde of every Minister their licence wherby you will deprehend them which want. One secret I will tell you, which I must entreat you to make a secret still: viid a peice you may demaunde of every one of them either licensed or not, for the exhibition of their licence, & keep ye profit to your self, howsoever the Register may perhaps challenge it." 93

Institution to a new benefice also involved payments to diocesan officials for registration and other formalities,

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93. S.S. lii. 8. Cosin to Richard Baddiley, 4 Apr. 1619.

usually amounting to a few shillings. Once a clergyman had settled in the diocese, there were contributions to be made to the expenses of the proctors of the lower clergy at convocations. The level of these was adjusted between 1563 and 1586 when it was finally settled at 1d. in the £ for all vicars having benefices valued at £10 or less in the Queen's Books and 2d. in the £ for all other beneficed clergy.<sup>94</sup>

Their responsibility for repairs to the church and to church property exempted the clergy from parish cessments levied for similar purposes. They were not, however, exempt from the poor rate. In order to clarify earlier doubts the Poor Law of 1601 specified the obligation of both clergy and those who held church lands or tithes to contribute to poor relief.<sup>95</sup> As late as 1628, however, freeholders from county Durham sought counsel's opinion on the exemptions still claimed by the dean and chapter, the hospitals, and lay improPRIATORS from both the poor rate and levies for the maintenance of highways; they proposed that glebe lands should be subject to at least some of the charges.<sup>96</sup> Opinion was given against the church and some clergy later found themselves heavily assessed by comparison with their neighbours. Between 1632 and 1647 the rector of the small parish of Winston paid a rate of between 1s. and 2s. Only once did he pay less than the leading gentlemen of the parish and on several occasions his

94. S.S. cxiii. 255-75.

95. 43 Eliz. I, c. 3; Hill, Economic Problems, 134.

96. Arch. Ael. 2nd ser. i. 51-2.

assessment was the highest for any individual.<sup>97</sup>

The burden of regular national taxation also bore heavily upon the clergy. Except for incumbents of vicarages worth less than £10 p.a. and rectories worth less than £6 13s. 4d. p.a. in the Queen's Books, all beneficed clergy paid to the Crown first fruits, the first year's income from the living by the same valuation, a requirement which might discourage a minister from seeking a new appointment unless he was very sure of the profits to be obtained. With the same exemptions, in every year but that for which first fruits were due, the beneficed clergy paid to the Crown one tenth of their income, again as assessed in 1535. In addition there were the clerical subsidies, voted by convocation to coincide with parliamentary subsidies, to which both beneficed and unbeneficed clergy contributed. To these were added from time to time benevolences, aids, forced loans, and eventually ship money, to all of which the clergy were more vulnerable than their lay contemporaries. In years of war, especially in the 1580s and the 1590s, the burden on the clergy became heavier, as the Crown demanded more frequent subsidies and multiple grants

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97. 'The Winston Churchwardens' Accounts, 1632-95', ed. Miss Elleston, Arch. Ael. 2nd ser. xvii. 103, 117, 119. The rector may have owned property in the parish in addition to that belonging to the living which would have been included in the assessment.

became the rule.<sup>98</sup>

There were problems in collecting taxes from the clergy as from any other group. The clerical subsidy rolls show that there were always defaulters, in addition to those legally exempt. There was a hard core of offenders whose repeated failure to pay taxes, both local and national, was only one aspect of a wider neglect of their responsibilities and duties.<sup>99</sup> An extreme example was that of Robert Charlton, pluralist vicar of Stamfordham and Ovingham. A defaulter on the subsidy in 1596 as vicar of Stamfordham, he was prosecuted in the same year for failing to pay procurations and three years later for dues to the diocesan registrar. In both 1599 and 1603 action was taken against him for the repair of Stamfordham vicarage; meanwhile in 1601 he had been accused of neglect of the provision of preaching and hospitality in his absence from Ovingham.<sup>100</sup>

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98. J. J. Scarisbrick, 'Clerical Taxation in England, 1485-1547', Jnl. Ecc. Hist. xi. 41-55; Hill, Economic Problems, 188-98; F. C. Dietz, English Public Finance, 1558-1641, 384-95. The account of clerical subsidies given by Dietz does not tally precisely with those listed for the northern province in S.S. cxiii. 255-303. In Lincoln curates usually contributed 6s. 8d. to the subsidy; C.W. Foster, State of the Church in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I (Lincoln Rec. Soc. xxiii), p. xvii. Loans and benevolences were requested e.g. in 1604 and 1614; Hist. MSS. Com. 9, Hatfield, xvi, p. 231. Bp. Matthew to Sir Robert Cecil, 15 Aug. 1604; D. & C. Libr., Hunter MS. 11. 14.

99. e.g. E 179/62/85; E 179/62/108.

100. D.R. II.4, f. 18; D.R. II.5, ff. 2-3; D.R. II.6, f. 10; D.R. III.5, f. 129.

In 1617 an enquiry was ordered into arrears of first fruits and tenths in the diocese. Only two or three livings were in arrears for first fruits but over fifty owed tenths for anything from one to forty years. The worst cases were naturally those exceptional livings where there had been no consecutive service by a beneficed minister, particularly the two tiny parishes of St. Mary in the city of Durham. Otherwise the greatest recalcitrance was shown by the clergy of Northumberland, where the incumbents of eight livings were in arrears for between ten and fifteen years. Collection of the subsidy was also less successful in Northumberland. Poverty was not the sole explanation, although some poor livings were amongst those furthest in arrears. Amongst the defaulters on both the subsidy and the ecclesiastical tenth were the holders of some of the better livings of both counties including wealthy pluralists and some prebendaries.<sup>101</sup>

The responsibility for collection of tenths, subsidies, and occasional grants was usually laid upon the chancellor, although some other trusted associate of the bishop was occasionally appointed to the task. The business of collection was usually amalgamated with that of visitation, a device perhaps more practical in Durham than in many dioceses because of the regularity with which the chancellor or his deputies visited local centres. The system was still by no means foolproof. Deprived of his rectory of Simonburn for failure to pay tenths worth £3 6s. 8d., Robert Cuthbert appealed to Lord Burghley for restitution. He claimed that the bishop had sent for payment in

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101. D. and D. Libr., Raine MS. 124, ff. 239-40.

January when Cuthbert had been in London, in pursuit of an earlier suit over possession of the living, rather than on the customary Tuesday after Low Sunday. Furthermore, the collector had only visited Corbridge, eight miles from his own living, neglecting to come to Simonburn in person as by statute he should have done.<sup>102</sup> Objections were also raised to the level of demands. In the last years of his life Bernard Gilpin engaged in a lengthy dispute with John Barnes, rector of Haughton le Skerne and surrogate to his brother the bishop. Gilpin objected successively and apparently justifiably to the demands made by Barnes for contributions to the bishop's visitation, for the subsidy of 1581, and for the annual tenths. His interest, he said, was the protection of his successors and he warned Barnes that unjust exactions would lead men to "think you seek it for your own purse."<sup>103</sup>

Not all tax collectors were as rapacious or inconsiderate. As chancellor, Clement Colmore was responsible for the collection of tenths and subsidies under Bishop Hutton. He did his best to ease the burden on clergy who found themselves in difficulties, on "earnest request" granting them acquittances for payments which had not yet been made. At his death he provided for any who might still suffer the consequences of their default:

"if after my decease any parson or vicar within this diocese or there assigns shalbe called in question or trouble for any arrearage due unto the late Queene of

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102. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1566-79, 547. Petition of Cuthbert to Burghley, 6 July 1578.

103. Gilpin, Life of Gilpin, 216-43.

thrice blessed memory during the tyme of my collector-shippe ..... upon shew of there acquittance or if it shall appeare by my booke of tenthes and subsidies that the said arrerage was by me received & not paid over into the exchequer then my executor ..... shalle paie out of my goods and Chattels the said arrerage of tenthes or subsidies & free the partie from the charge of fees." 104

The clergy were also bound to contribute to the defence of the country. The clerical contribution to the militia was assessed by the bishops and only the end result in arms and men was inspected with the rest of the muster. It was one of the few taxes sufficiently flexible to bring new groups within the bounds of liability. When the bishops were ordered to assess their clergy they were to include both those who had previously contributed and those now deemed able to do so. There is no record of the effects of the demand within the diocese but by the end of the 16th century the archbishop of York was protesting that the poverty of the clergy of his province would not allow them to raise the force required by the government.<sup>105</sup>

The clergy were thus more heavily and regularly taxed than the laity and in some respects the burden was increasing. The

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

105. L. Boynton, The Elizabethan Militia, 33-4, 185, 222-4.

There were often complaints against the burden placed upon the clergy. Acts of P.C. 1597-8, 583-4; Hist. MSS. Com. 9, Hatfield, xi, pp. 442. Archbp. Hutton to Sir Robert Cecil, 22 Oct. 1601. Senior clergy and the wealthier parish clergy made additional contributions towards defence; P.K. York Dioc. Regy. R.VI.c. Delta, ff. 55-6.

possibility of exemption from local taxes was removed, subsidies became more frequent (and even when they were not imposed, the clergy could be called upon to grant a benevolence), and the obligation to contribute to the militia might be extended as clerical incomes rose. On the other hand, the major clerical taxes were still assessed according to the Valor and the ability of the clergy to cope with the greater demands upon them depended very largely upon the rate of increase in the value of their livings.<sup>106</sup>

vii. The Wealth of the Clergy.

The best evidence available for the living standards of the clergy comes from the probate records; inventories which give the value and composition of moveable possessions at the death of the owner and wills which throw greater light on the clergy's holdings of real property and give some indication of the relative value attached to material goods.

Because land and other real property were omitted from inventories, they obviously do not provide an exact or complete guide to the total value of an estate. In most cases, however, the value of moveable goods was probably related to the wealth of the individual. Complete inventories have been found for 68 beneficed and 27 unbeneficed clergy. They show a great disparity of wealth not only between the beginning and end of

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106. No Durham clergyman is known to have begged exemption from the payment of national taxes on the grounds put forward by the vicar of Crosby in Leicestershire in 1614; "my livinge is verie small about x li communibus annis, my charge verie great xiii children livinge and I live in debt." Hoskins, 'The Leicestershire Country Parson', in Leicestershire History, 18.

the period but even within a single decade. In personal estate, although not in the income from their benefices, there was an increasing distance between the richest and the most impoverished; the pattern in the diocese thus follows that found for example in Lincolnshire throughout the 16th century.<sup>107</sup> Two or three clergy in each decade left goods worth less than £25.<sup>108</sup> At the same time, an increasing number of their colleagues were sufficiently affluent to leave estates valued at more than £200. In the late 16th century two or three examples have been found in each decade; by the 1620s and 1630s there were five or six.

By that date a number owned goods and chattels assessed after their deaths at £500 or more; six incumbents of parish livings died in possession of such estates. Most of those who left goods valued at more than £200 were prebendaries or diocesan officers as well as parish clergy. Even in the 16th century none of the senior clergy left an estate of lesser value. The most valuable estate left by a parochial incumbent was that of William Morton, archdeacon of Durham and thus rector of Easington and vicar of Newcastle, where he made his home. His goods, valued at more than £1,800, consisted of the unusually luxurious furnishings of a large house and his extraordinarily extensive library.<sup>109</sup> Only two purely parochial clergy left possessions of comparable

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107. Brooks, 'Social Position of the Parson', Jnl. Brit. Arch. Assoc. 3rd ser. x. 36.

108. The inclusion and calculation of debts are not consistent and totals quoted are therefore of estates before the subtraction of debts and legacies, unless otherwise stated.

109. Will and inventory of William Morton. D.R. Prob. 1620.

value. John Allenson, rector of Whickham (d. 1619), and Ralph Richardson, vicar of Aycliffe (d. 1631), both left goods worth between £900 and £1,000. Both derived the greater part of their income from agriculture and the comparison with Morton, who apparently held no agricultural land, may therefore be inappropriate.<sup>110</sup>

Although the senior clergy were usually the most prosperous in the diocese, there is no general correlation between the wealth of the parish clergy and the value of the livings which they held. There was no clear divergence in the standard of living of rectors and vicars or even of beneficed and unbeneficed. Richardson's vicarage of Aycliffe was reasonably well-endowed but the incumbent could not expect an income similar to those of the rectors of Houghton le Spring or Middleton in Teesdale. Men who occupied less profitable benefices often maintained a very comfortable standard of living and left a considerable estate to their heirs. In 1588 Robert Marshall, rector of Stainton le Street, left goods to the value of £274 and six years later the possessions of Robert Murray, including a flock of 300 sheep, were assessed at £201.<sup>111</sup> Some curates amassed estates rivalling those of the more affluent beneficed clergy. Although the most valuable estate listed in the probate inventories of the 1570s was that of Richard Gregge, curate of Hart,<sup>112</sup> the prosperous

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110. Inventory of John Allenson. D.R. Prob. 1620; will and inventory of Ralph Richardson. D.R. Prob. 1632.

111. S.S. xxxviii. 318-22; will and inventory of Robert Murray. D.R. Prob. 1594.

112. S.S. cxii. 55.

curate was a more common figure in the 17th century. In the 1620s five curates left estates worth between £120 and £500; two were independent stipendiaries and the rest assistant clergy. Most are known to have farmed the tithe and glebe from their employers, either incumbents or impropriators.<sup>113</sup>

As late as the 1620s, however, some curates left no more than a few pieces of furniture and a minimum of agricultural stock, crops, and gear. Thomas Liddell, curate of Chester le Street, died in 1622 possessed of an estate of less than £9. The most valuable items were his two cows, valued at £2 13s. 4d. and his apparel, valued at £1 13s. 4d.<sup>114</sup> Such extremes of poverty were rare and only four curates left estates totalling less than £20 although some had possessions worth only slightly more. Most stipendiary vicars also left very small estates. The level of their ecclesiastical income is reflected in the inventories more closely than that of any other group except the senior clergy. Successive vicars of Tynemouth, Darlington, and Berwick were amongst the poorest of the beneficed clergy. An extreme case was that of William Robinson of Tynemouth whose total estate of clothing, furniture, and books was valued at only £4 12s. 6d. in 1623.<sup>115</sup> A few clergy also left debts whose total exceeded that of the value of their moveable goods. The numbers of inventories with full lists of creditors is too small for any generalisation about clerical indebtedness

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113. Inventory of John Byers, cur. Jarrow. D.R. Prob. 1627; of Thomas Dent, cur. Durham city. D.R. Prob. 1628; of Anthony Airey, cur. Houghton le Spring. D.R. Prob. 1628; of John Jackson, preacher Berwick. D.R. Prob. 1629; of Peter Wells, cur. Merrington. D.R. Prob. 1635.

114. Inventory of Thomas Liddell. D.R. Prob. 1622.

115. Inventory of William Robinson. D.R. Prob. 1623.

and there is little indication of the way in which the debts were incurred. The majority of clergy left estates of more moderate value, largely unencumbered, and usually worth between £30 and £200; the average value increased with the passage of time and inflation.

The figures quoted above would give a better impression of clerical wealth were it possible to make some comparison with lay finances. There are considerable problems in relating clerical estates to those of their lay contemporaries as described in the probate records. Whereas the clergy formed a distinct professional and social group, it is difficult to draw a dividing line between lay social classes on the basis of their estates as recorded in probate inventories alone. A survey of Durham probate inventories from the 1580s gives instances of a yeoman possessing as little as £15 in goods, a husbandman as much as £80, and a gentleman anything from £20 to over £1,000. In moveable possessions at least, those clergy who left estates of £200 or more were as well provided as the upper ranks of the yeomanry and in many cases were the equals of the gentry. There was, of course, one vital difference. Because their income and freehold were for life only, the form of their wealth and the proportion deriving from chattels might be very different from that of laymen. In Durham as in Lincolnshire and Leicestershire the majority of the clergy were probably in financial circumstances not unlike those of the yeomanry and their relative position improved as the title of 'yeoman' was appropriated by less prosperous men in the 17th century. The poorest clergy might leave goods worth little more than those of a labourer, although the nature

of the goods would probably be very different.<sup>116</sup>

The possessions and goods listed in clerical inventories naturally reflect the sources of clerical income. Agricultural goods usually predominate, the products of tithing in kind, and the equipment and stock of the practical farmer, with debts and rents also taking their place in some inventories. Any surplus income which was not used in capital investment or expenditure could provide comforts and ornaments beyond the necessities of life. Some clergy must have spent much of their surplus income on books. Others made a better material investment by purchasing plate. By the end of the period most clerical households could boast a few silver spoons, but only the most affluent spent large sums on gold and silver. As early as the 1580s Richard Marshall of Stainton and William Bennet, prebendary and vicar of Aycliffe, owned plate worth £97 and £40 respectively.<sup>117</sup> The general standard of comfort in the furnishing of clerical houses advanced with the years as additional chairs, cushions, and hangings became common further down the social and financial scale. The change in living standards was most obvious in the households of the wealthiest clergy, where new ornaments and cultural amenities were first acquired. By the end of the period the houses of

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116. Hoskins, 'The Leicestershire Country Parson', in Leicestershire History, 21; Brooks, 'Social Position of the Parson', Jnl. Brit. Arch. Assoc. 3rd ser. x. 25-6.

117 S.S. xxii, pp. cxviii-cxxii; S.S. xxxviii. 318-22.

most prebendaries contained at least one pair of virginals. That of Archdeacon Morton was also decorated with numerous pictures on biblical and mythological themes.<sup>118</sup>

A fundamental contribution to greater comfort was the improvement or even rebuilding of the house in which the clergyman lived. Major improvements were an extension of the responsibility of the parish clergy for the maintenance and repair of the property of their livings. Even repairs could prove expensive and the diocesan authorities had difficulty in persuading some incumbents to fulfil the obligation.<sup>119</sup> Building projects of any size were, in consequence, only undertaken by the more prosperous. Bernard Gilpin estimated that his "exceedinge great chardges, in buildings and reparaciones" for the rectory at Houghton le Spring amounted to

"well towardes three hundreth poundes, if i say no more; there be workemen, manye yet alive, beside all those who are dead, in the newcastle, in Durham, in Aucklande, in this parishe, some in Yorkshire, some in Lancashire, some in Kendall, some in Westmerland, whiche can be true witnesses, how great and manifoulde chardges I have susteyned, with all the buildings within these walles, and withe the walles also ....."<sup>120</sup>

Another notable builder was John Lively, vicar of Kelloe and Gainford, whose activities are exceptionally well recorded in the detailed terriers of the two livings. He described both

118. Inventory of William Morton. D.R. Prob. 1620.

119. D.R. II.4, 5, 6, passim.

120. S.S. xxxviii. 83-94.

vicarage houses as "well contrived", that at Kelloe erected entirely on his initiative, that at Gainford "most of yt lately built by the said John Liveley". Both were substantial residences. The Gainford house had fifteen rooms with two outhouses and at Kelloe, where there was an extensive glebe to be farmed, a large number of outhouses surrounded a three storey building of nine rooms.<sup>121</sup> Other clergy engaged in building schemes for the benefit of their heirs and families but few lavished so much money and attention on the property of their benefices. The attitude of Lively, the father of four daughters, is therefore more striking than that of Gilpin, a bachelor whose estate would be dispersed amongst his parishioners and a variety of more distant relatives.

Most clergy contented themselves with residence in the houses traditionally assigned to them within their parishes. All but a handful of livings in the archdeaconry of Durham included a dwelling house at the time of the Valor. In wholly inappropriate livings and in some Northumberland parishes the provision was less adequate. The vicar of Ovingham was by custom assigned a single room in the house belonging to the inappropriate rectory; presumably when a family man was appointed to the living he had to find alternative accommodation.<sup>122</sup> One reason for the poverty of William Robinson of Tynemouth at his death was that his belongings only included the furnishings for a single room. He may have been the victim of a similar arrangement. Curates were very rarely provided with houses as part of their living. Most acquired establishments of their own but a few were forced to lodge with parishioners, sometimes in

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121. D.R. Glebe terriers, Gainford, 1634; Kelloe, 1635.

122. H. L. Honeyman, 'Three Jacobean Houses', Arch. Ael. 4th ser. xxxi. 136.

alehouses where they could become the source of much gossip and scandal.<sup>123</sup>

In an earlier period, a number of houses in both Durham and Northumberland had an additional importance to the community as semi-fortified buildings, refuges, and strongholds against Scottish and border raiders. The "tower chamber" at Houghton le Spring probably dated from 1483 when the rector was licensed to fortify his manse. Twenty years earlier a similar licence had been granted to the rector of Redmarshall. In the mid 15th century six clergy houses in Northumberland had 'towers' attached or near to them. By the 17th century these had lost their defensive function. Some, however, retained their architectural character and 'vicar's peles' or 'parson's towers' are still found in Northumberland.<sup>124</sup>

More than any other material aspect of clerical life, the housing provided for the incumbent reflected the value of each living. Thus the rectory at Houghton le Spring, after Gilpin's improvements, was worthy of one of the richest benefices in the diocese and the country. Gilpin's biographer, George Carleton, who lived at Houghton while attending the Kepier school, commented that

"the parsonage house seemed like a bishops pallace; nor shall a man lightly find one bishops house amongst many to be compared to this house of his, if he consider the variety of buildings, and the neatness of the situation."<sup>125</sup>

A more detailed description of the building which provoked the

123. e.g. wills of James Carre, cur. Alnwick. S.S. xxxviii. 224-5; of Clement Cockson, cur. St. John's Newcastle. D.R. Prob. 1598; D.R. V.12, ff. 145-7.

124. Surtees, Hist. Durham, i. 107; N. Pevsner, The Buildings of Northumberland, 146, 156 describes examples at Elsdon and Ford.

125. Carleton, 'Life of Gilpin', 400.

admiration even of Lord Burghley is given in the inventory of Robert Hutton who died rector of Houghton in 1623. It then had fifteen rooms, two "entries" (presumably small hallways), and seven outhouses and yards each with its own purpose.<sup>126</sup> Few clerical dwellings were built on so magnificent a scale but the houses at Eggescliffe, Whickham, Haughton le Skerne, Gateshead, and Sedgfield all had between ten and sixteen rooms in addition to outhouses and lofts.<sup>127</sup> The specialised use of rooms other than the kitchen first becomes apparent in descriptions of such establishments. The study or chamber occupied by the minister himself was the first to be mentioned and it was a feature of the houses of most incumbents from the end of the 16th century. By 1620 Archdeacon Morton's Newcastle house even had rooms designated for use and occupation by children. The earliest identifications of rooms by their ornament or colour are found in descriptions of clergy houses of similar size and wealth.

Livings of more moderate value usually provided their incumbents with houses of between four and ten rooms. One of the earliest described in any detail is that at Pitlington. In 1594 at the death of Robert Murray, the wealthy sheep farmer, it consisted of four rooms, a hall, kitchen, parlour, and bed-chamber in addition to a malt loft.<sup>128</sup> The average size of

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126. D.R. Prob. 1623.

127. Inventory of Henry Naunton, rec. Eggescliffe. D.R. Prob. 1603; of John Allenson, rec. Whickham. D.R. Prob. 1620; of Henry Ewbanke, rec. Whickham. D.R. Prob. 1628; of John Hutton, rec. Gateshead. D.R. Prob. 1612; of Robert Blakiston, rec. Sedgfield. D.R. Prob. 1634.

128. D.R. Prob. 1594.

residences in such benefices gradually increased. Where more than one description of the same house survives, some extension or improvement of the structure had usually been made during the interval. By the 17th century an establishment of six rooms was usual; the additional rooms were commonly a study and an extra parlour or chamber. Even then, however, the poorest of the beneficed clergy and unbeneficed curates who provided their own housing had to be content for the most part with no more than two, three, or four rooms. In 1623 the house of Humphrey Hardman, assistant curate of Stannington, had a hall, kitchen, and chamber. A number of clergy still had no room set apart for their own use in which to pursue those studies which had come to be seen as central to the clerical life.<sup>129</sup>

Although there was great disparity in the income and material circumstances of the clergy and thus in their standing vis à vis the lay community, certain economic and financial developments affected most, if not all, those who served in the parishes. The income from all endowed livings rose during the period, usually at a rate sufficient to keep pace with inflation. The stipends of some unbeneficed clergy also rose, although more slowly. The material comforts of clerical life became greater. By the mid 17th century the houses of the clergy were slightly larger and certainly better furnished than they had previously been. The degree of change and improvement varied with the circumstances of both living and incumbent.

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129. D.R. Prob. 1623; cf. inventory of John Brown, cur.

Lanchester. D.R. Prob. 1639.

The increase in the value of a living could only be maintained if the full revenue were collected. Better material standards as well as better education gave even the poorer clergy the confidence to pursue their financial rights into the courts. For many clergymen, however, personal affluence or poverty were not directly related to the income derived from an ecclesiastical living. They engaged in activities outside the immediate sphere of the parish ministry and upon the success of these activities - agriculture, the management of urban property, money lending, teaching, commercial speculation - depended their prosperity.