

TWO EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BISHOPS OF CHESTER AND THEIR

DIocese 1771-1787

  
JOHN ADDY

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

SCHOOL OF HISTORY

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## SUMMARY

Since this thesis is the first complete coverage of the diocese of Chester since 1895, it has been necessary to give a description of the structure and administration for a great deal of material has been revealed during cataloguing of the archives. A brief account of the predecessors of William Markham is essential for both he and Leilby Porteus built on foundations laid by those who preceded them in office.

It will be observed that Markham, due to his other additional and external duties, was unable to give his diocese the attention such an awkward area of country demanded. He did his best and showed a keen interest in the affairs of the diocese but was unable to reform abuses in appointments for he had not the time at his disposal. Heilby Porteus not only reformed these abuses but also instituted a form of written examination for would be ordinands and specified the course of study. As a parish priest he took a keen interest in the welfare of his clergy and his tenure of the see highlights the problem of finding assistant curates for the northern chapelries at a time when it was believed there were more clergy than livings. At the same time the poverty of many of his clergy led to Porteus making provision for them.

In a diocese so diverse as Chester, the problem of the Dissenters and Catholics was a more serious problem than elsewhere. The new industrial areas were becoming centres of Methodism and Dissent while the Catholics maintained their strongholds in northern Lancashire, both factors leading to problems which troubled the parish clergy. Education cannot be neglected for both the above groups as well as the Anglicans were exceptionally keen to provide educational facilities in this diocese. The Sunday School movement is markedly detailed in its archives in Chester.

Since both bishops were members of the House of Lords it has been essential to account for their actions outside the diocese and see what effect these had on their domestic policy. Finally the problems of the new industrial society are outlined to show how few of the clergy or the bishops really understood the meaning of the changes. Shortage of new churches, old churches too small and combined with an unprecedented increase in population created situations which the old diocesan machinery was unable to solve.

## CONTENTS

### Introduction

|                 |   |              |
|-----------------|---|--------------|
| CHAPTER ONE:    | A Survey of the Diocese and its Organisation                                  | p.1 - 20     |
| CHAPTER TWO:    | The predecessors of William Markham as Bishops of Chester 1700-1771           | p.21 - 43    |
| CHAPTER THREE:  | William Markham   | p.44 - 52    |
| CHAPTER FOUR:   | William Markham and his Diocese   | p.53 - 78    |
| CHAPTER FIVE:   | Dissenters and Catholics in the Diocese 1771-1776                             | p.79 - 91    |
| CHAPTER SIX:    | William Markham and his extra-Diocesan activities                             | p.92 - 104   |
| CHAPTER SEVEN:  | Beilby Porteus  | p.105 - 120  |
| CHAPTER EIGHT:  | Beilby Porteus and his Diocese  | p. 121 - 162 |
| CHAPTER NINE:   | Education in the Diocese 1771-1787  | p.163 - 194  |
| CHAPTER TEN:    | Dissenters and Catholics in the Diocese 1777-1787                             | p.195 - 218  |
| CHAPTER ELEVEN: | Beilby Porteus and his extra-Diocesan activities                              | p.219 - 256  |
| CHAPTER TWELVE: | The situation <sup>of</sup> <del>for</del> the Diocese and the Church in 1787 | p.257 - 280  |

### ABBREVIATIONS

- C. & W.A.S.: Cumberland and Westmorland Archaeological  
Society
- B.I.H.R.: Borthwick Institute of Historical Research
- H.S.L.C.: Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire
- Y.A.S.: Yorkshire Archaeological Society



## INTRODUCTION

It is fourteen years since I was first introduced to a confused, dirty, unsorted, largely unknown set of archives which were described as those belonging to the old Archdeaconry of Richmond, and which as late as 1952 has been reported by the Pilgrim Trust as entirely lost. Shortly afterwards I was also introduced to an equally mixed and probably dirtier collection deposited at Chester by the Diocesan Registrar. Since that date (1957) it has been my hobby to sort, classify and catalogue the records of the former while the archivist and his staff at Chester have attempted to bring some order out of the chaos that existed there. The many problems associated with the use of these records are dealt with in the introduction to the bibliography.

Very little appears to have been written about this diocese as a whole. What written material does exist is to be found in the publications of the various county Historical and Archaeological Societies in Cheshire, Lancashire, Cumberland, Westmorland and Yorkshire. So far as I am aware, at the time of writing, no modern definitive study of the entire diocese at any period of its history is in existence other than this all too brief work.

It has been possible to throw some new light upon the Hanoverian church, in this diocese, towards the latter end of the eighteenth century, and to see some of the problems that faced it. The fortunate survival of large quantities of correspondence between the clergy and their bishops has enabled one to discuss the problems facing many clergy trying to get assistant curates in the remoter parishes, the problems of dissent in the towns, the strength of the Catholics, the withdrawal of the working class, or certain sections of it, from the parish church and the devotion of many clergy to their parishioners.

Many assumptions, especially that the number of celebrations of Holy Communion were few, have to be changed. In no other diocese was the frequency of celebrations so high and the weekly and daily services so

regularly performed. Under every crag, in the northern half of the diocese, there was a grammar school and few <sup>diocesan</sup> could compete with Chester in the overall provision for education of all types. In the almost inaccessible and conservative rural parishes of the Archdeaconry of Richmond, there was a sense of purpose and responsibility. Incumbents tended to remain for many years in the same living, often on very small stipends, but they were not exclusively parochial for many of them used their energies towards raising funds for the S.P.G., charity and Sunday Schools.

The impact of the Industrial Revolution upon this diocese can be observed at first hand from the detailed reports on its effect which were sent to Beilby Porteus by the various incumbents of the Lancashire parishes. The potential chaos and ultimate danger to the church is portrayed in their letters long before the leaders in church and state considered that such a problem existed.

What is contained <sup>a</sup> in the following pages is designed in a small way to throw some light on what Christopher Hill has termed, "a dark corner of the kingdom". If what I have written contributes in some way towards the correction of many assumptions about the Hanoverian church and to further the study of this important diocese I shall be amply rewarded. I cannot conclude without making reference to the encouragement, advice and constant support of Dr. J.A. Woods without whose assistance this study would never have been completed. In addition I must express my gratitude to the many colleagues who have given me unstinted access to the records in their care and especially to the Dean and Chapter of Chester Cathedral and the librarian Canon C. Jarman, also to Professor S.L. Greenslade, Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, Mr G. Bill the librarian at Lambeth Palace and Mr. M. Collinson, Mr. R. Sharp France, Mr. B.C. Jones and Mr. B. Redwood the archivists respectively at Leeds, Preston, Carlisle and Chester record offices.

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LIST OF THE PARISHES AND CHAPELRIES IN THE DIOCESE 1771

ARCHDEACONRY OF CHESTER

| <u>Deanery</u> | <u>Parishes</u> | <u>Chapelries</u> |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Chester        | 24              | 2                 |
| Wirral         | 15              | 1                 |
| Bangor         | 3               | 1                 |
| Malpas         | 8               | 2                 |
| Nantwich       | 10              | 5                 |
| Middlewich     | 11              | 4                 |
| Macclesfield   | 8               | 22                |
| Frodsham       | 10              | 14                |
| Manchester     | 11              | 38                |
| Warrington     | 15              | 23                |
| Blackburn      | 2               | 22                |
| Leyland        | 7               | 9                 |

ARCHDEACONRY OF RICHMOND

|               |       |       |
|---------------|-------|-------|
| Amounderness  | 13    | 23    |
| Lonsdale      | 10    | 16    |
| Furness       | 9     | 19    |
| Kendal        | 10    | 24    |
| Copeland      | 25    | 17    |
| Richmond      | 27    | 10    |
| Catterick     | 25    | 13    |
| Boroughbridge | 20    | 5     |
|               | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| TOTAL:        | 263   | 270   |

Total number of parished and chapels 533

CHAPTER 1

A SURVEY OF THE DIOCESE AND ITS ORGANISATION

A study of the Diocese of Chester is a rewarding one for it was in this part of the country that the impact of industrialisation was making rapid inroads into the old ways of life during the eighteenth century. By 1787 the impact of this change can be seen in its effect both on religion and the church. Prior to 1541 the diocese of Chester was non-existent and the two archdeaconries from which it was later constructed formed parts of two large dioceses. The county of Cheshire, together with that part of Lancashire which lay between the Mersey and the Ribble, the Welsh counties of Denbigh and Flint, and a few parishes in the isolated parts of Caernavon and Caermarthen, formed the Archdeaconry of Chester. This archdeaconry formed part of the diocese of Lichfield and Coventry until 1541. (1) The second archdeaconry, that of Richmond, included an enormous area of land. The portion of Lancashire between the Ribble and the Derwent, with the addition of the southern portions of the counties of Cumberland and Westmorland, formed the western part of this archdeaconry, including within its boundaries the five rural deaneries of Amounderness, Copeland, Furness, Kendal and Kirby Lonsdale, which was often known as the region 'ultra moras'. The northern boundary of this diocese commenced on the west coast at Workington, following the course of the Derwent as far as the Cocker, then eastwards to Dunmail Rise and over the Westmorland fells to the head of the Eden Valley. From this point the boundary ran eastwards through Stainmore forest to the Tees at Cauldron Snout, where it followed the course of the river Tees eastwards to Sockburn. At this point the boundary turned southwards to follow the course of the Wiske to its confluence with the Swale as far south as Nun Monkton which lies some three miles west of York. At this point the boundary turned westwards to follow the Nidd to Ripley, skirting the boundaries of the peculiar jurisdictions of Ripon and Masham as far as Fingall parish. The

(1) J. Omerod, History of Cheshire (London, 1882), I.129

boundary then turned up Wensleydale to Langstrothdale head where it turned south to follow the county boundaries. (1) The eastern portion comprised the three deaneries of Richmond, Catterick and Boroughbridge. Until 1541 the whole of this vast region formed part of the diocese of York.

It is difficult to define, with any accuracy, the date when the Archdeaconry of Richmond was appropriated by the archbishops of York as one of the constituent archdeacons of the diocese. Evidence points to the episcopate of Thomas of Bayeux as the period when the diocese of York was reorganised to include this archdeaconry. (2) Between the capture of Carlisle by William II in 1092 and the foundation of the see of Carlisle in 1133, the archdeaconry had an opportunity to enlarge its boundaries at the expense of the diocese of Durham. For a long time, Carlisle had been neglected by its spiritual overlord the Bishop of Durham, so the conquered territory was quietly annexed to the diocese of York. Possession of this territory was confirmed by Henry I, in 1114, to Archbishop Thomas II. (3) In 1133 Henry I created the see of Carlisle and compensated the Archdeacon of Richmond for loss of territory in north Cumberland and Westmorland by granting him, through Archbishop Thurstan, special and quasi-episcopal rights in his archdeaconry. Later these peculiar rights were to become a problem to successive bishops of Chester when the commissaries of Richmond tried to assert some measure of independence. So by 1133 the boundaries of this archdeaconry were drawn, and marked a survival of the organisation that had existed in the north before the county boundaries of Westmorland, Cumberland and Lancashire were clarified. This archdeaconry remained unchanged for 700 years, until the reforms of 1836 led to the re-distribution of the territory between the dioceses of Carlisle, Ripon and Manchester.

- (1) Lancashire Record Office, Map of the Diocese of Chester 1750, ARR/10/1. Copy in folder at the back of this thesis.
- (2) W. Dugdale, Monasticon, 1682 (ed. London, 1846) III, 547-548
- (3) G. Hill, English Dioceses (London, 1900), p.288

Geographically the diocese was a region of great variety. The county of Cheshire, was an area of flat, even country with arable, pasture, meadow, large woods, parks and heath interspersed with tracts of common land. The enclosed farmlands produced wheat, oats, barley and rye. Cattle were bred for dairy purposes and poultry farming was extensive. Wild fowl of all kinds were abundant and salt was mined near Nantwich, Northwich and Middlewich. The eastern portion of the county saw the development of cotton mills, print works and coal mines. Stockport was rapidly increasing in size as the introduction of new industries and the expansion of old ones, especially cotton spinning, bleaching and hat manufacture, were to make it a far larger town than Chester by the end of the century. Macclesfield and Congleton were both expanding into the surrounding countryside as the silk industry provided increasing employment. The port of Liverpool, which fed both Lancashire and Cheshire, was extending its boundaries into the Wirral peninsula.

To the north was the county of Lancashire. The south western portion of this county had been a region of forest and moss, but the woodland had been cleared by 1700 and the land parcelled out in fields divided by hedges and ditches. The peat mosses and marches formed a barrier to easy transportation of goods and people in the early years of the eighteenth century. Three large areas of marshland, Chat Moss, Trafford Moss and Carrington Moss with several smaller marshes along the Mersey valley formed a complete barrier between Lancashire and Cheshire. To make an attempt to cross these marshes was extremely dangerous until, in 1805, attempts were made to drain them. The character of the Mersey was such that it was possible to cross the river at three points and nowhere else; at Warrington by a bridge, at Widnes and Liverpool by ferry boat. Hence the main north to south route ran through Warrington. There were a few minor crossings between Manchester and Warrington at Hollins, Stretford, Irlam, Barton and Salford, in 1750. The entire region of south-west Lancashire was open country with little industrial activity. (1)

(1) F. Walker, Historical Geography of South West Lancashire before the Industrial Revolution (Whetham Society, 1939) CIII, (N.S.)

Conditions were very different in east Lancashire. "In the south-eastern parts extensive mosses and fens scarcely allowed pathway for travellers, much less pasturage or cornfield. A great part of the eastern, central and northern districts consisted of mountain and moorland, in which the climate was bleak and the soil bare and unpromising." (1) Between Penwortham and the coast there was no means of crossing the Ribble. The area around Leyland and Euxton was largely moss while to the north of Bootle lay the broad belt of the Altcar marshes and the sand dunes. The eastern boundary of the county was formed by the high Rivington moors, an area almost denuded of population, which made the only possible line of communication between east and west the road from Wigan to Bolton. The existence of swift mountain streams of soft water and a supply of local wool had enabled the woollen industry to establish itself around Rochdale producing coarse cloth. By the end of the century, the discovery of coal and the expansion of the cotton industry was accelerating the growth of towns like Manchester, Bolton, Blackburn, Accrington, Ashton, Oldham, Burnley and Rochdale. (2)

The region to the north of the county, the southern portions of Cumberland and Westmorland, formed a wild rugged region where copper, iron, slate and wood were in abundance. By 1770 exploitation of these mineral reserves had commenced and an iron works established at Barrow in Furness. Bleak mountains, barren moors and wastes divided the western half of the archdeaconry from the eastern. The growth of coal mining along the Cumberland coast was bringing a number of labourers to work as miners. An extensive shipping trade was to be found at Workington and Whitehaven. Limestone was quarried, lead mined and wool produced in Westmorland so there was a native textile industry at Kendal and Kirby Lonsdale. The construction of turnpike roads in this region did not begin until 1752 so communications

(1) R.H. Morris, Chester Diocesan History (London, 1895), p.105

(2) F. Walker, loc.cit.

were, to say the least, atrocious. The shortest but most dangerous route to the western portion or deanery of Copeland, which lay along the coastal strip, was across the sands of Morecambe Bay. (1)

The three Yorkshire deaneries included in the dioceses comprised an area where the principal occupation was agriculture though some lead mining took place in Wansleydale and Nidderdale where the miners were a source of some concern to the incumbents of the dales parishes. (2)

In 1770 this enormous diocese was 120 miles in length, 90 miles in width and 570 miles round its perimeter, containing within its borders a total of 533 churches and parochial chapelries. The parishes tended to be of enormous size in area serving a total population of approximately two million souls. In Cheshire, the parish of Prestbury contained 62,740 acres with ten parochial chapelries. The parish church, almost as large as a modern cathedral, is situated in a small village while the neighbouring town of Macclesfield with a population of 8,743 souls was, at that time, a parochial chapel within the parish. (3) In Lancashire, the parish of Rochdale included the remote villages, in the Pennine region, of Saddleworth, Uppermill and Dobcross while the expanding town of Oldham was in an equally large parish, that of Prestwich. The parish of Whalley covered an area of 140 square miles and was more than twice the size of the large parish of Leeds in York diocese. The parish of Crosthwaite in Westmorland extended over an area of seventy square miles. Kendal, in addition to the two churches in the town, contained fifty villages and hamlets with fourteen chapels of ease. Millom, another large parish in Cumberland, extended for eighteen miles up the Duddon valley. (4)

The diary of Henry Speed, the deputy registrar of the diocese, records the problems and difficulties of travel in the diocese during the early years

- (1) C.M.L. Bouch & G.P. Jones, A Short Social and Economic History of the Lake Counties, 1500-1800 (Manchester, 1962) p.245 ff.
- (2) Cheshire R.O., Articles Preparatory to Visitation EDV7/2
- (3) R.B. Walker, "Religious Changes in Cheshire 1750-1850", Journal of Ecclesiastical History, XVII (April, 1966), 77-94
- (4) C.M.L. Bouch & G.P. Jones, *op.cit.*, p.175-188



of the eighteenth century. He describes the appalling condition of the main roads, the barely definable tracks of the secondary ones which, coupled with the dangers of flood, storms and highwaymen, made any journey an adventure. (1) The petition from the residents of Silverdale provides an illustration of this problem. In 1695 the inhabitants petitioned the vicar of Warton, in whose parish Silverdale was, that they might have a permanent chapel of ease. The reason stated for this was that the way to Warton, "... is plain & open from the Sides of two great hills to all the Severity of the weather Seawards. In the midst lies a deep Mosse ..." (2) When the rural dean, Dr. Fenton, went to visit the chapel he and his secretary almost lost their horses in the moss and were rescued by the parish clerk. At best the bishop could have only a superficial knowledge of many parishes and of those in remote parts none at all. The machinery for the administration of this awkward diocese was clumsy and involved since it differed in many ways from that operating in any other English diocese. In order to clarify the situation it is essential, at this point, to make some reference to the creation of the diocese. In 1539, Sir William Knight who was at that time, Archdeacon of both Richmond and Chester in plurality, was elected Bishop of Bath and Wells. In January 1540/1, he surrendered his Archdeaconry of Richmond, including his appropriate rectories of Bolton in Lonsdale, (3) Clapham, Easingwold, Thornton Steward and Rastall to Henry VIII, Archbishop Lee and the Dean and Chapter of York, ".... to us our heirs and successors to our use in perpetuity..." (4) By a similar Charter dated 8 March 1540/1, Knight surrendered his Archdeaconry of Chester to Henry VIII and the Bishop of Lichfield of whose diocese this archdeaconry formed a part. (5)

- (1) JH.E. Bennett, "Revenues and Disbursements of the Bishops of Chester", "Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire XCVIII (1946), 75-107
- (2) Lancashire R.O., Silverdale Parish Papers, DR Ch.37
- (3) The parish of Bolton le Sands is often referred to as Bolton in Lonsdale being at one time part of the Lonsdale Hundred.
- (4) Letters and Papers of Henry VIII, XVI, 535-536
- (5) ibid., XVI, 535

On 4 August 1541, by Letters Patent dated at Walden, Henry created the new diocese of Chester out of the dissolved monastery of St. Werbergh, in the city of Chester, as an episcopal seat for a bishop, a dean and six prebends. The Archdeaconry of Chester, taken from the diocese of Lichfield, and that of Richmond, taken from the diocese of York, were to comprise the territorial extent of the new diocese. John Bird was translated from Bangor to be the first bishop. (1) The office of archdeacon was to be vested in the bishop and for the future the two archdeacons would be titular officials only with a stipend of £50 per annum paid to each from the revenues of the see. The intention behind this regulation was to eliminate the possibility of the Archdeaconry of Richmond becoming an independent unit. By 1539 this had virtually happened and the archdeacon was administering his archdeaconry through a commissary and a vicar general, the archbishop of York having but few powers outside his primary and other visitations. The new bishop acquired the rectories which had been appropriated to the archdeaconries together with the conventual buildings of the abbey of St. Werbergh for his palace. (2)

The diocese of Chester was endowed with sixteen manors, which had formerly been part of the possessions of the abbey of St. Werbergh and in addition the properties owned by the abbey within the city itself, as well as manors in fifteen townships. Four rectories in Flintshire, those of Langyerum, Bebyoke, Caernavon and Over Peovor with pensions from a further six livings, were added to the possessions of the see. On 8 January 1546 the crown exchanged the fifteen manors for twelve rectories. (3) Mary I gave the rectories of Cartmel and St. Bees to the bishop in 1557 and Elizabeth I added a further four in 1562. As compensation for the loss of Workington rectory the bishop was allowed to have the right to nominate to the six prebends in the cathedral as they fell vacant. (4) In the long term the see

(1) J. Omerod, op.cit., p.95

(2) L. & P. XVI, p.536

(3) J. Omerod, op.cit., I, 96, 97

(4) F. Gastrell, Notitia Cestriensis (Chetham Society, 1860), XXII (O.S.) pt. 3

of Chester was poorly endowed for inflation eroded the original value of the endowment. In 1546 the annual value of the bishopric was £420 gross, the annual tenths being £42. By 1715 the revenue had increased to £1,294, less £369 for disbursements of various kinds and from 1754 to 1789 the gross income varied from £957 to £2,137, but the average income was around £1,000 annually. This revenue was insufficient to enable the bishop to maintain his palace and establishment so he was allowed to hold livings in commendam, the rich living of Wigan being one of them. (1) Until 1755 a portion of the bishop's income was derived from the payment of mortuary dues, which had continued to be collected in the diocese being exempted from the restrictions of the Act concerning Mortuaries of 1534/5. In 1755 it was decreed that mortuary dues should cease to be collected on the first vacancy of Waverton rectory which did not occur until 1767. (2) The rectory of Waverton was granted to the bishop as compensation for the loss of his mortuaries.

The bishop, as archdeacon, was entitled to appoint a commissary to administer his archdeaconry of Richmond, or more than one if he thought it necessary, which was a continuation of the old practice. However the powers of the commissary were regulated to suit the policy of the bishop at any particular time and in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries much of the legal business from the western deaneries of Richmond was handled at Chester for reasons which are not yet clear. For a long time the power of the commissary was little more than that granted to the rural deans. A succession of able commissaries after 1660, and a succession of bishops who remained but a few years, enabled the commissaries to recover some of their lost powers. By 1759 the commissary felt strong enough to defy the jurisdiction of the diocesan chancellor outside the times of episcopal visitation. His former prerogative to licence clergy, schoolmasters, midwives and surgeons, during the absence of the bishop from his see, were renewed in the

(1) R.H. Morris, op.cit. p.103

(2) D.S. Lysons, Magna Britannia (ed. London, 1808), II.323

eighteenth century. (1)

In general the jurisdiction and administration corresponded with that of any other diocese but the division of authority was somewhat different. The Archdeacon of Richmond had originally exercised a quasi-episcopal jurisdiction under the terms of an agreement signed between Archdeacon Woodhouse and Archbishop Melton in 1331. (2) The privileges attached to this agreement had been transferred to the bishop of Chester in 1541 but from time to time attempts were made to override the bishop's authority, as exercised through his chancellor. In Chester, the chancellor combined in his office the joint one of vicar general, who dealt with licences probate and letters of administration, and official principal, hearing causes of contentious jurisdiction, on behalf of the bishop. (3) Whenever the bishop held his primary or triennial visitations the chancellor's jurisdiction extended throughout the whole diocese for six months and all business went to Chester. (4) As with other official appointments in the diocese that of the commissary was by letters patent, which set out in detail the powers of the commissary. (5)

In addition to the office of commissary, the bishops of Chester retained the office of rural dean. The rural deans, since the archidiaconal jurisdiction was vested in the bishop, exercised their authority as representatives of the bishop by terms of their letters patent and the custom of the archdeaconries. They visited their deaneries annually when they summoned the churchwardens of each parish to appear before them and present a report on their parish churches, incumbents and parishioners. The rural deans had power to correct ecclesiastical offences other than incest, adultery and divorce all of which were reserved for the bishop or his

- (1) Leeds City Archives, Archdeacons' Letters Patent, CD/PB/9
- (2) A. Raine, Historians of the Church of York and its Archbishops (Rolls Series, 1894), III, 248-250
- (3) F.W. Irvine, "Church Discipline after the Restoration", H.S. L.C., LXIV (1912), 43
- (4) J. Omerod, op.cit., I, 106
- (5) Leeds C.A., Probate Act Book, RD/PB/8, f.146

chancellor to determine. In addition the rural deans had the power to grant probate and issue letters of administration for the estates of all deceased persons in their rural deaneries which were below £40 in personalty, (knights, esquires and the clergy were outside their province.) (1) Until 1700 the rural deanery of Amounderness was reserved by the bishop as preferment for his chaplain. (2) It is not yet clear how the office of rural dean was organised in the diocese before 1541 but from 1551 onwards their appointments were by letters patent granted for one life only. (3) As direct representatives of the bishop they could proceed against offenders by censure as the bishop or his vicar general could. If the chancellor of the diocese attempted to obstruct their visitation then the rural deans had the right to adjourn to another church and hold the visitation within the time appointed. In the Archdeaconry of Richmond, the rural deans had the right of appeal directly to the Archbishop of York or his vicar general in such cases. (4) By the eighteenth century the custom of appointing individual rural deans fell into disuse and in the archdeaconry of Chester, the chancellor held the office of rural dean for the twelve deaneries of Chester. In Richmond archdeaconry the commissary held the office of rural dean for the eight rural deaneries and this practice appears to have arisen to meet inflation which tended to reduce the value of the commissary's and the chancellors' income. It was the custom by 1760 to appoint surrogates or deputies to carry out the duties of the rural deans under the direction of the commissary or chancellor.

By ancient custom the commissary of Richmond had his own registrar and the rural deans had a registrar to record their acts. (5) In order to keep an eye on their activities the registrar at Chester was made registrar

- (1) Cheshire Record Office, Precedent Book (Report on the Rural Deans), EDR/6, ff. 57-60
- (2) *ibid.*, ff. 75-77
- (3) *ibid.*, ff. 71-75
- (4) J. Omerod, *op.cit.*, I, 106
- (5) Cheshire R.O., Bishops Register 1768-1779, EDA/2/7 (These documents are in an unfoliated section at the back of the register)

general and the deanery registrars as deputies. (1) The diocese of Chester was peculiar in that the bishop had two consistory courts instead of the more usual single one. At Chester the consistory was presided over by the chancellor as official principal but at Richmond the commissary presided over his own consistory which sat in Trinity Chapel, Richmond. It had been customary for the Archdeacon of Richmond to have his own consistory long before 1541 and the old custom was continued for geographical reasons. The existence of two competitive courts for business led to many disputes between the chancellor and the commissary for all appeal cases from Richmond court went directly to the chancery court of the Archbishop of York. (2)

This orderly diocesan arrangement was disturbed by the existence of a number of spiritual republics known as peculiar jurisdictions. Two of these, Masham with Kirby Malzeard and Middleham were large tracts of territory. The former was granted by Roger de Mowbray to the dean and chapter of York in 1148, to endow a prebendal stall in the Minster. The prebend became one of the wealthiest in England and was valued in 1535 at £166. 13. 4d. On 5 March 1546/7, Henry VIII issued a licence to Archbishop Holgate to dissolve the prebend and proceeded to grant it to Chancellor Wriothsley and his heirs as a lay fief. In 1547 the revenues of the old prebend were given to Trinity College, Cambridge as part of the endowment. (3) By 1770 this peculiar had passed into the hands of the family of Abstrupus Danby who held his visitation and correction courts and granted probate until 1857, when the peculiar was abolished.

Middleham was the favourite residence of Richard III as Duke of Gloucester who commemorated his marriage to Lady Ann Neville by converting the parish church into a collegiate church with a dean, six canons, four lay clerks and six choristers. On 21 May 1481, Archbishop Rotherham exempted the collegiate

- (1) Lancashire R.O., Consistory Court Act Book (Richmond) 1741- 1748, ARR/12, f.152
- (2) Leeds CA., Richmond Faculty Books, RD/RF/D, f.14
- (3) *ibid*, Masham Peculiar Records, MP/29  
J. Fisher, History of Masham (London, 1865), *passim*

church from all archiepiscopal, metropolitanical and other ecclesiastical jurisdictions. (1) The new status of the college was confirmed by a bull of Sixtus IV and it retained its position as a royal peculiar with right to grant prebate. Arkengarthdale, in Catterick deanery, was a manorial peculiar with its own courts. It had originally formed part of the possessions of Egglestone Abbey but in the eighteenth century it had passed into the hands of the Bathursts and by 1790 had been transferred to the Earls of Lonsdale. (2) The Dean and Chapter of York exercised a peculiar jurisdiction in the parish of Kirby Ireleth, in Copeland deanery, and in the eighteenth century there was a great deal of contention between the bishops of Chester and the Dean and Chapter of York concerning the extent to which the bishop could exercise a right to visit the parish. (3) The Collegiate Church of Manchester was responsible for the spiritual oversight of the entire deanery, but was not exempt from episcopal oversight. After 1688 the fellows of Manchester College became extreme Tories with strong Jacobite sympathies, and as such they were a serious problem to many bishops, especially Bishop Samuel Peploe himself a strong Whig. (4) A small group of parishes in the deanery of Boroughbridge, those of Aldborough, Boroughbridge, Burton Leonard, had been granted to the Dean and Chapter of York in 1300 to augment the chapter revenues, at the same time the chapter was allowed to exercise the right to present and hear cases of contentious jurisdiction. (5)

The church and its organisation was looked upon as the spiritual expression of the community. Arthur Warne described it in these words: "This community was expected to be loyal to the Crown as head not only of Church but also of State, and respectful to the laws of man as to those of

- (1) W. Atthill, Documents relating to the Church of Middleham (Camden Society, XXXVIII (OS) 1847)
- (2) Leeds C.A., Richmond Citations, RD/AB/2a
- (3) Lancashire R.O., Kirby Ireleth Parish Papers, DR Ch.37  
Borthwick Institute, York, Bishopthorpe Papers, R.Bp. 6B (temporary reference number)
- (4) F.R. Raines, Rectors of Manchester and the Wardens of the Collegiate Church of that Town (Chetham Society, 1885), V, VI (NS)
- (5) Register of Thomas of Corbridge, ed. W. Brown, (Surtees Society), 1925 CXXXVIII

God. Ideally this community included all Englishmen, and those who remained outside, as Roman Catholic or Dissenter, had to be accounted for and their conduct watched for subversive activity. It was one of the glories of the eighteenth century that it was quick to learn that conscientious refusal to conform to the Established Church was not synonymous with subversive activity." (1) The religious troubles of the seventeenth century caused the eighteenth to hold peace and stability in high regard. There was still enough disorder in the country to deserve insistence on the supremacy of law which almost amounted to veneration.

The method by which the Church kept control over, and disciplined or attempted to, both the clergy and the laity was by process of visitation. (2) The churchwardens or chapelwardens, as the case might be, had to complete and return to the visitor the Book of Articles, which consisted of a series of questions on the state of the church fabric, its services, furnishings, the morals of both clergy and parishioners. The consciences of many churchwardens must have been severely strained in completing the answers. The clergy, parish clerks, schoolmasters, surgeons and midwives had to attend the visitation to exhibit their licences, which enabled them to exercise their offices, and also the churchwardens to make their presentations and take their oaths of office. Offenders against the law were cited to appear and were dealt with by summary justice at the visitation, their punishment being excommunication or a public penance to perform in their parish church.

The more serious cases which concerned such matters as defamation, neglect to pay church rates, tithe disputes, profanation of Sunday by working, pew disputes, fornication, adultery and divorce were heard before the consistory court either at Richmond for that archdeaconry, or in the consistory court within the cathedral at Chester. In theory the courts

- (1) A. Warne, Church and Society in Eighteenth Century Devon (Newton Abbot, 1969) p.19
- (2) J. Addy, The Archdeacon and Ecclesiastical Discipline in Yorkshire 1598-1714 (York, 1963)



sat every Tuesday in term time, but by 1771 this rule had lapsed and the court sessions varied in interval according to the amount of business before it. The day of the week was no longer Tuesday but was changed to Wednesday or Friday as it suited the convenience of the judge and proctors. The entire arrangements of the court with its judges, registrars, proctors and apparitors was largely medieval. The opportunity to modernise the machinery and improve the administration of canon law had been lost at the Restoration (1) and no changes were made. It was solely upon this antiquated and cumbrous machinery that the bishop had to reply in his administration of the diocese at a time when revolutionary changes were taking place in the growth of population and in economic life as a whole.

The diocese of Chester had serious problems in connection with those who owned no allegiance to the Anglican Church. In Lancashire, especially in the deaneries of Amounderness, part of Kirby Lonsdale and certain areas in the Yorkshire deaneries of Catterick, Richmond and Boroughbridge, there were strong centres of recusancy. By 1770 the Methodists were putting down roots in the new manufacturing towns in Lancashire and Cheshire. The Quakers, who in the time of the Commonwealth, had established themselves as a strong force in several portions of the diocese were in a state of decline. The old dissent was also changing as the presbyterians moved from Arianism to Unitarianism. All these matters were scarcely dealt with at all by the clumsy ecclesiastical administrative machinery, and though Quarter Sessions kept a watchful eye on certain groups, here also the efficiency depended upon the keenness or otherwise of the Justices of Peace. The temporal courts lent the assistance of their secular officers, who had power to enforce penalties, to support the ecclesiastical courts when requested by the writ, de excommunicatio capiendo, to do so. Otherwise the only penalty the ecclesiastical courts could impose, that of excommunication would stand unsupported, "and be only as effective as a rough, tough

(1) E.A.O. Whiteman, "The Re-establishment of the Church of England 1660" Transactions of the Royal Historical Society Fifth Series, V (1955) ' 111-131

rationalistic, priest-despising people were willing to let it be." (1)  
 Apart from the watchful eye kept upon the parishes there were those who belonged to no parish but have left their record in Quarter Sessions papers. These were the dangerous class of thieves, prostitutes, robbers and vagabonds who roamed the country. The very existence of such groups made it all the more important that the Church and State should be partners in exalting the idea of law and order. (2)

No survey of the diocese would be complete without reference to the extent and exercise of the various kinds of patronage as it existed in 1771. Patronage in the eighteenth century was regarded as the possession of legal property which could be bought and sold. This was accepted as the only possible way to ensure that men or merit were appointed to the right livings, and younger sons of the squirearchy provided for through a family right of presentation. In 1771 the diocese of Chester, including the city itself, consisted of a total of 533 parishes and parochial chapelries. Twelve of these parishes were peculiar jurisdictions. The Dean and Chapter of Worcester owned the rectories of Warton and Thornton in Lonedale. The rectory of Stanwick St. John belonged to the Dean of Ripon. The Crown exercised sole jurisdiction in Middleham. Little Ouseburn formed part of the jurisdiction of the Precentor of York Minster. The seven parishes of Burton Leonard, Hornby, Masham, Allerton Malverer, Great Ouseburn, Aldborough and Kirby Ireleth, in Furness, were part of the properties of the Dean and Chapter of York. (3) The patronage can be classified as follows:

Patronage in the gift of private individuals. A very large number fall into this group of 371 churches which includes 36 parochial chapelries where the pew owners, freeholders and those who paid poor rates elected their incumbent

(1) G.F.A. Dent, Temporal Pillars, (Cambridge, 1964), p.43

(2) A. Warne, op.cit., p.19

(3) J. Addy, "Archives of the Archdeaconry of Richmond", Archives, VII (April 1965), 25-34

from two or more nominations. (1) The elective chapels were all in the Archdeaconry of Richmond.

Patronage in the gift of collegiate bodies. There were nineteen parishes in this group where the patronage was shared between the Cambridge colleges of King's(1), Trinity(6), St. John's(1), and the Oxford colleges of Christ Church(4) and University(7). The Collegiate church of Manchester was patron of seven livings in the deanery.

Patronage in the gift of the Bishop or other bishops. The Bishop in his own right was patron of twenty-five livings plus a half share in Wallasey rectory. The Bishop of Lichfield presented to the four livings of Coppenhall, Wybunbury, Burton and Tarvin which had formerly been part of the original diocese of Lichfield and Coventry. The livings of Whalley, Blackburn and Rochdale were in the gift of the Archbishop of Canterbury as former possessions of the Cistercian abbey of Whalley.

Patronage in the gift of the crown. In Chester the crown exercised patronage in two parts. In the first instance the Crown in its own right held the patronage of twenty-five livings formerly the property of one or more of the dissolved monasteries. A further six belonged to the King as Duke of Lancaster and these were the parishes of Hawkshead, Dalton, Pennington, Millom, Richmond and Nidd.

Patronage in the gift of a corporation. The town corporations of Liverpool, Chester and Congleton presented to seven livings in their boroughs. The Haberdasher's Company of London presented to the living of Bunbury.

Patronage in the hands of capitular bodies. The Dean and Chapters of Chester and York, the Dean of Ripon and the Dean and Chapter of Worcester presented to some twenty-eight livings in various parts of the diocese. In the case of a further six livings the incumbent was his own patron. In effect,

- (1) Clerical elections to these chapelries were frequently the source of contention and scandal. Details of many elections have been preserved in the various collections of parish papers in Lancashire, Leeds and Carlisle Record Offices.

the laity controlled more than sixty-five per cent of the livings in 1771.

The diocese of Oxford, as Dr. McClatchey has pointed out, was one where a few influential families controlled a high proportion of the advowsons. (1) In the diocese of Chester control on a large scale was restricted by the existence of a number of corporate bodies in the towns, so the influence of the great families was to some extent minimised. In Cheshire it has been estimated there were fifty noblemen with incomes ranging from £3,000 to £10,000 per annum. (2) The Grosvenor family who lived at Eaton Hall, some four miles from the city, had considerable influence in the corporation ever since the reign of Charles II. Between 1715 and 1874 they held one seat without a break and for 42 out of 159 years held both seats. In 1760 when Sir Richard Grosvenor expected to be made a peer, he recommended to the Corporation, Thomas Grosvenor and Richard Wilbraham Bootle as candidates. Both were returned unopposed until 1784 when the independent party put up John Crewe who was unsuccessful. (3) The Earl of Stamford, the Earl of Cholmondely, and the Duke of Devonshire exercised the right to present to Cheshire livings. The latter presented to Brindle and Lord Cholmondely to Malpas and Thilston. The Earl of Derby had the livings of Winwick and Holy Trinity, Chester in his gift. The county representation was monopolised by the Egerton, Crewe and Cotton families.

In Lancashire there were no contested elections during the period covered by this study. One seat was always held by a member of the Stanley family and the other by one of the country gentry drawn from the Egertons, Molyneux, Shuttleworths and Blackburnes. There were a number of boroughs in the county, two of which were pocket boroughs namely Clitheroe and Newton in Makerfield. Clitheroe was held jointly by the Curzon and Lister family until 1780 when Thomas Lister cheated his partner out of his share in the

(1) D. McClatchey, Oxfordshire Clergy 1777-1869 (Oxford, 1960), p.5

(2) R.H.B. Walker, loc.cit.

(3) L. Namier & J. Brooke, The House of Commons 1754-1790 (London, 1964) I, 221

representation of the borough, so the Listers held both seats. (1) Newton was a pocket borough of the Leghs of Lyme Park, who were also lords of the manor, and controlled the Corporation during the whole of the period under review. (2) Liverpool was the scene of a conflict between the Anglican Corporation and a party of independents supported by the Dissenters. Although they styled themselves Whig and Tory these divisions bore little resemblance to those at Westminster. By 1780 the Corporation had won control and in 1784 one seat went to the Corporation and the other to the dissenting party. (3) Wigan was a difficult borough to control for the voters were small shopkeepers without much political consciousness. The Bridgeman family owned the advowson and the rectors of Wigan were also lords of the manor. When Henry Bridgeman died in 1782 John Cotes (son of Shirley Cotes, rector of Wigan 1750-1776) was returned. A member of the family followed Cotes and by 1791 Sir Henry Bridgeman was controlling both seats. (4) Preston was a borough in which the right of election was in the inhabitants, or resident freemen. Until 1768 the Tory corporation had successfully controlled the elections but the opposition, in the Whig interest, defeated the Corporation's efforts to return their candidates. (5) The interest of the Derby family and Sir Henry Hoghton, a dissenter, who also controlled the advowson and presented a Whig vicar on every occasion to counter Tory influence, wrested control from the Corporation. (6) The members for the borough of Lancaster were usually local gentry drawn from the Cavendish, Braddyll, Rawlinson and Warren families. In 1784 and again in 1786, Lord

(1) L. Namier & J. Brooke, op.cit., I,316

(2) ibid., I,318

(3) ibid., I,317

(4) ibid., I,319-322

(5) A.J. Wood, The Great Election 1768 (unpublished dissertation (St. John's College, York, 1972). Deposited in the Lancashire Record Office.

(6) L. Namier & J. Brooke, op.cit. I,319

Lonsdale tried to win control of the seat, through his cousin Sir John Lowther, but failed to do so. (1) Cumberland and Westmorland were virtually under the control of the Lowthers who had built up their interests over the years. Cockermouth was a pocket borough of the Lowther family by 1770. The Lowthers had control of the six best livings in the county while the Earl of Egremont and the Flemings controlled the remainder, except the electoral chapelries. (2)

In the Yorkshire portion of the diocese, political influence lay with the Marquis of Rockingham and his nephew Earl Fitzwilliam. The two boroughs of Aldborough and Boroughbridge were pocket boroughs of the Dukes of Newcastle, who owned the majority of the houses in Aldborough and the burgages at Boroughbridge. (3) Until 1763 the Slingsby family represented the borough of Knaresborough and had done so since 1625. When Sir Henry Slingsby died in 1763 his burgage property was bought by the Duke of Devonshire who controlled both seats until 1832. Richmond was represented by the families of York and Darcy in 1754 when the Darcys purchased the burgage property of the Whartons. In 1761 Sir Conyers Darcy bequeathed his burgage property in the borough to his nephew, the last Earl of Holderness, who sold them in 1762, to Sir Lawrence Dundas. From this date forward the Dundas family controlled both seats. (4) Patronage was also vested in the Earls of Aylesbury, Lord Bolton and to a lesser extent in those of Hutton, Wyvill, Lascelles, Ingleby and Wandesford who all played their part in county politics and church matters.

The high proportion of the laity who controlled church patronage in the diocese and elsewhere mattered less than it might have done, because there

(1) L. Namier & J. Brooke, op.cit., I.316

(2) ibid., I,242, 247, 403

(3) ibid., I,432, 433

(4) ibid., I,435, 438

was a close similarity between the social conduct of the clergy and laity which governed their conduct as patrons. The education both received was of a similar type. In the latter part of the century when coherent philosophies of church and state had to be worked out, the identifications of interests between the two sections of society was taken as the example of how an established church ought to work. The incumbent, unless affected by evangelical ideas, farmed, hunted, went shooting, wore lay dress as did his lay neighbours and relatives. (1) He regarded the promotion of his family interests to be a sacred duty, a fact which marked the generation of the Walpoles and the Pitts. He found good jobs for his sons either in the church or outside.it. There was to him, no valid reason why his son, or his son-in-law, or any other ordainable male relative should not be provided for and this was done by the expedient of buying an advowson or right to the next presentation if the former was impossible. (2)

So the eighteenth century reversed the seventeenth century's tendency to split the Church and State. The titled, well connected, bishops of George II and George III brought the two together. Clergy and laity followed this example and so the spiritual and temporal became the twin parts of an individual unity. (3)

- (1) Lancashire Record Office, Colton parish papers, DR.CH/377
- (2) The collections of parish papers in the Cheshire, Lancashire, Leeds and Carlisle Record Offices contain innumerable examples of the sale, purchase or alienation of advowsons for this purpose.
- (3) G.F.A. Best, *Temporal Pillars*, (Cambridge, 1964) passim.

CHAPTER 2

THE PREDECESSORS OF WILLIAM MARKHAM AS BISHOPS OF CHESTER  
1700-1771

The eighteenth century church and its bishops had a bad press, until the work of the late Dr. Norman Sykes, brought new light to bear on the efforts of the episcopate to maintain standards in the face of many difficulties. It was assumed that Hoadly and Watson were typical of their time, but there were other men such as Wake of Lincoln, Nicholson of Carlisle, Bagot of Norwich and Porteus of Chester as well as Archbishops Secker and Markham who were conscientious men concerned for the well-being of Church and State. The satirist who looked upon the weaknesses of certain bishops could write as follows:

"Behold your bishop; well he plays his part  
Christian in name but infidel in heart,  
Ghostly in office, earthly in his plan  
A slave at court, elsewhere a lady's man.  
Dumb as a senator, and as a priest  
A piece of mere church furniture at best." (1)

This sweeping condemnation of the eighteenth century episcopate did not apply to the bishops of Chester during this century. A.R. Vidler is probably nearer the truth when he writes, "The bishops on the whole were good, conscientious, respectable men. It would not be fair to say that they regarded themselves only as officers of state". (2)

The bishops of Chester in the eighteenth century were conscientious, respectable men faced with many problems for the diocese had suffered, since 1660, from a series of short episcopates. This was a weakness for no bishop remained long enough at Chester to see his policies firmly rooted. In the whole of the eighteenth century only one bishop, Samuel Peploe, remained, as its diocesan for any considerable period of time. The diocese of Chester was

(1) N. Sykes, Church and State in Eighteenth Century England, (Cambridge, 1934), p.412

(2) A.R.Vidler, The Church in an age of Revolution (London, 1931) p.35



regarded in the same light as many Welsh sees, a stepping stone to a wealthy diocese. The diocesan officials were accustomed to hold and retain all their privileges until death or resignation called them away. Both William Markham and Beilby Porteus were faced in their turn with problems their predecessors had neglected or failed to solve.

In 1700, the Bishop of Chester was Nicholas Stratford, a high church man and a Tory. He was related by marriage to John Dolben, Bishop of Rochester, and through his influence was appointed by the Crown as Warden of Manchester Collegiate Church, a key position for control of the church both in Manchester deanery and in central Lancashire. As warden he revised the statutes of the College and built it up as a strong centre of Anglican worship and Tory politics, whose fellows were to be Jacobite supporters in 1715 and 1745. During the time Stratford was warden he held a prebend at Lincoln and the Deanery of St. Asaph in plurality. Political feeling ran high in Manchester during 1682 over the court party's policy that Stratford felt unable to continue his support of the party. At the same time Stratford's attitude towards the Dissenters in his diocese led to a fierce attack on his policy in Manchester so he resigned the wardenship in 1684 and retired to the living of St. Mary Aldermanbury where he remained until 1689.

The Revolution of 1688 introduced a period of strife between Whigs and Tories for control of the ecclesiastical patronage of the Crown for party interests and in the diocese of Chester this patronage was extensive. In 1688 Bishop Cartwright of Chester had fled to France with James II and died in Dublin during James's Irish campaign in 1690. One of the twenty new bishops consecrated to vacant sees in the reign of William III was Nicholas Stratford who, like so many of his predecessors, was allowed to hold the living of Wigan in commendam. As bishop, Stratford was concerned to serve his diocese to the best of his ability. His visitations and confirmations were regular in that they were held triennially, which was better than many other dioceses were managing to do. (1) No details of his ordinations survive for the

(1) Bodleian Library, Tanner MS.152, f.11 (Itinerary of Bishop Stratford)

VISITATIONS AND CONFIRMATIONS IN THE ARCHDEACONRY OF RICHMONDBISHOP STRATFORD1691

|           |                 |
|-----------|-----------------|
| June 16th | Preston         |
| June 18th | Lancaster       |
| June 20th | Cartmell        |
| June 27th |                 |
| June 28th | Richmond        |
| July 2nd  | Boroughbridge   |
| July 26th | Bolton le Moors |

1694

|               |             |
|---------------|-------------|
| August 26th   | Bootle      |
| August 29th   | Egremont    |
| August 31st   | Workington  |
| September 2nd | Cockermouth |
| September 6th | Whitehaven  |

1698

|          |               |
|----------|---------------|
| May 12th |               |
| May 14th | Lancaster     |
| May 15th |               |
| May 17th | Kendal        |
| May 20th | Whitehaven    |
| May 22nd | Cockermouth   |
| May 26th |               |
| May 27th | Richmond      |
| May 30th | Boroughbridge |

1701

|           |               |
|-----------|---------------|
| June 17th | Preston       |
| June 19th | Lancaster     |
| June 21st | Cartmel       |
| June 25th |               |
| June 26th | Kendal        |
| June 30th | Richmond      |
| July 4th  | Boroughbridge |

Institution Act books from 1688 to 1752 are lost and it is by no means easy to trace clergy appointed during these years. His Exhibit Books record, in so far as they survive, the care with which he slowly built up the standards of the clergy. (1) He refused to ordain George Burches, nominated to be curate of Moghull chapel to the priesthood on account of his scandalous life and his ignorance. Stratford wrote to Archbishop Sharp in 1703 expressing his concern that his clergy should be men worthy of their calling. (2)

The graduate clergy who accepted nominations to livings were drawn more from Cambridge than from Oxford colleges, a pattern which was maintained until the episcopate of William Markham. The Roman Catholic problem in his diocese was serious for the entire deaneries of Amounderness, part of Furness and Kirby Lonsdale were areas of intensive catholic loyalty and in time of rebellion were regions to be watched with care. This problem he handled with great dignity for though he himself was strongly anti-papal, he aimed to arouse as little resentment as possible so providing the catholic majorities in these deaneries with no excuse to join any attempted restoration of the Stuarts should this be attempted through Lancashire. (3) Bishop Stratford was unable to exert a great deal of influence in the cathedral chapter, for during the whole of his episcopate only two prebends fell vacant. It fell to his lot to raise funds for the repair of the cathedral which was in a poor state. A brief was obtained on the following grounds:

"That such is the present ruinous condition of the said Cathedral Church in Chester, and of the Buildings thereunto belonging, by reason of the perishable nature of the stone .... and the damage they received in the time of the Civil Wars, that the said Dean and Chapter .... have not been able with all their care and the utmost of their ability to prevent the continual and increasing decay of the said Buildings ...." (4)

- (1) Lancashire R.O., Exhibit Books 1691-1707, ARR/16
- (2) A. Tindal Hart, Life and Times of John Sharp, Archbishop of York, (London, 1949), p.168
- (3) ibid., p.220, 300
- (4) R.V.H. Burne; Chester Cathedral, (London, 1958) p.168

The brief brought in insufficient funds so a house to house collection was taken through the city. By 1707 the repairs were complete and when Bishop Stratford died of apoplexy in London in February 1707/8, his body was brought to be buried in the cathedral he had done so much to repair. A vivid description of the funeral customs of the time is recorded in the papers of Dean Cotton. (1) The accounts of the cathedral treasurer show that the mourning hung in the choir remained in position until the election of William Dawes as his successor in January 1708/9. The diocese was vacant for almost one year.

No doubt Archbishop Sharp had his friend Sir William Dawes in his mind as the possible successor to Bishop Stratford. A high churchman and a Tory, he already held a prebend at Worcester and was Dean of Bocking. In his deanery he had instituted the custom of monthly celebrations of Holy Communion in place of the usual three or four each year. This practice he encouraged in Chester and the churchwardens presentments between 1710 and 1714 bear witness to this policy. (2) The biggest triumph of Sharp's career was the appointment of two Tory bishops, Blackhall to Exeter and Dawes to Chester, carried out in the face of Whig opposition. Marlborough suspected that Harley had interfered in order to obtain two additional votes on the Tory side in the Lords. Anne reprimanded Marlborough in a letter dated September 1707:

".... For I know no measures the Lord Treasurer has, but what were laid down when you were here, and I do not know that I have broken any of them; for I cannot think my having nominated Sir William Dawes or Dr. Blackhall to be bishops is any breach, they being worthy men: and all the clamour that is raised against them proceeds only from the malice of the Whigs, which you would see very plainly if you were here .... I think myself obliged to fill the bishops' bench with those that will be a credit to it, and to the Church ...." (3)

The interval between the death of Bishop Stratford and the election of Bishop Dawes was a source of worry not only to Archbishop Sharp but also to

(1) R.V.H. Burne, op.cit., p.171

(2) Leeds City Archives, Churchwardens Presentments, RD/CB/8/10

(3) H. Curtis Browne, Letters of Queen Anne (London, 1935) p.230

Nathaniel Crewe, Bishop of Durham. The latter wrote to Sharp about the matter on 31st May 1707.

"I am yet of opinion that the Bishop of Exeter (1) will be Bishop of Winchester. For I know for certain (but this is to yourself) that before I came out of Town Dr. Blackhall (a worthy city minister) was sent for by the Queen, and that she offered him his choice of the Bishoprics of Exeter and Chester. I advised him to pitch upon the former ...<sup>^</sup> I find that the common report of the Town is that Dr. Blackhall will be declared Bishop of Exeter and Sir William Dawes Bishop of Chester, I could well be pleased if this news was true. Tho' I am afraid Sir William Dawes will not be fond of Chester since the living is gone from it. Today I hear that our Dean of Ripon (2) is talked of for the Bishopric of Chester." (3)

When he received this news Sharp lost no time in writing to Sir William Dawes to encourage him to accept the offer of Chester for this would be a victory for the Tories and strengthen the hand of Sharp in organising the church in his province.

"Hon. Sir - Is there any hope of your coming among us? May we believe what has been told us over and over again that you are designed for the Bishop of Chester? If so God and the Queen be thanked ... But however doubtful as I am at this time, take the thing for granted because my business now is at the earnest desire of Dr. Stratford the last bishop's son to recommend a secretary to you if you be not yet provided of one ... It is not so mean a bishopric as perhaps you may have represented to you. I am told from those that knew it very well that it may be valued at £900 per annum without the living of Wigan ...." (4)

The episcopate of Bishop Dawes was short but during his seven years the diocese was served by an aristocratic prelate who set a good example to both clergy and laity. He was reputed to be one of the best preachers of his time modelling his sermons on those of Sharp. Archdeacon Burns describes Bishop Dawes as, 'most scrupulously laborious in discharging the duties of his high offices, uniting easiness of manners with the most dignified deportment, and recommended by all the qualifications of personal gracefulness.'

- (1) This was Sir John Trelawny of, "And shall Trelawny die?" fame.
- (2) Christopher Wyvil was the Dean of Ripon at this time.
- (3) A Tindal Hart, op.cit., p.241-242
- (4) ibid., p.242

... kind and respectful to his clergy and humane to everyone." (1)

Like Parson Woodeford, Dawes knew how to combine business with pleasure and the diary of Registrar Prescott records an example of the bishop in such a situation.

"May 17 1709. I dine with my Lord Bishop. A select number, (including) Lord Gower, Sir Ric[hard] Grosvenor, Sir Roger x Mostyn, Sir Hen[ry] Bunbury, Mr. Cholmley Edgerton, Dr. Thane, etc. fill the table. Here is an elegant dinner, good wine and free conversacion. About 4 my Lord recedes to Mr. Lancaster's funeral ... My Lord returns about 5, and the conversacion improves very cheerfully ..." (2)

Visitations were a problem for transport was primitive and roads poor to say the least. In 1707 Archbishop Sharp had visited the diocese of Chester during the vacancy of the see. Only his itinerary for the Archdeaconry of Richmond has survived and it took Sharp a month to complete his tour. Sharp encouraged the reciting of the Litany on Wednesdays and Fridays, prayers on Holy Days and frequent celebrations of Holy Communion, a policy that was to have lasting effects in parts of the Chester diocese.

#### VISITATION ITINERARY 1707 (3)

|           |           |   |
|-----------|-----------|---|
| Monday    | June 9th  | Visitation at Richmond  |
| Tuesday   | June 20th | Court at Richmond   |
| Wednesday | June 11th | To Bainbridge and visitation at Garsdale and Sedbergh 30 miles                    |
| Friday    | June 13th | Visitation at Kendal  |
| Saturday  | June 14th | Visitation at Burnside and Troutbeck Chapel and thence to Keswick 28 miles        |
| Sunday    | June 15th | Lowswater church and in the evening to Cockermouth 12 miles                       |
| Monday    | June 16th | Visitation at Cockermouth   |
| Tuesday   | June 17th | Visitation at Ennerdale and Whitehaven 20 miles                                   |
| Wednesday | June 18th | Visitation at Muncaster 20 miles  |
| Thursday  | June 19th | Over the sands to Ulverston 20 miles  |
| Friday    | June 20th | Visitation at Ulverston   |
| Saturday  | June 21st | Visitation at Cartmel and Flookborough and across the sands to Lancaster 20 miles |
| Sunday    | June 22nd | Church in the morning and afternoon to Heysham 8 miles                            |
| Monday    | June 23rd | Visitation at Lancaster   |
| Tuesday   | June 24th | To Preston 20 miles   |
| Wednesday | June 25th | Visitation at Preston   |

(1) R.V.H. Burne, op.cit., p.178

(2) Cheshire Sheaf, XL.65

(3) Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, Precedent Papers, R.VII.PK.181

|          |           |  |
|----------|-----------|--|
| Thursday | June 26th | Visitation at Goosenargh and Chipping 12 miles |
| Friday   | June 27th | To Boroughbridge. 50 miles in two days         |
| Saturday | June 28th |  |
| Sunday   | June 19th | Visitation at Boroughbridge                    |
| Monday   | June 30th | To Richmond 20 miles                           |

The visitations of the diocese undertaken by Bishop Dawes were very thorough as the Comperta Books reveal. Although many bishops lamented the fatigue and labour involved in visiting their dioceses and administering confirmation during their progress, Dawes made no such complaint. Indeed his energy aroused Bishop Nicholson of Carlisle to write to Bishop Wake of Lincoln about him on 18 July 1709.

"Very glad should I be to see you as able to engage in, and go through with, these fatigues as our robust brother of Chester ... who has undoubtedly the largest diocese in England next to your own, but is so far from being wearied with any such slender circuit as it can afford him. He came hither last week from Whitehaven, and went hence to Newcastle-on-Tyne. He is now at Durham, from whence he comes back to the remaining parts of his visitation at Richmond and Boroughbridge about the middle of this week. When his own necessary duties are over, he goes on to Bishopthorpe; and thence returning by Nottingham to Chester, will have visited every county in this whole Province." (1).

A reliable horse and a stout pair of legs were the basic needs of an eighteenth century bishop to help him carry out his protracted visitations.

The death of Archbishop Sharp terminated the episcopate of Bishop Dawes at Chester for he was translated to York in the spring of 1714 as Sharp's successor and at the latter's request that Dawes should succeed him at York. As was only to be expected another Tory, Francis Gastrell, was elected to Chester. His patron was Robert Harley through whose influence, Gastrell had received a canonry at Christ Church, Oxford in 1703. It is entirely due to Bishop Gastrell's interest in history that the collection of the Randle-Holmes family was preserved. When the Chester corporation refused to purchase the collection, Gastrell wrote to Harley about the matter. Harley purchased this and added it to the collection that now bears his name.

The accession of George I coincided with the rise to power of the Whigs, who, amongst other matters, were anxious to reduce Tory influence in Chester

(1) N. Sykes, op.cit., p.143

diocese which was regarded as a centre of Jacobite and Catholic activity. The year 1718 saw the beginning of a contest between Bishop Gastrell and the Whig government over the wardenship of Manchester Collegiate Church which was then vacant, the patronage of which was in the hands of the Crown. The post of warden was offered to Samuel Peploe, the Whig vicar of Preston, as some mark of esteem for the part he had played in resisting the Jacobites in 1715; Bishop Gastrell disliked Peploe for his very strong Whig views and refused to institute him on the grounds that the statutes of the college required the warden to hold a degree in divinity awarded by either Oxford or Cambridge university. In order to circumvent this regulation, Archbishop Wake was persuaded to award him a Lambeth degree in divinity. The Bishop of Chester challenged the validity of such a degree for the post of warden but the King's Bench ruled that legatine degrees were of the same validity as those awarded by the universities. (1) Bishop Gastrell had no option but to institute Peploe as warden. As a Whig, Peploe was in continual conflict with his Tory chapter which was supported in its attitude and actions by the Tory bishop who was the visitor. (2)

Bishop Gastrell appears to have maintained, in so far as he was able, the traditions of his predecessor in visitation, ordination and confirmation. Where he could exercise influence on patronage, Tory clergy were appointed to those livings. His relationships with the great magnates were cordial for he wished to advance the interests of the Tories as well as maintain them in his diocese. His visitations offered an opportunity, as they did in every diocese, of testing political opinions in the country and reporting any serious discontent. Two visitations of Bishop Gastrell provided precedents upon which Beilby Porteus was to use in his visitation of 1778.

In 1717, Bishop Gastrell conducted a special enquiry into the provision

- (1) The Bishop of Chester's case with Relation to the Wardenship of Manchester in which it is shown that no other degrees but such as are taken in the University can be deemed Legal Qualifications for any Ecclesiastical Preferment in England (Cambridge, 1721)
- (2) FR. Raines, The Rectors of Manchester and the Wardens of the Collegiate Church in that Town (Chetham Society, 1885), VI



for education, of all types, within his diocese. He asked for full details of endowments, foundation, salary of the master and the number of pupils attending. This information was later used by Bishop Porteus when he made his enquiries into the state of education in 1778. (1) During the summer of 1723, Gastrell held a full visitation of his diocese. On this occasion he asked for details about the creation of the parish, its church, houses of note, provision for charity, education, the stipend of the incumbent, and such other information as the parish cared to provide. The information supplied was collated in a single volume under the title, *Notitia Cestriensis*. (2) Porteus used this during his visitation of 1779 and made additional notes or amendments to the original returns. The returns are a valuable source of information for details of the number of families, dissenters and papists were noted in the margin of the text. Gastrell, like his colleague, Wake of Lincoln, discovered that the traditional returns of the churchwardens were more or less irrelevant for the majority were content to make an 'omnia bene' return and hope for the best. Hence a new form of questionnaire was sent to the incumbent which replaced the old Book of Articles and this new method of enquiry was adopted by Gastrell for Chester and by Archbishop Herring for York. (3)

The years between 1714 and 1740 were lean ones for the Tories where patronage was concerned. By 1718 Bishop Gibson of London and Sir Robert Walpole allied together to exploit 'the land of promise,' (4) and so gain for the Whigs a monopoly of the ecclesiastical preferment. The king interfered when he thought it necessary to do so. The partnership between Bishop Gibson and Sir Robert Walpole came to an end in 1736 and with the resignation of

(1) Leeds CA, Cause Papers RD/AC/1/5

(2) F. Gastrell, *Notitia Cestriensis*, (Cathedral Library, Chester)

(3) The Chetham Society published the returns for the Cheshire and Lancashire Deaneries only in their old series, VIII, XIX, XXI, XXII. A manuscript copy of the returns for the Archdeaconry of Richmond, made about 1780, is in the Leeds City Archives, RD/RU

(4) N. Sykes, op.cit., p.36

Walpole the era of Whig monopoly in this sphere came to an end. From 1746 to 1766, the Duke of Newcastle controlled the ecclesiastical patronage exercised by the Crown including the election of bishops, so once again the bench reverted to a motley collection representing a range of political views. Newcastle had a difficult problem in attempting to conciliate all the interests concerned and also prepare for the day when George III should succeed his <sup>grand</sup> father. George II interfered in preferments merely to frustrate the Duke of Newcastle and to tease his ministers. It is against this background that the bishops of Chester were chosen between 1725 and 1770.

During the first half of the eighteenth century, the dioceses in the northern province needed, as bishops, men who could wage both civil and ecclesiastical warfare. Chester diocese was always a strategic centre and especially between 1714 and 1747. It was composed of areas of country traditionally Jacobite with strong centres of popery. As a result of two Jacobite rebellions in thirty years the diocese needed a bishop whose Whig politics and Hanoverian loyalties were unquestioned. Throughout the reign of Anne and for the first eleven years of the reign of George I, the bishops of Chester were Tories. When Gastrell died in 1725, Gibson wrote to Townshend on the matter of his successor.

"The diocese of Chester is full of papists, and the late bishop has given great strength to the tories' interest there, especially among the clergy; which will require a person not only of zeal for his majesty's service, but also of experience and authority, such as may awe the clergy and preserve the bishop from errors of administration among a people who will not fail to improve upon and expose them if any be committed." (1)

Gibson had in mind Samuel Peploe, vicar of Preston, as the next bishop, for his services in resisting the rebels when they arrived in the town in 1715. Peploe had refused to read prayers for King James and insisted upon open support for George I. Another Whig incumbent the vicar of Broughton in Furness had received threats from the rebels when they heard of his sermon supporting the Hanoverians. He reported his action to the Commissary of Richmond.

(1) N. Sykes, Edmund Gibson (Oxford, 1926), p.124-126

"The last year as the Rebels were in Full March towards Lancaster, and within 20 miles of our town in those wavering and distracted times, to express my Loyalty to the best of Kings, and the Protestant Succession .... I preached from Proverbs 24, v 21,22 .... In the prosecution of that Discourse, I recited Dr. Shaw's text, as Mr. Baker in his Chronicle of King Edward 5th, p.122 tells us, (what) ye Bastard plants shall take no deep Root: For which discourse the Rebels were informed of Me, and even so exasperated against me, that they threatened to plunder my Goods and to cutt my Person in pieces; As several special Messengers from Lancaster and Cumberland gave me an Account." (1)

The vicar survived the threat and remained at Broughton until his death in 1729. The second Jacobite rising of 1745 met with no more success than the first.

Samuel Peploe was the son of Podmore Peploe of Dawley Parva. He was educated at Jesus College, Oxford, where he graduated in arts in 1691. He advanced to his master's degree in 1693 and took Holy Orders. Presented to the rectory of Kedlestone, Derby, in 1695 he soon became noted for his strong Whig principles and his latitudinarian theology. Eventually he came to the notice of Sir Charles Hoghton, a leading Lancashire Whig and patron of the living of Preston. On the occasion of the next vacancy in 1700, Hoghton presented Peploe to the living to counter the activities of the Jacobites, the papists and the Tory corporation of the town. (2) He was disliked by the townsfolk for his manner and politics. The strength of the papists in Preston alarmed him so much that he built two new churches to counteract their activities in converting protestants. (3) He also compiled a list of papists' estates bequeathed to superstitious uses in the Preston area.

With the support of Walpole, and after a keen contest, Gibson carried his candidate and he was consecrated bishop in March 1726. As a Whig and warden of Manchester College he was detested by the Tory chapter but received support from the dissenters whom he was prepared to tolerate. (4)

(1) Leeds C.A., Churchwardens Presentments (Western) WD/B1/4

(2) Lancashire R.O., Poll Books. Preston corporation allowed papists to vote openly in the election of 1714 as a recently discovered poll book reveals.

(3) Lancashire R.O., Preston Parish Papers DRCh./37

(4) R. Halley, Lancashire, its Puritanism and Nonconformity (Manchester, 1872), p.473-475

On 12th April 1726, Peploe was enthroned as Bishop of Chester and allowed to retain the wardenship of Manchester College in commendam.

The new bishop resigned the living of Preston, but resolved to keep it in reserve for his son Samuel who was to be ordained in 1726. In order that he could qualify for the living, he was made deacon in May and ordained priest the following September. Meanwhile John Stanley had been nominated as Peploe's successor at Preston, but the bishop refused to institute him to the living. The patron and church wardens appealed to the Archbishop of York, as they were entitled to do, that the bishop should be compelled to institute their legally nominated incumbent. (1) The case was heard in the chancery court at York and a decision arrived at in favour of Stanley, but Peploe took the case to London where George II intervened and Peploe was allowed to reserve the living for his son. (2)

Since the new bishop and the warden of Manchester College were one and the same person, there arose conflict between him and his Tory clergy in the College. The fellows of Manchester Collegiate Church objected to Peploe's primary visitations of the College in 1727 saying that as the bishop was also warden he could not visit himself. The visitation citation was rejected on the grounds that it referred to an Ecclesiam Collegiatam whereas it should have been Collegium Christi. (3) The fellows continued to preach enthusiastic sermons in support of divine right of kings which attracted large numbers while the warden preached dull ones on the Glorious Revolution which attracted few. As a way of escape Peploe influenced the Duke of Newcastle to secure the wardenship of the College for his son Samuel as successor to his father.

By 1738 Peploe felt that he had achieved some success over his Tory chapter at Chester. He wrote to the Duke of Newcastle that, "he had of late secured a majority in favour of the Whig interest, by which the opposite party were much displeased. The clergy of the honest side of the question .../

(1) B.I.H.R., Precedent Papers R.VII.PG.154

(2) ibid., R.VII.PG.175

(3) Manchester City Archives, Diocesan Papers M39/3/5

increased in the city, which was a great eyesore, they having eight or nine of that sort in the quire and in the town; and not one, excepting the then dean, that he could depend on when he was first concerned at Chester." (1)

The strength of the opposition may be observed on the occasion of the visit of Lord Cholmondeley, Lord Lieutenant of the county, in August 1738 to the city of Chester, when not a single member of the Corporation appeared to greet him. Chester city did not encourage Whigs and would not do so long as Watkin Williams remained the Member of Parliament for Denbigh. (2)

The anti-Whig majority in the corporation intruded into the cathedral foundation as bedesmen, persons whom the dean thought, "were neither well-behaved nor well-affected towards the present happy establishment." The strategy behind this was to intrude voters or freemen, "and their annuity from the church gave them voices in the county elections and in the late contest they all resolutely opposed the king's friends." (3) This meant the majority would vote as the prebendaries directed.

In 1715, when Peploe had made a personal appearance in Preston and defied the orders of the rebels, he had been supported in his attitude by Edmund Atkinson, vicar of Ulverstone to whom he later promised some preferment. Atkinson replied to this in a letter dated 11th November 1727, reporting that the Jacobites were active in Colton parish where Barbon and Hodgson were attempting to remove Robert Bateman the curate and replace him with a sympathiser. On 29th November, Robert Bateman wrote to the bishop, pointing out that the nominee of the opposite party, a Mr. Chapman, was furious that the bishop would not ordain him. To make matters worse, Chapman had been outspoken in his condemnation of Peploe "... This same Mr. Chapman has very boldly made free with your Lordship's Character before several persons. And some others of Mr. Barbon's friends have openly dar'd to say, that Your Lordship

(1) N. Sykes, Church and State in Eighteenth Century England (Cambridge, 1934), p.73

(2) N. Sykes, op.cit., p.74

(3) ibid., p.74

is a Lyar & they can prove you so; with other very base words which I can produce Evidence or Certificates of if required." (1)

When the Jacobite rebels arrived in Manchester in 1745, they were received with great joy and solemnity at divine service by the fellows of the Collegiate Church, Manchester. Peplow at 78 years of age was now too old to make another personal appearance as he had done in Preston thirty years before. He wrote to the Duke of Newcastle asking that some form of punishment should be meted out to the fellows of the College, "where some particular persons were as insolent as ever in their behaviour towards the friends of the government." (2)

It was the strength of the Tories, the papists and Jacobites that compelled Archbishop Herring to write to Hardwicke in 1747 about the type of man he believed should succeed Peplow at Chester who was now an old man of  $8\frac{2}{3}$  eighty. "Give me leave to suggest my lord that when the old bishop drops, it will be of great moment to the state to fill up that see well. It should not be a bishop of the women's making, or an election, or a family bishop but a good scholar, a good Christian and a stout Protestant, of strong spirits and constitution, who knows how to fix his post and how to maintain it. Such a man might do good and make a lasting impression on that Jacobite and Popish county. I speak the plainer on this point, as it is an affair within my province, and for which I am in some sort accountable." (3)

Bishop Peplow had already taken measures to see that a strong Whig occupied the key post of diocesan chancellor by appointing his son to that position. Samuel Peplow had graduated with the degree in civil law and shortly after his institution to the vicarage of Preston in 1726 had been granted a prebend at Chester with the rectory of Northenden in plurality. Later in the same year he was appointed chancellor, an office which he retained until his death in 1781. In 1728 he was made Archdeacon of Richmond and ten years later became warden of Manchester College in the place of his father who

(1) Lancashire R.O., Colton Parish Papers DRCH./37

(2) N. Sykes, op.cit. p.74

(3) ibid., p.74

intended that his son should bring the fellows into a state of obedience. This appointment carried with it the rectory of Tattenhall and all these posts, with the exception of the living of Preston, he held throughout his career. (1)

During his tenure of the see, Bishop Peploe encouraged church building at a time when little was being done in that field throughout the country as a whole. He consecrated no less than thirty nine new churches, to counteract the influence of the papists. He also erected two galleries in the cathedral, at his own expense, to provide additional accommodation and drew up detailed regulations about their use which were followed, at least in spirit, until 1875 when the galleries were removed. Peploe was far from popular in his diocese, except with the Whigs and Dissenters, for he had no respect for public opinion and remained an extreme Whig until his death.

The man selected to succeed Peploe as bishop was Edmund Keene, the master of Peterhouse, Cambridge. He had distinguished himself as vice-chancellor of Cambridge by promulgating a series of new orders and regulations for the better discipline of the university and ~~whose~~<sup>his</sup> skill as an academic governor had marked him out for the task of subduing the unruly fellows of Manchester College and the Jacobite citizens of the counties of Cheshire and Lancashire. Edmund Keene has been described as, "a munificent and learned prelate" and was the son of an alderman at King's Lynn. His brother, Sir Benjamin Keene was the British ambassador at Madrid. His friendship and contacts with Sir Robert Walpole had brought him several appointments, including the rectory of Stanhope in the diocese of Durham. Keene was consecrated as bishop in January 1752 and retained the rectory of Stanhope in commendam, continuing also as master of Peterhouse until 1754. Upon his election to the diocese of Chester, Keene married, in May 1752, Mary Andrews, daughter of Lancelot Andrews of Edmonton, Middlesex, a lady who possessed a considerable fortune. She exercised a great influence over her husband so that Thomas Gray referred to her as, "the she-bishop of Chester". (2)

(1) J. Venn, Alumni Cantabrigienses (Cambridge, 1924), I. part i.

(2) J.H.E. Bennett, "Revenues and Disbursements of the Bishops of Chester" H.S.L. & C. XCVIII, (1948), 84

The new bishop was not enthroned until the April and this ceremony was performed by proxy in a somewhat shabby fashion. The Dean was absent so prebendary Roger Barnton was enthroned in place of the bishop by the vice-dean, John Mapletoft. The old palace was in such a poor state of repair that Bishop Keene refused to take up his residence there and rented Cholmondeley House as his summer residence. He decided to demolish the old buildings and rebuild a new palace. When William Cole visited his friend, the rector of Tarporley, in 1755, he recorded in his diary; "On the north west Corner of the Church, by the Cloysters, the present worthy Bishop is building an entire new Palace, which is an handsome long Building of free Stone, fronting the Abbey Court, where several of the Prebendaries have and are now building very neat and elegant Houses for themselves; and when all are completed it will be a most elegant and beautiful Square." (1) When Cole dined with the bishop two years later, he was informed that the palace had cost over £2,000 or the equivalent of three years revenue. Cole however considered Bishop Keene to be, 'as much puffed up with his dignities and fortune as any on the bench.' (2)

Evidence drawn from the Exhibit Books reveals that Keene made some sound appointments to livings and was insistent that resident curates should be provided for those parishes and chapelries where the incumbent was non-resident. Unfortunately he seems to have made little impression upon the weakness many candidates had in their ordination titles and the ease with which a chapelry, after only a few months service, could be resigned. It was left to Porteus to deal firmly with this matter. Keene's visitations appear to have been thorough in so far as surviving material enables a judgement to be made. He confirmed for Archbishop Hutton in York in 1755 and in his own diocese. (3)

He was always prepared to support a curate who demanded a reasonable stipend. At Ambleside in October 1756, Mr. Wilson the curate appealed to

(1) R.V.H. Burne, op.cit., p.219

(2) British Museum, Add. Mss. 5836 (Cole Collection), XXXV

(3) N. Sykes, op.cit. p.124



the bishop that he ought to have the use of the parsonage, the surplice fees and a minimum of £30 per annum. The bishop considered the appeal and issued an order to the absentee incumbent that the curate should have his request granted from Whitsunday following. He concluded his letter; "Be so good as to communicate these directions to the parties concerned and let Mr. Wilson know that I shall send a Commission to Dr. Fenton to grant him a licence, and in the mean time he has this written authority to act upon. I thank you for the trouble I have given you in this affair ...." (1)

There were problems arising from nomination of curates who were considered unsatisfactory by the parishioners, in chapels where the nomination was partly vested in certain property holders. One such objection was made by the parishioners of Clifton chapel in Workington parish. John Stanley, vicar of Workington was determined to force upon Clifton chapel the former schoolmaster, John Thompson. The parishioners raised serious objections against him being made deacon and then licensed as curate. ".../ we look upon the said Mr. Thompson to be a verry Incompetent and unfitt person for the said Function, he having been reader there for Sum years last during which time he has frequently been verry Scurrilous, abusive, Licentious and inordinate, and given a general Distaste and uneasyness within the said Chapelry, particularly on the Sundays after Divine Service, for which Irregularity's when he has been reprehended, his ordinary answer was, that he neither valued us nor the Place no more than his Stick, having a good Temporall estate of his own."

His record as a schoolmaster appears to have been unsatisfactory for the parishioners pointed out serious faults. "We the said Inhabitants do further begg leave to Certifie to your Lordshipp, that the said Mr. Thompson as likewise verry badly conducted in that Station, by frequently, inhumanly and barbarously beating and abusing his Scholars,, particularly the Son of one Joseph Askew, about whose neck he fix'd a Halter and almost Strangled him ....

(1) Carlisle Record Office, Ambleside Parish Papers DRC/10

many others by almost pinching their Ears of, for which reasons and Severall others not proper here to insert, we humbly request your Lordshipp not to admitt the said Mr. Thompson into the said orders ...." (1) It was pointed out to Keene that since the living had been augmented by Queen Anne's Bounty they had received many offers from persons better fitted for the position of curate. The vicar of Workington apparently took no notice for the parishioners said they had, ".... frequently represented the aforesaid Grievances to the said Mr. Stanley, in hope of redress, but entirely without any manners of remedy or amendment. (2) Keene rejected Thompson.

Very often the way to ordination, for some graduates and the majority of non-graduates, lay through the profession of schoolmaster. In Chester diocese this was the common path to ordination which resulted, as Porteus found, in some unsatisfactory admissions based on dubious titles. Wyvill Blennerhasset, a member of the north country gentry, was teaching English and Mathematics at Bridgewater Academy under David Webber in 1761. He moved closer to his home district in the spring of that year and took a vacant school post at Wythop, hoping for ordination. He came under the care and tuition of Daniel Fisher, vicar of Cockermouth, who gave a detailed report about him to Keene. Fisher expressed his surprise that Blennerhasset had not been ordained earlier and certainly given a more profitable living than Buttermire chapel would be. Upon questioning the ordinand, Fisher discovered that, "when he was at the University of Dublin, about 6 years since, He unfortunately married a Woman, whom His Father thought was not equal to his Son, and thereby unhappily incur'd his Father's Displeasure, that he wou'd not see or assist his Son from that Time, till his coming to Buttermire, which he obtained by the Interest of Joshua Lucock Esquire and Mr. Christian at the Request of his Brother an eminent attorney in London" (3) He became reconciled to his father and soon obtained preferment to a better place than the poor chapel of

(1) Carlisle R.O., Clifton Parish Papers DRC/10

(2) ibid

(3) Carlisle R.O., Buttermire Parish Papers DRC/10

Buttermire. He was popular with the parishioners and a very useful minister.

Rejection of an ordinand for some physical defect did not always mean that he was barred from orders for life. It was possible to find a chapelry where the nomination was in the hands of landowners and householders. When Thomas Green the curate of Whitbeck, Cumberland, died in September 1769, the patrons selected Thomas Smith the schoolmaster of Dalton in Furness, "a person born in your Petitioners Neighbourhood, of a worthy, good and reputable Family, and himself of a fair and unblemished Character ..." Smith had been rejected for orders on account of his physical defects but it was considered the bishop could ignore this under the circumstances. "... that such Lameness of the said Mr. Thomas Smith was occasioned by a Boil on his left Thigh, which by improper Applications contracted the Sinues in such a Manner, that he is not now able to walk without the Aid of a Cane or Stick to support him ..." (1) The parish would not be a demanding one in that it was but two miles long and something under a mile in breadth. Another reason for his appointment was that he could teach a school which was greatly needed in the area.

On 31 October 1769, Smith wrote to the bishop somewhat hesitatingly in case he should again be refused orders. He stressed the point that he wanted to remain at Whitbeck for life with the secondary aim that, the living would, "I hope (be) capable of affording an agreeable Retirement at that Period of Life, when a School, crowded with 50 or 60 little Boys, may become rather too fatiguing an Employment ..." (2) In many cases this was what happened and curates of this type remained in one living all their natural lives.

The scope and nature of examinations of ordinands varied from diocese to diocese and the zeal of individual bishops. In an attempt to have some measure of control over the suitability of his ordinands Keene demanded a curriculum vitae from each one. Porteus, when he came to Chester, adopted this method and made it an integral and efficient part of his examination system. When in June 1762 Thomas Pooler wrote to the bishop asking for admission to

(1) Carlisle R.O., Whitbeck Parish Papers DRC/10

(2) ibid

orders he gave a detailed account of his education. He was born in Over Kellett and educated at the grammar school in the parish, under three masters, "each of whom had their Instructions at Sedbergh /..." (1) an important school at this time. He left school when he was approaching seventeen and moved to Sedbergh where he remained for three years. He was then elected by the trustees, at twenty, as master of Over Kellett school. He remained there for over two years when, "Mr. Tomlinson Usher of Sedbergh, tired with the Fatigue & hurry of a public school accepted a Curacy at Poulton in the File (sic) ... The Ushership of Sedbergh being vacated by his removal Mr. Bateman applied to me ...." (2). Pooler found life at Sedbergh too enervating and he had to resign. Barbon chapel in Kirby Lonsdale being vacant at the time, would be, he thought, the place in which to regain health and so he was appointed curate.

Keene was successful in settling the long dispute between the bishops of Chester and the Dean and Chapter of York concerning their jurisdiction in Kirby Ireleth. The Dean and Chapter were trying to exert their jurisdiction over the chapels of Broughton, Seathwaite and Woodland. The dispute had begun in 1707 when Bishop Stratford claimed that the chapelries were under his jurisdiction since in 1547 Bishop Bird sent Letters of Request to the Bishop of Sodor and Man to consecrate Broughton church. Also the bishop asserted all offenders were penanced at Ulverstone by Dr. Fogg in 1677 and that in 1698 and again in 1701 the clergy had attended his visitations. (3)

Matters came to a head on 25 April 1764 when Timothy Cooperson curate of Broughton, wrote to Keene that the division over the ecclesiastical jurisdiction was now serious. The vicar of Kirby Ireleth held his jurisdiction from the Dean and Chapter, but the curates held licences given at Chester and attended the Chester visitation courts. Cooperson was annoyed when he received a citation to attend a visitation court. "... I have received from Mr Machley, the D[eputy] Register of the Archbishop's Court of York, Articles of Enquiry, with a Citation thereon, requiring myself as Curate of Broughton, and the Chapel Wardens, to appear at the primary visitation of the Lord Archbishop of

(1) Carlisle R.O., Barbon Parish Papers DRC/10

(2) ibid

(3) Lancashire R.O., Kirby Ireleth Parish Papers DRCh./ 37

York, to be held for that diocese, in the Parish Church of Skipton on Monday the 14th Day of May next /... " (1)

Cooperson drew the bishop's attention to this in the hope a settlement could be reached. The Dean of York was the rector and appointed the vicar as his surrogate, 'by way of Opposition to their's of Richmond usually appointed here /...'" Besides it was sixty miles to Skipton, a journey that would take five days to complete. "I need not urge the general Inconveniences that might arise from the Clergymen of this Parish being all called out at a Time to distant visitations, the Parish is large, accidental Duty frequent, that part of it, especially where I reside, populous, still advancing, so that in Cases of Emergency, a Supply might, in the mean time, be difficultly procured." (2)

Registrar Lambert at Lancaster brought information to light proving that the clergy of the chapelries need only attend the visitation of the archbishop when he visited his province but not when he held his diocesan primary or triennial visitations.

Keene wrote to Drumond on 5th May 1764 pointing out the problems, that no evidence could be found for the chapelries being part of the peculiar of Kirby Ireleth. "There is certainly some embarrassment in the affair, for if the Vicar has a peculiar jurisdiction, the chapels would not have been under mine, and yet the Curates receive my licence, and the Vicar was instituted by the Bp. of Chester in 1671" (3) Archbishop Drummond agreed that the peculiar was Kirby Ireleth only and not the chapelries, and any possible further encroachment by the Dean and Chapter should be prevented.

The Dean and Chapter of Chester remained very much as Peploe had appointed to it. The members were Whig in sympathy and little opportunity presented itself for Keene to make any change. In 1764, he was offered the diocese of Armagh by George Grenville but he refused this on the grounds that he preferred to wait for Ely, to which he was translated in 1771. (4) Bishop Keene seems

(1) B.I.H.R., Bishopthorpe Papers R.Bp.68/6

(2) ibid. The Bishopthorpe papers are undergoing renumbering and the above reference is the temporary identification

(3) B.I.H.R., Bishopthorpe Papers R.Bp.68/6

(4) Dictionary of National Biography, XXX.304

to have been at pains to send out circular letters to his clergy, at his own expense, concerning the activities of the papists in his diocese and the necessity for watchfulness over their conversion of protestants. His translation to Ely paved the way for the promotion of William Markham, Dean of Christ Church, Oxford to the see. It was during Markham's tenure of the see that the rapid increase in population took place, accompanied by the expansion of industry and the growth of towns, for which both he and other bishops were unprepared.

CHAPTER THREE

WILLIAM MARKHAM, BISHOP OF CHESTER 1771-1777

Edmund Keene, having been translated to Ely, a successor had to be found for the diocese of Chester. By 1771 the problems of industrialisation of the southern parts of the diocese were creating problems that needed the attention of a resident bishop. No one foresaw the consequences of industrialisation and the diocese instead of receiving a bishop who had parochial experience, found a former headmaster, who was Dean of Christ Church, as its new bishop. Markham had too many duties to be as efficient in his diocese as he should have been. R.H. Morris in his diocesan history realised Markham's weakness. "Bishop Markham, ... was too heavily weighted to do justice to his episcopal duties, for he continued to hold the Deanery of Christ Church with his bishopric, and to these heavy charges was added the tuition of the Prince of Wales. His promotion to the Archiepiscopal see of York in 1777 was in reward for the satisfaction he had given as preceptor of the royal princes." (1) With these words Morris dismisses the entire episcopate of Markham, so the reader is left without knowledge of his background, his achievement and failure.

It is from Jeremy Bentham, who was one of Markham's pupils at Westminster School, that we receive an impression of the new bishop as a school master. "Our great glory was Dr. Markham. He was a tall portly man and high he held his head. We stood prodigiously in awe of him; indeed he was an object of adoration." (2) His clergy appear to have viewed him in a similar light for John Bennett, curate of St. Mary's, Manchester, writing in 1783, dedicated his new book to Markham.

"I am not without some solid reasons for particularly addressing such a work as this to your Grace's protection. Having received from your authority my existence in the church; having, sometimes, felt my emulation quickened by your encouraging epistles; living in a diocese

(1) R.H. Morris, Chester Diocesan History (London, 1895), p.227

(2) J. Bentham, Worked. J. Bowring (Edinburgh, 1843), X.30

which once was your own and still retains you for its Metropolitan; permit me to conclude that independently of your titles, or your station, or your greatness, there is some degree of justice and propriety in such a dedication." (1)

In order to arrive at some assessment of the part played by William Markham during his time as Bishop of Chester, it is essential to view his career from four aspects; his biography, his pastoral care of his diocese, his activities as Dean of Christ Church and his interest in the House of Lords. It is unfortunate that biographical material is scarce for very little of his personal correspondence has survived and he rarely published any of his works. So, by and large, what we know about his life is confined to secondary sources for the most part.

Born at Kinsale, Ireland in 1719, William Markham was the eldest son of Major and Elizabeth Markham. Until he attained the age of twelve he was educated at home by his father, but after William's mother died, his father resolved to move to England so that his son could have a good education. Major Markham moved to London and rented a house in Vine Street close to Westminster School. On 21 June 1733, William was entered as a pupil at Westminster school under the tuition of Dr. Nicol and Dr. Johnson. His tutors were very soon impressed by the intelligence of their new pupil. His father was a staunch Whig and William was brought up to admire the Glorious Revolution of 1688. although by the time he became Bishop of Chester, his friendship with Lord Mansfield had led him to become a ministerialist.

In the elections of 1738, Markham was successful and was awarded a studentship to Christ Church, Oxford, where he matriculated on 6 June of the same year. At Oxford he was considered to be the outstanding scholar of the day and excelled in the art of composing Latin verse. He graduated as bachelor of arts in 1742 and three years later he was awarded his master's degree. Markham decided to remain at Oxford for a further three years and at the conclusion was awarded a doctorate in civil law. During these last three years Markham undertook duties as a tutor at Christ Church and availed himself

(1) J. Bennett, Divine Revelation (London, 1783), p.viii



of the opportunities for travel in Italy and France during the long vacation. (1)

Towards the end of 1753, Dr. Nicol announced that he would retire from the post of head master of Westminster School. Markham was offered the post, but discovered that the statutes required the master to be in holy orders. Consequently he was ordained priest at the age of thirty-four and three years later was appointed one of the chaplains to George II. For the next eleven years, Markham remained at Westminster School and during that time he had the opportunity to befriend Lord Mansfield, William Burke, and the friendless young Irishman, Edmund Burke. Edmund valued the friendship of Markham so highly that he asked him to be godfather to his son Richard in 1758. In an attempt to assist Edmund Burke to some preferment, Markham wrote to the Duchess of Queensbury on 6 October 1759, suggesting that the post of consul in Madrid would be an excellent situation for Edmund Burke. At the same time he asked the duchess to approach William Pitt and put forward the suggestion. (2) The duchess complied with Markham's request, but Pitt rejected the application and retained Burke in England. (3)

About three quarters of the pupils who passed through Markham's hands were ordained during his lifetime. These included two future archbishops, several deans and archdeacons. He was instrumental in obtaining preferment for his former pupils. Cyril Jackson he presented to a prebend at Southwell. William Page, John Cleaver and Thomas Mostyn were appointed to prebendal stalls in Chester. Edward Salter, William Conybeare and William Jackson were all presented to vacant prebendal stalls at York when Markham was translated from Chester to the archbishopric of York. (4)

On 16 June 1759, Markham married Sarah Goddard, the daughter of a

- (1) C.R. Markham, A Memoir of Archbishop Markham 1719-807 (Oxford, 1906), pp.1-10  
D.F. Markham, A History of the Markham Family (London, 1854), passim
- (2) T.W. Copeland, Correspondence of Edmund Burke (Cambridge, 1958), I, 133
- (3) Chatham Correspondence, ed. W.S. Taylor & J.A. Pringle, (Edinburgh, 1843), I, 432
- (4) C.R. Markham, op.cit., p.16-17

wealthy merchant, from Rotterdam. She was then twenty-one and he some forty years of age but both lived to bring up to adult life a family of thirteen children. After eleven years at Westminster School, Markham began to feel the strain of the post and felt that his health was suffering. Recollecting that once he had been promised assistance in obtaining preferment by the Duke of Bedford, he wrote to him about the matter. At that time the deanery of Bristol was vacant, although worth something less than £500 per annum, but Markham considered that this would be a beginning. The Duke spoke to George II about the matter but the king had promised the deanery to Dr. Barton. In any case the king said he would remember Markham when the next vacancy arose that proved to be suitable. On 21 June he was presented to the richest prebendal stall in Durham worth some £700 per annum. He wrote on the matter to Dr. Berkeley:

".... I have great reason to thank God for this and many other favorable events in my life. I am at present in possession of every thing which a reasonable mind ought to be contented with .... I had compliments of congratulation from the B. of Durham, attended with second compliments on my promotion to one of the best prebends in his Church ,...." (1)

Towards the end of 1763, Dr. Gregory, the Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, announced his impending retirement and indicated that he wished Markham to succeed him as dean. At the same time the Duke of Bedford wrote to Markham that the king intended to present him to the deanery of Rochester, which Dr. Pearce intended to resign. On 8 March 1764, Markham resigned his post as master of Westminster School and retired to Durham in June expecting to hear the announcement of his preferment to Rochester. Nothing appears to have been done in this matter until the following December, when Markham wrote to the Duke complaining about the delaying tactics of Dr. Pearce. The outcome was that in February 1765, Markham was installed as Dean of Rochester with the vicarage of Boxley in commendam.

Markham remained at Rochester for the next two years since Dr. Gregory

(1) British Museum, Add. MS., 39, 311, f.89

seemed reluctant to resign his deanery of Christ Church. However, early in 1767, Dr. Gregory died and the deanery became vacant. Towards the end of September, Markham was offered the deanery and immediately wrote to George Grenville on the matter, thanking him for his efforts on his behalf. "I have been called to Town suddenly by an offer of the Deanery of Christ Church. I did not apply for it, nor can I find that I have been recommended. I am told that it was his Majesty's own doing. If it be so, I cannot any way account for it so naturally as by ascribing it to the impression which your kind mention of me on a former occasion may have left on his Majesty's mind. Permit me therefore to return you my thanks for it. Your kindness to me has been such, that whether I owe this obligation to you or not, it makes no difference in my duty, or in the sense which I have of it." (1)

On 23 October, Markham was installed as Dean of Christ Church over which he was to preside for the next ten years. During his term of office, his students occupied his close attention, one being Richard Burke, son of his friend, Edmund Burke.

Burke wanted a studentship on the Christ Church foundation for Richard. Each year at least three students went up to Christ Church from Westminster School and on some occasions as many as six. Any vacancies on the foundation, over and above those occurring in the normal course of events, were filled by nominees of the Dean and Chapter and these students were known as canoneers. Markham used this method to fill the place vacated by Matthew Lewis who had to resign his studentship on the occasion of his marriage and appointed Richard Burke to his place. (2) Thomas King wrote to Edmund Burke on 22 December 1771 to inform him that he had had the pleasure of attending Richard at his matriculation. "As the Tutor the Bishop intends for Him, (a Mr. Berkley) was not in Oxford, I had the Satisfaction of attending Him to the Vice Chancellor this morning and seeing Him properly matriculated." (3) During January 1773 Edmund Burke wrote to Shackleton ~~Rish~~ about Richard's progress at Oxford.

(1) British Museum, Add. MS, 42,085, f.161

(2) T.W. Copeland, op.cit. II, 393

(3) ibid., II, 394

"He is entered in that University a Student of Christ Church. The Dean was very much pleased with him upon his examination, &..." (1) Since Richard was considered to be too young for the university, "the Bishop of Chester has been so good as to indulge him with a years leave of absence" (2)

A residence in London seemed desirable to Markham at this stage, so he rented a house in Bloomsbury Square but further promotion was to be offered him. Edmund Keene had been translated to Ely in December 1770 and the diocese of Chester was vacant. It was offered to Markham who accepted. His election took place on 26 January 1771 and his consecration as Bishop of Chester, by Archbishop Drummond, assisted by the bishops of Durham, Carlisle and Worcester, on 17 February 1771.

The friendship between Markham and Burke began to cool during his time as Bishop of Chester because divergent opinions rose between them on the rebellion of the American Colonies. The final break came when Markham, disgusted by Burke's violence towards Warren Hastings at his trial, broke off the friendship.

In 1771, Lord Holderness wanted to provide a preceptor for the Prince of Wales and at the same time, Lord Mansfield wanted to assist his old friend Markham. Holderness consulted the Earl of Chesterfield who said that the preceptor must be a preceptor only and nothing else. On 27 March 1771, Lord Holderness wrote to Markham about the proposal that the latter should be nominated as preceptor.

"Yesterday in the evening I had an opportunity of laying before the King the substance of the conversation that passed between your Lordship & myself the preceding day, & am commanded to say that His Majesty is much pleased at your ready compliance with his desire of entrusting the Religious & learned part of the young Prince's education to your care, and approves entirely the maxims your Lordship threw out as to the mode of carrying the King's views into execution upon the first knowledge of His Majesty's intentions.

Upon mentioning Mr. Hurd's name I found the King very much prepossessed in his favour and well informed of his great merit, but for particular reasons His Majesty postpones his final resolution till I can have the honour of another interview with

(1) ibid., II,401

(2) ibid., II,409

your Lordship which I shall hope for on Thursday morning if not very inconvenient to you." (1)

By early April the appointment of William Markham as preceptor and Cyril Jackson as sub-preceptor was approved and on the 12 April, Markham commenced his duties.

A second London house was now desirable as a convenient centre for his duties as tutor to the royal princes, so the Markhams moved to Sion End, Kew, where they were to reside for the next five years. A few letters from the princes to their tutor have survived and it is evident from these that the princes had a great affection for their tutor. On 27 December 1775 the Prince of Wales wrote to Markham commenting on the news from America.

"You must attribute the incorrectness of my last letter to the haste I was in, for Mr. Jackson was calling me to come to the preceptors room to my lesson therefore I am very much afraid that it was very incorrect. I am very much afraid we must believe the news from America. Alas when I come to consider the prodigious fame our arms had got in the last War, and now, what? Shall we lose all this credit, all this honour, all this reputation, all this fame, being vanquish'd by whom? By an army of ragamuffins with a General Washington at their head, an upstart, an I do not know who. I beg you will present my compliments to Mrs Markham & yr. daughter & my love to William and pug George ..." (2)

Lord Holderness and Markham disagreed as to the content of the princes' education. Holderness wanted their education to have a modern slant but Markham aimed to give it a classical bias, involving detailed study of classical authors. However during 1774, Lord Holderness found it essential to travel abroad for his health, intending to spend a year over the tour. On his return he was disturbed to find that the Prince of Wales had acquired a great affection for, and a strong attachment to Markham. Holderness despaired that he would ever see the education of the princes carried to a successful conclusion. He also felt that since Markham had been disappointed in not obtaining a translation to Winchester, he might alienate the Prince of

(1) B.I.H.S. Markham Papers

(2) ibid  
These letters have been removed from the Borthwick Institute by the owners preparatory to being sold by auction in London during the current year.

Wales from his father, for relations between the Hanoverian monarchs and their offspring were always liable to be strained.

Lord Holderness discussed the matter with Lord Carmarthen from whom he learned the information that he also intended to retire for he had been associated with Markham in the education of the princes. In May 1776, Lord Holderness tendered his resignation and the King saw that the opportunity presented itself to make further changes. On 27 May, George III wrote to Lord North, "I yesterday took the painful task of sending for the Bishop of Chester, and, with kindness and frankness, told him that, as Lord Holderness meant to retire, I should at the same time appoint a new Preceptor. The princes would secretly feel a kind of victory if the Bishop remained . . . ." (1) Markham was shocked, "and not very respectfully asked, Has your Majesty consulted Lord Mansfield? The King surprised at so strange a question, replied he surely was master to appoint whom he pleased to overlook the education of his children and repeated his determination." (2) Markham then begged the King to consider that he had a large family to maintain, but he was told not to worry for the change would make no difference to his future preferment. As a parting gift George III presented Markham with a copy of the Odes of Pindar. Since Lord Mansfield had been instrumental in securing the appointment of Markham as preceptor he now proposed Bishop Hurd as his successor. The announcement of the change was a shock to all who knew Markham. "It was suddenly declared that the King had dismissed Dr. Markham (Bishop of Chester) and Mr. Jackson from being preceptor and sub-preceptor to the Prince of Wales; and that Lord Holderness and Mr. Smelt, his Royal Highnesses governor and sub-governor had resigned their posts. No reason was assigned for so great a revolution." (3) The termination of Markham's services came on 28 May 1776 but he had not long to wait for

(1) C.R. Markham, op.cit., p.43

(2) Political Memoranda of Francis Fifth Duke of Leeds, ed. Oscar Browning, (Camden Society N.S.), XXXV, 5-9

(3) Horace Walpole, Last Journals (London, 1845), II, 49-52

preferment. His old friend Archbishop Drummond of York died on 10 December. The archbishopric was offered to Terrick, Bishop of London, but he declined the offer on account of his age. George III then suggested to Lord North that the vacant archbishopric should be offered to Markham. This offer he accepted with alacrity and was translated on 21 December 1776 and enthroned at York in January 1777. Horace Walpole suggested that Markham had been promised translation to either London or York out of fear of what he might divulge about the King and his family. (1)

The remainder of his career as Archbishop of York falls outside the scope of this work. (2)

(1) ibid

(2) As Archbishop of York, Markham was involved in the Gordon Riots having to make his escape in disguise from his house. He went to live in South Audley Street where he died in 1807 at the age of 76. He wrote little for publication beyond a few sermons. At Bishopthorpe he maintained a princely establishment and spent money on repairs to Southwell, Ripon and York Minsters. For a Christmas present to his forty-seven grandchildren, he gave them £1,000 each in 1806.

CHAPTER FOUR

WILLIAM MARKHAM AND HIS DIOCESE

William Markham came to the diocese as its bishop at a time when criticism of the standards set by the various orders of the ministry of the church was vocal. Criticism of the church was to increase as the years passed and the press openly attacked many of the abuses of the time. The Nottingham Journal printed a Litany, attacking the clergy, and based on the model of the prayer book Litany. "We beseech thee O Lord, that it may please thee to illuminate all bishops, priests, and deacons; that they may see the horrid sinfulness of seeking translations, of holding pluralities, of non-residence and purchasing of livings." (1) Markham, like so many of his brethren on the bench, was a pluralist and non-resident for the greater part of the year, but he did try to give the diocese such attention as his other duties permitted.

On 23 February 1771, Markham came to Chester for his enthronement and was met outside the city by a select company which escorted him to his cathedral. Later, Markham found himself charged with the payment of ten shillings and six pence toll fees and thirty-four shillings and sixpence for cakes and wine consumed by the party that welcomed him. The expenses of his enthronement were by no means light, for the choirsters charged a fee of five guineas for their services and the legal fees in addition made a total of £22. 12s. 10d. which the new bishop had to meet out of his stipend. During the period of Markham's episcopate the stipend appears to have been about £1,000 per annum. Out of this he had to pay tenths to the Crown, the stipends of the two archdeacons of £100, and an allowance of £90 to vicars in charge, the salary of the deputy registrar of £20, taxes of £40 plus his subscriptions to the clergy fund and the charity school. In addition he had the wages to pay for the palace servants. It was therefore essential that the bishop should be a man of independent means, or hold one or more livings in commendam, or some alternative office, which in Markham's case was the Deanery of Christ Church and the office of tutor to the royal princes. (2)

(1) Nottingham Journal, 29 January 1780

(2) J.H.E. Bennett, "Revenues and Disbursements of the Bishops of Chester", H.S.L. & C., XCVIII, 81,82,91-95



There is but scanty information upon the visits Markham paid to his diocese but from the evidence in the act book it appears that he paid an annual visit between the end of June until early August. His act book records details of his ordinations in London and at Chester. (1) The ordinations at Chester all take place between 20 July and 8 August and other ordinations are held in London, all outside the traditional Ember seasons. On the other hand the bishop of Carlisle appears to have rigidly observed the Trinity ordination season and to have held but very few outside Trinitytide. (2) Notices of forthcoming ordinations were published in the press and the letters exchanged between ordinands and the bishop reveal that some candidates were unable to find the official notice in the press. (3) Markham used the Manchester Mercury and Adams Chester Courant, for inserting ordination notices. "The Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Chester will have a public ordination in the Cathedral Church of Chester on Sunday 28 July 1771". (4)

Similarly details of Markham's confirmations are scanty. From such evidence as survives it seems that confirmation tours were held during his annual visit to Chester. He refers to this in a letter to the Prince of Wales dated 1 August 1772. "In the pretty pair of letters which I have just now received, I am happy to find one from your Royal Highness very short, according to the old rule, because the Prince of Wales was short. I have finished my confirmations which were larger than I expected. I had four thousand at Chester and twelve hundred at Malpas. I have an ordination tomorrow. We hope the next day to start towards Kew." (5)

The following summer, according to a notice in the Chester Courant, Markham held a larger confirmation tour. "The Bishop of Chester will confirm at Macclesfield on Tuesday 20 and Wednesday 21 July, Stockport on 22nd, Manchester on the 23rd, 24th and 25th, Wigan on the 26th and 27th, Liverpool

(1) Cheshire R.O., Bishops' Act Book 1777-1790, EDA1/8 n.f.

(2) Carlisle R.O., Bishops' Register 1734-1764

(3) ibid., Ponsonby and Haile Parish Papers, DRC/10

(4) Adams Chester Courant, 4 July 1771

(5) B.I.H.R., Markham Papers

on the 28th and 29th and Warrington on the 31st." (1) Many writers have assumed that Markham confined his travels in his diocese to within a reasonable distance of Chester, but the acquisition of the parish records of Mosser reveal that he made a confirmation tour through Kendal and Copeland deaneries in 1776.

In a letter dated 6th October 1777 to Bishop Porteus, Thomas Symonds the vicar of Kendal stated that Mosser chapel was not consecrated by the late bishop (Markham) on his confirmation round last year. (2) In all probability some assistance was given by the Bishop of Carlisle in confirming people from Copeland and Kendal deaneries as he also ordained clergy from these deaneries on Letters Dimissory from Chester. (3) There was also some assistance from the Bishop of Clonfert who, from time to time, resided in Carlisle diocese. But there is little doubt that confirmation in Chester was much in the same state as described by Dr. Norman Sykes. "In respect of numbers confirmed and the frequency of confirmation circuits, the Hanoverian Church may challenge comparison with any century of its predecessors; but it may not rightly be judged by standards based upon the improved roads, and the construction of railways, much less upon the smaller dioceses and motor-car travel, of later centuries". (4)

The duties of a bishop were outlined by Francis Webber, fellow of Lincoln College, preaching the consecration sermon for the Bishop of Bristol in Lambeth Palace Chapel in 1750. "The church of England has thought fit to follow the constitution of the primitive church in the appointment of the several orders of bishops, priests, and deacons. Episcopacy seems now to be no longer a stumbling-block .... even of those, who are upon other accounts disaffected to the establishment. They allow it to be, if not of apostolical institution, yet at least consistent with the good government of the church, and in many respects conducive to the interests and well-being of religion. They acknowledge

(1) Adams Chester Courant, 29 June 1773

(2) Carlisle R.O., Mosser Chapel Papers, DRC/10

(3) Bodleian Library, Ms. Oxford Diocesan Papers b21, Carlisle R.O., Bishops' Register 1765-1823 for details of ordinations on Letters Dimissory from Markham.

(4) N. Sykes, op.cit., p.132

the propriety at least of a superior rank of men to superintend the work of the Ministry, to inspect into the lives and conduct and regularity of the clergy, to set in order the things that are wanting, to represent the exigencies of religion to the state and to claim its protection." (1)

If the bishops are a superior rank of men supervising the work of the ministry it may be wise to glance at the status of the Chester clergy when Markham became bishop in January 1771. The Dean was Dr. William Smith, a native of Worcester, who graduated at New College, Oxford, where he took his several degrees. A scholar of no mean ability, he was probably the best dean Chester ever had. Like many others, he owed his preferment to his friendship with the Stanley family. (2) The Chapter appears to have been constituted of clergy who received their prebendal stalls as a reward for their Whig activities or family position. Roger Barnston, a former pupil of Sedbergh school, and graduate of Trinity College, Cambridge, owed his preferment to Bishop Peploe. Peploe was patron of St. Michael's, Chester, where Barnston was vicar, and he rewarded him with a prebendal stall for his activities in the city on behalf of the Whigs. Edward Mainwaring, another pupil from Sedbergh and a graduate of St. John's, Cambridge, was presented by Peploe to the living of Weaverham in 1735. Bishop Keene, himself a Cambridge man, collated Mainwaring to a prebendal stall. Richard Jackson, vicar of St. Oswald, Chester, was rewarded by collation to a prebendal stall by Bishop Peploe, as a mark of his appreciation for Jackson's activities on behalf of the Whigs in Chester. Another was Abel Ward, fellow of Queen's, Cambridge, who in 1744 was presented to a prebend and appointed chaplain the following year to Peploe, with the living of St. Anne, Manchester, as some token of the Bishop's appreciation of his work for the Whigs in ~~Kory~~ Manchester. The outstanding personality amongst the hierarchy of the diocese was Samuel Peploe junior. When Chancellor Thane died in the autumn of 1727, Peploe was created the new chancellor and, until his death in 1781, he was both chancellor,

(1) F. Webber, Sermon preached at the Consecration of John Bishop of Bristol 1750 (London, 1751), p.29

(2) R.V.H. Burne, Chester Cathedral (London, 1958), p.216

official principal and vicar general, in control of the administrative machine for fifty-three years. (1)

Although Samuel Peploe was appointed warden of Manchester College after his father's resignation in 1738, yet the Tory chapter always regarded Peploe as an intruder of a questionable and uncompromising character. During his early years as warden, Peploe seldom lived in Manchester because the clergy were opposed to his political views, and the chapter followed the teachings of Sancroft, Ken and the non-jurors. They preached rousing sermons in the Collegiate Church denouncing erastianism and vindicating catholic principles. Peploe, as a man of liberal ideas and a staunch Whig, treated his clergy coldly since they did not respond to his views. Although he was also visitor of Manchester Grammar School he did little to promote its usefulness in the field of education. However as the older clergy died they were replaced by men with whom Peploe had worked. On the death of his father, the chapter at Manchester raised so much opposition to his policy that Peploe had to modify his views, although he found his position in the chapter somewhat humiliating. During Markham's episcopate, Peploe as warden divided his time between Chester and Manchester. (2)

The Dean and Chapter of Chester came into conflict with their new bishop over the proposed appointment of his two sons, William and John Markham, as joint registrars. The Chapter declined to confirm the bishop's request because there was no precedent for such an act nor was it thought to be necessary. The Dean and Chapter wrote to Doctors' Commons for advice on procedure in this matter and upon receipt of this deposited it in the chest in the Chapter House, for the guidance of others who might be faced with a similar situation. On 29 January 1773, Bishop Markham again approached the Chapter. "And whereas the said William, Lord Bishop of Chester has now for the Second Time offered for our Confirmation the above Grant namely, 'A Grant of the Right Reverend William Lord Bishop of Chester to his Sons William

(1) ibid., p.217-218

(2) F.R. Raine, Rectors of Manchester and the Wardens of the Collegiate Church of that Town (Chetham Society, 1885) VI, N.S., 167-169

Markham and John Markham of the Office of Register whensoever the said Office shall become Vacant by the Death, Resignation or Surrender or Forfeiture of Benjamin Keene Esquire the present Register bearing date December 3rd 1771', which Grant has been read to us in Chapter assembled 29th January 1773. We are willing to shew the Bishop all possible respect, but at the same Time persuaded that if the Grant be in itself illegal our Confirmation of it will not make it legal ...." (1) In the end it was resolved to confirm the Grant only in so far as the law permitted this to be done. The final stage is an entry of the Grant in the Bishop's Register for 1773. (2)

If such were the hierarchy then what of the general run of the clergy? According to John Wesley, they were of a different calibre to those of earlier centuries. "It must be allowed, that ever since the Reformation, and particularly in the present century, the behaviour of the Clergy in general is greatly altered for the better .... Most of the Protestant Clergy are different from what they were. They have not only more learning of the most valuable kind, but abundantly more religion. Insomuch that the English and Irish Clergy are generally allowed to be not inferior to any in Europe, for piety, as well as for knowledge." (3)

Since Markham appears to have resided in his diocese for some six weeks each year, the entire administration (and often clerical appointments) was in the hands of the chancellor as vicar general and official principal. In April 1771 Markham appointed Thomas Symonds, vicar of Kendal, his commissary for the five western deaneries to relieve the chancellor's burden. ".... by reason of our attendance in Parliament and other urgent and necessary Avocations We are detained and likely to be a considerable time absent from our Episcopal See of Chester for the ease & convenience therefore of the Clergy and others subject to our jurisdiction within the Deanrys (sic) of Amounderness Lonsdale Furness Kendal and Copeland ...." Symonds was given power to licence clergy to the cure of souls, to licence all school masters and administer the oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy to all who had to take them. (4) Archdeacon Blackburne carried out similar duties in the three

- (1) Chester Cathedral Muniments, Chapter Act Book 1747-1816, f.169  
 (2) Cheshire R.O., Bishops' Register 1768-1779, EDA2/7, f.139v  
 (3) J. Wesley, Works (ed. London, 1872), V. Sermon CIV, 178  
 (4) Carlisle R.O., Kendal Parish Papers, DRC/10

eastern deaneries. (1)

Markham, so far as can be ascertained at the present time, held no primary visitation of his diocese. All visitations held in the western deaneries of Richmond were undertaken by Thomas Symonds, for the eastern deaneries by Archdeacon Blackburne and in the archdeaconry of Chester by the chancellor. (2) There are no surviving records for 1771 which cover any visitation and even if Markham undertook such a task, nothing has survived to give an accurate picture of the diocese so comparison with Porteus's findings in 1778 is difficult.

Chester diocese was unique in the eighteenth century for two peculiarities which survived in no other English diocese. The first was the office of King's Preacher. This office had originated between 1590 and 1595 but the first recorded appointment is in 1599 when on 23 January, Elizabeth I directed that £200 should be made available as an annual stipend from the profits of the lands of recusants and that four preachers should be appointed at a stipend of £50 per annum, without cure of souls, who were to preach wherever the need arose. The plan was that these preachers would counter the activities of catholic missionary priests in the strong recusant areas in the diocese. Two preachers were directed to Amounderness and Kirby Lonsdale, while a further two were to work in the deaneries of Furness and Copeland. This project failed because the preachers were peripetetic and made but little contact with the inhabitants of those deaneries.

In 1662 the preachers were ordered to deliver sermons against the dissenters in those areas where dissent flourished. The Toleration Act of 1689 removed the need for any wholesale attempt to enforce conformity, so by 1730 the office was used by the bishops as some reward for their chaplains. During and after Markham's episcopate, the office of King's Preacher became a sinecure and useful perquisite for a beneficed clerk. The most arduous

- (1) Leeds C.A., Archdeacons' Papers, CD/PB/9
- (2) Leeds C.A., Comperta et Detecta Books RD/C/1-47  
Cheshire R.O., Comperta et Detecta Books EDV/1

duty for the holder of this office, in 1771 and after, was to preach one sermon each year, usually the same one, in every Lake District chapel while at the same time enjoying a pleasant summer holiday as the guest of hospitable gentry. These occasional sermons, for they were little else, were often preached on week days and had little value but appointments continued to be made on the bishop's recommendation until the office was extinguished by Sir Robert Peel in 1844. (1) The second was the survival of the office of Reader long after it had disappeared elsewhere. Many rural chapelries had but poor endowments often less than five pounds per annum. (2) Had the services of these Readers been withdrawn many parts of the western deaneries would have been dechristianised and lapsed into paganism by the middle of the eighteenth century. Chancellor Fergusson, of Carlisle, had a poor opinion of them when he wrote that they were, 'tailors, cloggers and butter print makers'. (3) These men were licensed to read mattins and evensong and frequently they acted as the local schoolmasters. Their emoluments were partly in money and partly in kind, i.e. 'clothes yearly,' and, 'whittlegate'. The former meant one suit of clothes, two pairs of shoes and one pair of clogs. The latter meant board for a number of weeks or days in the houses of the inhabitants and since few families had more than two knives and fewer used forks the curate brought his own cutlery or 'whittle'. (4) The readers in the chapels of Ponsonby, Haile, Bellerby, Hardrow, Howgill, Rampside and other northern chapels were also schoolmasters and appear to have drawn up wills, conveyances, bonds and other standard legal documents until the stamp duties brought the practice to an end. (5)

The creation of Queen Anne's Bounty, in due course, brought an end to the office of Reader. When a chapel was augmented by a grant of £200 from the governors of the Bounty it became a perpetual curacy and as such had to be served by a deacon or priest. This is possibly the reason for the large

- (1) E. Aeon, "King's Preachers in Lancashire", Lancashire & Cheshire Antiquarian Society, LVI (1941-1942), 67-105
- (2) Leeds C.A., Valuation of Livings, WD/B1/1 (temporary reference)
- (3) C.M.L. Bouch & G.P. Jones, The Lake Counties 1500-1836, p.186
- (4) ibid., p.186-187
- (5) W. Nicholson, Miscellany Accounts of the Diocese of Carlisle (ed. R.S. Fergusson), Cumberland & Westmorland Archaeological Society (Extra Series), I., 98

number of men who, from 1752 onwards, were ordained to the diaconate and never proceeded to take priest's orders. At the same time the common practice in the diocese of admitting schoolmasters to holy orders roused a great deal of criticism since it was regarded as entry by the, 'back door' into the ranks of the clergy.

The only measure of the academic standards of the beneficed clergy was the possession of a university degree and the situation in the diocese, when Bishop Keene was translated to Ely in 1770 can be observed from the following list, which, incidentally, does not include the curates in the parochial chapelries.

| <u>Oxford</u> | <u>Cambridge</u> | <u>Scotland/Ireland</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| 87            | 122              | 16                      | 225          |

so it would appear that less than half the clergy were graduates. The weighting in favour of Cambridge is no doubt due in some measure to the fact that Keene himself was master of Peterhouse and that Trinity, King's and St. John's were patrons of eight livings in the diocese. The grammar schools in the northern part of the diocese had several closed scholarships to Queen's, Oxford, and this encouraged many graduates to return north for their ministry.

The large numbers of non-graduates who sought orders disturbed Bishop Porteus when he came to the diocese. He was not the first to be alarmed for Stephen Sutton, vicar of Kirby Ireleth, when making his visitation return to Archbishop Herring in 1743 had some pungent remarks to make concerning Bishop Peploe's custom of ordaining candidates direct from the grammar schools without any adequate supervision. "I can assure your Grace .... that a whole Colony of poor raw Boys taken from the home-bred insignificant schools of this Country and Ordain'd Deacons on some sorry Titles, Mere Reader's Places, by his Lordship of Chester, hath (after some small probation here) been transplanted, or sent abroad, into your Grace's Diocese .... to seek their Fortunes there, and furnish the Yorkshire Clergy with low pric'd Curates."<sup>(1)</sup>

Bishop Keene tried to alter the situation by requiring certain details from each non-graduate ordinand. Stephen Reagh quoted these in his letter of

(1) Archbishop Herring's Visitation Returns 1743, (ed. S.L. Ollard & P.C. Walker), Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Record Series, LXXI, 99-102



application to the bishop from Cockermouth:

"... that they give three Months Notice to your Lordship of their intentions of offering themselves Candidates, and likewise, that besides their usual Instruments they send an account of their place of birth, what education they have had, and particularly what they have been employed about since they left School."

Further details were then added about his career.

"... I humbly beg leave to acquaint your Lordship that I was born at Longrigg in the Parish of Bromfield in the County of Cumberland. I had my education at the free Grammar School at Brigham near Four Years, since that I have been Usher to the Revd Mr. Ritson at Cockermouth, and have continued the School there since his Decease." (1)

This practice introduced, so far as present evidence provides, by Bishop Keene was continued by Bishop Markham during his short episcopate but Porteus extended and improved the practice when he came to the diocese in 1777.

Naturally the accident of birth played a great part in the lottery of ordination and preferment. Canon Ollard wrote: "The dates of the ordinations shed a light on the system of the day; it will be seen how often the better-born or more highly placed clergy were ordained Deacon and Priest within a few days or a few weeks, and then admitted to a benefice, which they held for life." (2) There was little pastoral training and many remained deacons for long periods. This applied to the clergy of Chester as well as those in other dioceses. Some were ordained priest within one week or at most six months of taking deacon's orders while the non-graduates, of the type of Stephen Reagh and the less well connected, appear to have waited some years before advancing to priest's orders. (3) Judging from a letter written by Michael Pearson, curate of Burton in Kendal, to Bishop Markham from his living at Outwell in Norfolk, there were many ordained to dubious titles. "Am sorry that I have not yet been able to provide a Cure for your friend Mr Beverley. Most Cures here are picked up by young Graduates from Cam[bridge]:

(1) Carlisle R.O., Ponsonby & Haile Parish Papers, DRC/10

(2) Archbishop Herring's Visitation Returns, (ed. S.L. Ollard & P.C. Walker), Y.A.S. Record Series, LXXIII

(3) See the index to beneficed clergy in the record offices at Chester, Preston and Leeds.

who have been ordained Deacons with feigned Titles, they have the preferences, as being more ready; - 9 were ordained with me at Norwich & not one had a real Title. If Mr Beverley can get a Title for his Deacon's Orders in the North, it will be there more easy to get him a Curacy as he wd. be ready upon the shortest notice:" Thomas Beverley was eventually given a title to the curacy of Burton in Kendal by John Hutton, as his assistant, in September 1776. (1)

Chester diocese can provide four excellent examples of rapid preferment. Thomas Wray DD. who was chaplain to Archbishop Secker was rewarded by presentation to the vicarage of Rochdale, the rectory of Great Chart and of Wittersham, all in the gift of the Archbishop of Canterbury. James Worsley of Hovingham Hall, Yorkshire, not only held a prebend at York but was rector of Stonegrave and vicar of Gilling (2) until his death in 1777. Abel Ward held two rectories, a prebend and the office of Archdeacon of Chester as a reward for his services as chaplain to Bishop Peploe. Two other clergy who obtained rapid preferment were Samuel Peploe, whose career has already been traced, and Richard Jackson of York. The latter was ordained in 1737, appointed vicar of St. Martin, Chester, in 1738, vicar of St. Oswald, Chester, in 1739. He was collated to a stall in Chester cathedral in 1744, collated to a stall in Lichfield in 1741, and a prebend in York in 1750. All his preferments he obtained before he was forty years of age and must surely take the prize for pluralism in Chester diocese. (3) Other well connected clergy, who had been educated at Christ Church, Oxford, and beneficed in Chester, Markham nominated to George III for appointment to the sinecure office of King's Preacher in Lancashire. These were Humphrey Shuttleworth, vicar of Kirkham, in 1771, Thomas Mostyn, vicar of Chrisleton, in 1775 and Henry Dawney, rector of Bedale in the same year, followed by Guy Fairfax, rector of Wigan and Richard Jackson of Bebbington in 1776 and 1777. (4)

Of the clergy who were beneficed in Chester diocese in 1771, some forty-

- (1) Carlisle R.O., Letter from Michael Pearson to William Markham 9 June 1776, Burton in Kendal Parish Papers, DRC/10
- (2) Gilling. This parish is Gilling in Richmond archdeaconry and not Gilling in Cleveland archdeaconry.
- (3) R.V.H. Burne, op.cit., p.217
- (4) Cheshire R.O., Index to Clergy

three held two benefices, fourteen held three and a further four had not only three livings but two or more prebends in addition. This practice of holding livings in plurality was regulated by the statute of 26 Henry VIII which allowed benefices below eight pounds per annum to be held in plurality. Livings above that value, could be held in plurality if the incumbent <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ an acting chaplain to the Crown, the nobility, an archbishop or other specified persons. Canon 41 allowed a graduate with a Master of Arts degree to hold two benefices provided they were not more than thirty miles apart. By Canon 47 the non-resident incumbent must provide a resident curate for one of his livings. Furthermore the Act of 1529 also distinguished between benefices sine cura animarum and benefices cum cura animarum, so that clerks were able to accumulate a collection of benefices, by evading the regulations, through the process of creating a number of prebends in cathedrals and collegiate churches where the obligation of residence was unnecessary. (1)

The various classes of persons who were allowed to hold benefices in plurality had become meaningless by the middle of the eighteenth century and was interpreted in a loose manner. The maximum of eight pounds per annum given in the King's Book as the valuation, bore no relationship to the real value of livings in 1771. The distance of thirty miles specified as the maximum distance allowed between livings held in plurality was often overcome by resorting to the use of the fictitious, 'computed mile'. (2) Cripps summarised the position in the following words:- "Dispensations were still allowed to be obtained and various directions were given for the cases in which they were to be granted: which cases were in fact so numerous that there could scarcely have been any clergyman who might not have brought himself within some of them." (3) By no realistic measure could the distance between Bolton-le-Sands, on Morecambe Bay, and Nantwich be within the thirty mile limit, yet James Thomas was incumbent of both under the patronage of the

(1) N. Sykes, op.cit., p.148

(2) D. McClatchey, Oxfordshire Clergy 1777-1869 (Oxford, 1960), p.39

(3) H.W. Cripps & A.T. Lawrence, Law Relating to the Church and Clergy (London, 1921) p.490

bishops of Chester from 1769 to 1824. Neither was the travelling distance between Edenhall, in Carlisle diocese, and Aldingham, in Lonsdale deanery, nor between Bolton, Lancashire, and Broughton-in-Furness a reasonable one, yet the Crown as patron permitted these livings to be held in plurality. During his episcopate, William Markham appears to have held ordinations annually, in the summer, at Chester and at other times in London, either at Kew chapel or at Duke Street chapel in Lincoln's Inn Fields (1) but few of those who were ordained in London were beneficed at Chester. The following table shows the proportion of graduate to non-graduate ordinands at his ordinations. (2)

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Deacons</u> | <u>Graduate</u> | <u>Non-Graduate</u> | <u>Priest</u> | <u>Graduate</u> | <u>Non-Graduate</u> |
|-------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1771        | 5              | 0               | 5                   | 14            | 0               | 14                  |
| 1772        | 9              | 1               | 8                   | 17            | 1               | 16                  |
| 1773        | 13             | 1               | 12                  | 13            | 3               | 10                  |
| 1774        | 17             | 0               | 17                  | 13            | 1               | 12                  |
| 1775        | 14             | 4               | 10                  | 15            | 5               | 10                  |
| 1776        | 13             | 1               | 12                  | 17            | 3               | 14                  |

The number of graduates who sought ordination in Chester was far below the number of non-graduate ordinands many of whom were also schoolmasters while others came direct from the grammar schools.

Evidence supplied by the institution act book shows that the number of graduates in the diocese was low in proportion to the total number of clergy. During Markham's episcopate there were fifty-five Oxford graduates, including nine from Christ Church, and only nineteen from Cambridge, so reversing to some degree the policy of Keene who favoured Cambridge. Four of Markham's clergy were ordained contrary to the regulations in Canon 32. John Camperley was ordained deacon in June and priest in December 1773. Francis Blackburne, son of Archdeacon Blackburne, was ordained deacon at York in July and priest in October of 1773, in order that he might be instituted to the family living of Rudby. George Heron, son of Sir George Heron of Rosthern, was likewise ordained deacon in May 1774 and priest at Kew in the July of 1774. All these were well connected and could expect rapid preferment. (3)

(1) Cheshire R.O., Act Book 1760-1776, EDA1/7

(2) Cheshire R.O., Act Book 1760-1776, EDA1/7

(3) ibid.,

Family appointments to livings were no more than what might be expected during an episcopate of six years and at a time when clergy tended to remain in one living for many years. In 1774 Richard Armistead was nominated to Claughton by his uncle Peter Legh and Francis Blackburne to the living at Rudby by his father. A further three family livings became vacant in the following year when Randall Andrews, William Brock and Crewe Arden were all presented to the livings of Broughton, Davenham and Torporley. Three parents presented younger sons to family livings in 1776, namely, Richard Jackson to Overchurch, Offley Crave to Warmingham and Oswald Leycester to Alderley. (1) It appears that in Chester as in other dioceses, those who had the right family connections and who were highly placed, were quickly preferred to some lucrative living or livings while the non-graduate clergy with poor connections were presented to parochial chapelries and tended to remain there for life.

The reasons for non-residence in Chester diocese are not difficult to find. The very large number of poor livings, especially in the Archdeaconry of Richmond, caused many clergy to undertake the duties of a schoolmaster and hold one or more chapelries at the same time. A study of the biographical index of the clergy (2) will show that not all the pluralism in Chester was due to poverty especially in the case of members of the Cathedral chapter, fellows of Manchester College, and holders of prebendal stalls outside the diocese. Although pluralism was bad it was in no way comparable to the plurality that existed in Ely and Oxford. (3)

It is obvious that pluralism and non-residence did create problems in many parishes, the case of Arkengarthdale will serve as an example for it can be paralleled in many other areas of the diocese. In 1773, the churchwardens made a presentment that the curate had attended the church for three services

- (1) Cheshire R.O., Act Book, ~~XXXXXX~~ 1760-1776 EDA1/7
- (2) Index to beneficed clergy. A copy of this is deposited in the Cheshire, Lancashire and Leeds record offices.
- (3) A. Warne, Church and Society in Eighteenth Century Devon (Newton Abbot, 1969), p.40-42

on three Sundays between 13 December 1772 and 9 May 1773. Furthermore his absence from the parish raised problems when a death took place. It appears that the churchwardens had written to the curate upon the subject and in his reply he stated that, "... the Dead might be kept till there was a Number and then Send for him ...." He was absent for long periods in 1775 and 1776 and when requested to do so, he flatly refused to come to take a burial service so the churchwardens had to report that, "... ye said Corps Laid in ye Church two Days and two Nights which Corps became so Lothsome in so much that the Peoples was almost Surficated (sic) with ye same ...." (1)

Another cause of non-residence and probably the most common one, was the lack of a parsonage house or the dilapidated state of the existing one. At Langton on Swale, the parsonage was built so close to the river, that the lower rooms of the house were frequently under water, and was, "in danger of being washed away by the River Swale"; so a faculty was obtained to erect a new one away from the river. (2) The glebe terriers, as a rule, give detailed information about the parsonage house and a study of these has revealed that in far too many parishes the house was virtually uninhabitable. The parsonage of Nidd, for example, was built of cobble stones, some ten yards by seven yards in size, with a roof of thatch and clay floors being little more than a labourer's cottage. Smeaton parsonage was a ruinous house being built of brick with two parlours, four lodging rooms, earth floors and a bad roof. It remained in this state until it was rebuilt in 1811. (3) Coniston parsonage was described as, "a very ancient building built of stone mixed with clay mortar, and covered with slate and floored with flags .... The walls are bulged and cracked in several places and the roof with great difficulty kept on, the timber much decayed by length of time ...." At Dalton in Furness, the parsonage was little more than a farm house being 'a mean old decayed building (with roof supported by props) built of limestone and

(1) Leeds C.A., Churchwardens Presentments, RD/CB/8/10

(2) Leeds C.A., Faculty Book, RD/RF/1A, f.29

(3) *ibid.*, Glebe Terriers, RD/G

covered with a very ordinary kind of slate." (1) In the parishes of Cleator, Clifton, Ennerdale, Embleton, Lytham, Cartmel, Colton, Halton, Lowick and Standish there were no parsonage houses for any resident incumbent. (2) In the Wirral deanery, which included the town of Liverpool, the parsonage houses were in a reasonable state of repair but in Manchester deanery eleven parishes had no parsonage house. This state of affairs was not confined to Chester diocese for Archbishop Drummond's visitation revealed a similar pattern in York diocese and Mrs McClatchey has shown how the pattern was on the same lines in Oxford. (3)

Some small attempts at rebuilding parsonage houses were made from time to time. In the entire Archdeaconry of Richmond the only parsonage house to be built during the time of both Bishops Keene and Markham was the one at Bedale in 1764, which replaced a small house, the new one having twenty-four rooms on three floors. (4) A few others had been built earlier in the century by private means. Only three faculties were issued during Markham's episcopate for rebuilding of parsonage houses and all for Cheshire parishes. One was built at Wilmslow (1772) with twelve rooms on three floors, another at Gawsworth (1773) and a third at Malpas (1773) both being houses with eighteen rooms on three floors. (5)

The appearance of these large parsonage houses indicated a change in the social status of the clergy. These suggest that they were becoming more affluent due in no small part to the benefits brought by enclosure and to the steady rise in the price of corn which took place after 1765, both of which improved their standard of living. Although an Act had been passed in 16 by George III to promote the residence of the clergy upon their livings, by allowing them to negotiate a loan for the purpose yet few advantages were taken of this Act until the last decades of the eighteenth century and, in several

- (1) R. Sharp France, "Lancashire Parsonages in the Eighteenth Century", "Record Society of Lancashire & Cheshire, CIX (1965), 13-21
- (2) Lancashire R.O., Glebe Terriers, DRC/3 (Carlisle), DRB/3 (Blackburn)
- (3) B.I.H.R., Archbishop Drummond's Visitation 1764, V.1764  
D. McClatchey, Oxfordshire Clergy 1777-1869, p.20
- (4) Leeds C.A., Glebe Terriers, CD/G
- (5) Cheshire R.O., Bishops' Register 1768-1799, EDA2/7, f.116,133,159

cases, parsonage houses were not built until the 1840s.(1) A considerable number of parishes saw little of their non-resident incumbent, especially in the remote chapelries of the north and in those parishes which were in the patronage of a University College. So it came about that it was the stipendiary curate who came to represent the Church as established by law, a man often ill paid and badly housed.

A letter written by William Mason, canon of York Minster, to Bishop Hurd of Worcester asking for preferment for a poor curate, contains the following comment upon the patronage system which he compares to a lottery. "Observe me, my dear lord, I make no personal request. I only throw a letter, like a lottery ticket, into a wheel, where it may possibly turn up a small prize; or from a possibility you may transfer it into some other ecclesiastical wheel, where small prizes may bear a greater proportion to blanks than in your own." (2) The letter was an indirect reference to the large number of ordinands who were turned out of the universities each year, needy, poor, and in urgent need of a living. Every year a number of yeomen's sons from Cumberland, Westmorland, North Lancashire and the Sedbergh district of Yorkshire, went up to Oxford or Cambridge. Each year a number graduated, were ordained, and returned to their native regions to occupy a chapel or acquire a poor living for a long number of years for there were at this time, according to writers of the period, more ordinands than benefices. (3)

Letters from the Cumberland and Westmorland clergy to the bishops of Chester do not confirm an abundance of curates seeking livings but rather the opposite. One example taken from a number of similar cases will suffice.

On 20 February 1775, William Hutton, rector of Beetham in Westmorland wrote the following letter to Bishop Markham "I have now had the vicarage

(1) The parish papers at Chester, Lancashire, Carlisle and Leeds R.O. provide details in the deeds section of the building of parsonage houses after 1800.

(2) N. Sykes, op.cit., p.189

(3) C. Thornton & F. McLoughlin, The Fothergills of Ravenstondale, (London, 1905) passim



of Beetham, County of Westmorland, with a very extensive Parish about thirteen years and without any assistance, Clergymen being extremely scarce in our part of the Country; I would wish .... to have a Curate to give Me some relief from that strict Confinement which attendance upon my Parish obliges Me to." (1)

The stipends of curates who acted as assistants in parishes were regulated by an Act of 1713, (2) which gave power to the bishops to grant stipends to curates which ranged from £30 to £50 per annum.

A survey of twenty-nine chapelries in the Lake District undertaken in 1714, revealed that stipends in these places ranged from two pounds at Seckmurthy to twelve pounds at St. Bees, but Wythop chapel in Brigham parish had no endowment, the curate going from house to house for his food.(3) In 1770 this chapelry had received an endowment of nine pounds per annum but curates rarely remained more than one year for it was impossible to live on so small an income. (4) During Markham's episcopate the range of stipends varied from twenty pounds to forty pounds in the Archdeaconry of Richmond, with the exception of Croft where the curate received fifty pounds. (5) The joint parishes of Ponsonby and Haile had but fifteen pounds per annum for the stipend; East Cowton was little better with sixteen, while Ingleton Fell and Howgill chapels, like Wythop, had but nine pounds and at Singleton the stipend was so poor that it was insufficient to maintain a curate. (6) In the Chester archdeaconry stipends were better, for curates here received between forty and fifty pounds per annum. (7) Dr. John Robinson, curate of Ravenstondale, noted several instances, during the last three decades of the

- (1) Carlisle R.O., Beethom Parish Papers, DRC/10. These letters reveal many of the intimate problems facing the clergy in the large parishes in the northern deaneries.
- (2) 12 Anne c.12
- (3) Leeds C.A., Valuation of Livings 1714, RD/WD/B1
- (4) Carlisle R.O., Wythop Parish Papers, DRC/10
- (5) Leeds C.A., Eastern Deaneries Parish Papers, CD/PB/1-9
- (6) Lancashire R.O., Singleton Parish Papers, DRCh/37  
Carlisle R.O., Ponsonby & Haile, Wythop Parish Papers DRC/10  
Leeds C.A., Ingleton Fell, Howgill, Parish Papers CD/PB/1-9
- (7) Cheshire R.O., Cheshire Deaneries Parish Papers, EDP/1

eighteenth century, of the value of stipends paid by absentee incumbents to their resident curates. The following table illustrates the gap between the rich pluralist and their stipendiary curates. (1)

| <u>Value of Living</u> | <u>Curate's Stipend</u> |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| £280                   | £36                     |
| £270                   | £30                     |
| £170                   | £20                     |
| £ 80                   | £16                     |
| £ 60                   | £15                     |

The effect of the wide differences in stipends on the lives of the clergy can be illustrated, on the one hand, by reference to the life and activities of Edward Jackson, vicar of Colton, and on the other with those of Edmund Law and Robert Walker. Jackson was presented to the living in 1762 and held it until his death in 1789, adding to Colton the living of Ulverston in plurality in 1786. Jackson moved widely in society, frequently breakfasting with Lord George Cavendish at Holker Hall. He dined with the local Justices of Peace, hunted, fished, shot game and attended cockfights as did many of his fellow clergy in Chester archdeaconry. (2) In the evening he enjoyed a game of cards winning at one time seven shillings and at another losing tenpence at three card bragg. He travelled frequently to Kendal, Shap, Ulverston, Keswick, Cartmel, Ambleside, Hawkshead, Dalton and Broughton. His hobby was the study of plant physiology, but all these activities did not detract from his clerical duties and he gave much thought to the preparation of his sermons. (3)

Low stipends could produce exceptional men brought up in a hard school. Edmund Law, curate and schoolmaster of Staveley in Cartmel, whose stipend never exceeded twenty pounds per annum, became the father of Bishop Law of Carlisle, the grandfather of two other bishops, a lord chief justice and a governor general of India. (4)

(1) C.M.L. Bouch & G.F. Jones, op.cit., p.185-7

(2) RB. Walker, loc.cit., XVII, 77-94

(3) T.E. Casson, "Diary of Edward Jackson, Vicar of Colton", (Transactions of Cumberland & Westmorland Archaeological Society, XL, 1-27

(4) J. Stockdale, Annals of Cartmel, (Ulverston, 1872), p.192

Another was Robert Walker, who at seventeen years of age was the schoolmaster at Gosforth, moving to Buttermire as schoolmaster and reader from 1730 to 1734. Ordained deacon in 1734, he became curate and schoolmaster at Torver for four years and moved to the curacy of Seathwaite where he remained from 1738 to his death in 1805. In addition to his clerical duties he practised farming, weaving and other domestic occupations. He reared a family of twelve and at his death left a fortune of £2,000. (1)

The operation of Queen Anne's Bounty had, over the years, raised the value of many livings, that by 1786 the bishops could stipulate that no curate should receive less than twenty-five pounds per annum, yet a study of the parish papers reveals many instances where private arrangements were made which resulted in the payment of a stipend less than the minimum. At the end of the century curates were signing affidavits to the effect that they would not accept any stipend less than stipulated in their nominations. A survey of the benefices, including the parochial chapelries, in the rural deaneries of Copeland, Kendal and Furness reveal that thirty-seven were worth less than £50 per annum, fifty-six were worth £10 per annum or less. Some sixty per cent of the clergy in these deaneries were in receipt of stipends no greater than those of the ploughman or shepherd. The remarks of Arthur Young that the earnings of a farm labourer resulted in a weekly wage of nine shillings in Oxfordshire so in effect his total earnings were greater than the stipends received by many northern curates. (2) There was in effect no social division between incumbent and people in these deaneries at this period.

In some chapels within the diocese, the incumbent was regarded as belonging to the community, especially so in Old Hutton, Selside, Grayrigg

- (1) Lancashire R.O., Seathwaite and Torver Parish Papers, DRCh/37  
 Carlisle R.O., Buttermire Parish Papers, DRC/10
- (2) A. Young, View of Agriculture in Oxfordshire, (London, 1809), p.321

Langsleddale, Crossthwaite, Preston Patrick, Staveley, Hugil, Hawes and Garsdale, where the freeholders and ratepayers elected the curate. If more than one clerk was nominated to the living, then a public election was held supervised by the overseers of the poor. (1) This suggests that on these occasions there was some compromise between Anglicans and Dissenters, but a careful study of the later visitation returns after 1778 reveals that there were very few, if any, dissenters in many of these chapelries.

A number of clergy who were licensed by Bishop Markham remained in their first curacies for many years, often ranging from twenty-two to sixty-three years, but at Maghull the curate spent his entire ministry of seventy-three years in this chapel. (2) Others remained as short a time as possible, often nine months, or at most until they were priested. (3) The problem when trying to assess Markham's policy is the absence of any detailed visitation returns prior to 1778, and the churchwardens presentments are equally deficient, for they make either an, 'omnia bene' return or present sexual offences only.

We know but little of Markham's relationships with his clergy. One instance has recently appeared in the cataloguing of parish papers. On 29 March 1775, the churchwardens of Dendron wrote to Markham asking him to intervene in a dispute with their incumbent concerning his attempt to take the school endowment for augmenting the stipend to which Markham appears to have paid some attention. A letter from the incumbent, Roger Baldwin, to the Bishop written on 11 April 1775 expresses surprise that Markham should concern himself with the affairs of a place like Dendron. "I have this inst. received your Favor which is utterly unintelligible to me. I know nothing of a Petition as little of a Plan, and by whom agreed to. I never heard you had ever interested yourself about any of Dendron's concerns, till I heard of it on my late return from London but could not then believe it." (4)

(1) Carlisle R.O., Old Hutton, Selside, Grayrigg, Langsleddale, Crossthwaite, Preston Patrick, Parish Papers, DRC/10. Leeds C.A., Staveley, Hugil, Hawes, Garsdale Parish Papers CD/PB/1-9. In several instances the complete records of the elections have survived, including the pool books.

(2) Cheshire R.O., Act Book 1777-1790, EDA1/8

(3) Carlisle R.O., Wythop Parish Papers and others, DRC/10

(4) Lancashire R.O., Dendron Parish Papers, DRCh/37

Through Markham's efforts the school at Dendron was preserved but few bishops were willing or able to attend to outlying portions of their diocese, which credits Markham with showing more interest in his diocese than has hitherto been accorded him.

During his tenure of the see of Chester, Markham does not appear to have encouraged any movement to make provision for extra church accommodation, either by building new ones, or extending the existing ones, although population was increasing. Church fabrics and their maintenance were the responsibility of the churchwardens of the parish. Canon 89 provided that, "All Churchwardens or Questmen in every parish shall be chosen by the joint consent of the Minister and the Parishioners ... but if they cannot agree then the Minister shall choose one, and the Parishioners another." (1) Since no fixed number was stipulated, the number of churchwardens elected varied according to local custom and the size of the parish. By and large it was two, but in large parishes such as Kendal it was as many as twelve. (2) The election of churchwardens took place in Easter week after due notice had been given in church of the annual vestry meeting. (3) The office afforded but few perquisites and every suspected malversation of funds meant a costly and lengthy suit in the Consistory Court, so the office was frequently filled by reluctant persons.

The custom of election varied from parish to parish. Sometimes the office was held in rotation by all householders, on other occasions by the occupiers of certain premises, or even by house-row. In others the basis was formed by the aristocracy, the plutocracy and the oligarchy of the parish with the result that these parishes were governed by select vestries. Such vestries were composed of two dozen persons who acted independently of the parishioners at large. (4) Having been duly sworn into office at the visitation, the first duty of the new churchwardens was to levy a rate, to

(1) Constitution and Canons Ecclesiastical (London, 1851)

(2) W.E. Tate, Parish Chest (Cambridge, 1969) p.84  
B.I.H.R., Cause Paper, R.VII.H.2700

(3) 58 George III c.69 required a form of notice to be given.

(4) W.E. Tate, op.cit., p.18-19

Lancashire R.O., Goosenargh Vestry Minute Book, PR644

raise the estimated amount of money they would need to spend on the church fabric during the coming year together with other items of expenditure. Their popularity depended upon the skill with which they kept the rates to the minimum. Having determined the total figure the churchwardens then notified each parishioner of his individual assessment.

Objections were frequently made against the assessment and often the rate never yielded its full value for many refused to pay, and had to be prosecuted in the church courts to recover the money. (1) The Quakers always objected and the Dissenters frequently refused so that the eighteenth century court books are full of the names of those who refused to pay church rates. (2) Certain parishes in the north of the diocese had widely differing ways of levying their rates, either by a flat rate assessment or by fattening cattle for the market. (3)

The care of church fabrics varied considerably. To judge from the annual presentments of the churchwardens the fabrics were well maintained, but were rapidly becoming too small for the increasing population. The later Act Books of the Consistory Court show that in reality conditions were otherwise, for a considerable number of churches were the subject of detailed orders for repair, including the whitewashing of the walls. (4) The universal remedy of the period for the cleansing of the interiors of churches was a very liberal application of whitewash to the walls. It was cheap, clean and symbolised the dispersal of mysticism and obscurity by the penetration of the pure light of reason. (5) Canon J.S. Purvis has revealed some appalling conditions in Yorkshire church fabrics during the eighteenth century and which were to be found in other dioceses. (6) The episcopal registers from 1768-

- (1) *ibid.*, Assessment Cause Papers, ARR13/1  
Leeds C.A., Assessment Cause Papers, RD/AC/1-7. The papers in this collection have not yet been classified under separate headings but are catalogued preparatory to classification.
- (2) Leeds C.A., Comperta Books, RD/C/22-35. Cheshire R.O. Comperta Books, EDV1/176-187
- (3) C.M.L. Bouch & G.P. Jones, *op.cit.*, p.334-335
- (4) Leeds C.A., Consistory Court Act Book, RD/A/48, f.26-40
- (5) N. Sykes, *op.cit.*, p.233
- (6) J.S. Purvis, Conditions in Yorkshire Church Fabrics 1300-1800 (York, 1958)

1779 show that there was a certain amount of church building being carried out in the Archdeaconry of Chester but very little in that of Richmond. Accrington chapel had been rebuilt and enlarged by April 1772. In September of the same year a faculty was granted to rebuild and enlarge Longton chapel where church accommodation was insufficient, in a populous manufacturing county. In the same month the building of Sankey chapel was finished to serve an expanding area. (1) By the end of 1774 three more rebuildings had been completed, at Haslingden, Chelford and Holy Trinity, Chester, where additional seating had been included to meet the needs of the expanding population. (2)

No further building took place until 1775, when Whitworth chapel, in Rochdale parish, was enlarged and galleries constructed to provide more pews. Liverpool parish church, now old and decayed, was to be enlarged for the port <sup>in</sup> was expanding/population. The growth of a suburb at Toxteth Park made a new church imperative for the new community. A similar state of affairs existed in Manchester where the new residential area of Didsbury made a complete reconstruction of the old church essential. In 1776 a new church was built at Bury to meet the needs of the increasing number of weavers and spinners who were moving into the area. (3)

Occasionally some wealthy patron would provide, at his own expense, a new church for an area in a large parish with an increasing population. The Earl of Stamford built a new church in Stalybridge for the people who lived in the townships of Newton, Dukinfield, and Mottram because their parish church at Ashton-under-Lyne was too far away and too small. (4) Bishop Markham managed to find time to consecrate two new churches, one at Pendleton in Manchester on 27 July 1776, and the other on 5 August in the

(1) Cheshire R.O., Bishops Register 1768-1779, EDA2/7, ff.122, 126, 128

(2) ibid., ff.141,160,165

(3) ibid., ff.167,172,183,193

(4) Cheshire R.O., Bishops Register 1768-1779, EDA2/7, f.200

same year at Moscar. (1) The new church at Mosser in Copeland deanery he had no time to consecrate during his confirmation tour of 1776, (2) and he enlisted the assistance of the Bishop of Carlisle to consecrate Thomas Robinson's new church at Rookeby, the only one to be built in the eastern deaneries of Richmond archdeaconry. The reason given for calling upon the services of his brother of Carlisle was that Markham was absent from the diocese and unable to attend to the matter on 30 May 1776. (3) Some eleven briefs were issued for the building or rebuilding of churches between 1770 and 1776. Subscriptions were invited to assist in rebuilding the churches at Farnham, Haslingden, Lindal, Nun Monkton, Crosscrake, and St. Bridget's, Chester. For the expanding industrial areas new churches were planned for Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Bosley, Bradshaw, Whitworth in Rochdale and Edenfield in Bury but these could only meet a fraction of the needs of these areas. (4)

Another indication of the effect of the increase in population is to be noted from the very large number of faculties which were granted for the erection of galleries in churches throughout the diocese, a trend which was also common in Devon and York. (5) As galleries were erected so also the number of common or open seats in churches were slowly eliminated as more conversions of these into private pews took place. This change was a factor which, in the long run, had some bearing on the growth of nonconformity. (6) Galleries were often erected to provide room for an organ and the bands of trained singers who were beginning to appear in many parish churches.

An expanding population raised problems of the burial of the dead, for churchyards in many towns were rapidly becoming overcrowded with consequent dangers to public health. By 7 August 1773, more space was needed for burials at Warrington. (7) Similarly in the chapelries it was often necessary to

(1) ibid., ff.207-212

(2) Carlisle R.O., Egton Parish Papers, DRC/10

(3) Leeds C.A., Rookeby Parish Papers, CD/PB/7

(4) W.A. Bewes, Church Briefs (London, 1896) p.333-336

(5) A. Warne, op.cit., p.55

(6) Leeds C.A., Faculty Books, RD/AF/A-D

B.I.H.R., Faculty Books, R.Bp.

(7) Cheshire R.O., Bishops Register 1768-1779, EDA2/7, f.146



regulate the times of funerals to avoid burials by night. In the parish of Oldham and the chapel of Saddleworth the times of funerals were regulated in 1771 to 3.0 pm to 4.0 pm in winter and 5.0 pm to 6.0 pm in summer. (1)

Other chapelries found the transport of increasing numbers to bury in the churchyard of the parish becoming a problem and so sought a faculty to give them the right to have their dead buried in their own chapelyards. At Lindal in Cartmel parish a faculty was granted to bury the dead in Lindal chapelyard for the road to the Cartmel Priory was, 'extremely bad', and difficult to travel along in winter. (2) In 1775 a similar faculty was granted to Ingleton Fell to avoid a four mile walk to Ingleton village. The parishioners of Hutton Roof supported the application for a faculty to bury in their own chapelyard by stating that the problem of the journey to Kirby Lonsdale was such that, "... it not unfrequently happening (as the Corpse are carried on Mens shoulders thro' narrow Lanes and bad Roads and often in bad Weather) that dangerous Colds and sometimes fatal Surfeits, are the Consequences of Funerals."

(3)

This was the situation in the early seventies, but as the Industrial Revolution got under way, these problems were <sup>era</sup> exacerbated by the growth in population. The Church showed little initiative in the attempt to solve the problems of expanding urban communities. In Manchester and Salford there were two churches for a population of 11,000, and the population of 95,000 in Chester archdeaconry had a provision of additional church room which was pathetically small. The prime factors which the bench considered to be of vital importance were the influences of new ideas, moral laxity, and the maintenance of the Establishment. (4)

(1) ibid., ff.113,135

(2) ibid., ff.149

(3) ibid., ff.176,222

(4) R.A. Soloway, Prelates and People 1780-1850 (London, 1969), p.282-3

CHAPTER FIVE

DISSENTERS AND CATHOLICS IN THE DIOCESE 1771-1776

Dissenters were excluded from public office by the Test Acts and the Clarendon Code. Every party when victorious at the elections, urged the magistrates to exclude dissenters from office, and likewise when defeated at the hustings protested, "against the practice as an unreasonable, unchristian and wicked tyranny - the very practice which they themselves, in their prosperity, endeavoured to support by every claim of right and to defend by every argument of utility and convenience." (1) Although the influence of the old dissent was waning yet there appears to have been no marked return to communicant life in the Anglican church. Arthur Warne has commented upon this fact in his study of the diocese of Exeter in the eighteenth century. "The spiritual state of parishes varied, but as always it depended upon the alertness of the incumbent or his curate. It seems too that at a time when Dissent was waning and Methodism was yet to make itself felt with force the numbers of communicants cannot be called large. The fact is, however, that the custom of frequent communion had not yet come in." (2)

The eighteenth century saw the beginning of a decline in the old dissent. A report on the dissenters in England and Wales in 1715 gives a total of twenty congregations in Cheshire of which two were Independent (Congleton and Chadkirk), three Baptist and eleven Presbyterian. (3) Bishop Gastrell incorporated a survey of dissent in each parish in his visitation of 1723 and this revealed that the Quakers were maintaining a hold, albeit a declining one, on their former areas of strength in the Archdeaconry of Richmond, with no expansion of either Independent or Presbyterian congregations save in a few towns like Bolton, which seventy years before had been described as the Geneva of the north. Two areas of strength were at Rochdale where the puritan traditions had survived

(1) Francis Blackburne, The Confessional (London, 1766), p.35

(2) A. Warne, op.cit., p.48

(3) F.J. Powicke, Centenary History of Cheshire Congregational Union, (Manchester, 1907), p.13-14

from the days of Joseph Midgley and, the town of Kendal where dissent had always been strong. (1)

The return made in 1772 shows no distinction between Presbyterian and Independent. From the point of view of the church courts they may have been collectively identified under either title. The reason for this decline was the Trinitarian controversy which led to divisions and secessions and these in turn sapped the vitality of the Church. In the earlier part of the century the doctrine of Deism had been advocated by John Locke who claimed that religion should be simple, and natural, "unencumbered by creeds, formularies and priesthood". (2)

In 1730 Matthew Tindal's book, Christianity as old as the Creation, gave it a mask of Christianity but it was pantheistic and unitarian making no demands upon the people, but interpreted in the language of the period it enjoyed popularity for some time. Bishop Butler, supported by George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne, and the non-juror William Law boldly attacked Deism with the result that the old dissent and the Church of England were drawn closer together. Elliott-Binns states that the reason for the decline of the old dissent was the leniency shown by the Anglican Church. "Those who are best acquainted with the state of the English nation, tell us that the Dissenting Interest declines from day to day, and that the cause of Nonconformity owes this gradual decay in a great measure to the lenity and moderation that are practised by the rulers of the Established Church". (3) There is evidence in the visitation returns that a good deal of occasional conformity was the custom in many places but not in all.

The second conflict was the Trinitarian controversy which began with Dr. Samuel Clarke (1675-1729) rector of St. James, Piccadilly, who published a book entitled, The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity, in which he denied the teaching of the creeds. The continual debates on nonconformity made men suspicious of the Tests which admitted to office those who were prepared to

- (1) Chester Cathedral Library, Notitia Cestriensis, (Kendal) B. Nightingale, Lancashire Nonconformity, (Manchester, 1891), II, 1-6, 240 ff.
- (2) J.R.H. Moorman, History of the Church of England (London, 1954) p.273
- (3) L. Elliott-Binns, The Early Evangelicals (Lutterworth, 1953), p.110

to accept orthodox opinions and exclude those who were not. "Men who were Arminian by conviction swore to articles which were Calvinist in content; even when Unitarian in sympathy, they accepted creeds which were Trinitarian in form." (1)

Francis Blackburne, rector of Richmond and Archdeacon of Cleveland, pioneered a movement whose aim was to remove the compulsion placed on the holders of public office and the clergy to subscribe to the Thirty Nine Articles. Blackburne regarded subscription to these Articles as, "an unwarrantable interference with those rights of private judgement which are manifestly secured to every individual by the scriptural terms of Christian liberty, and thereby contradicting the original principles of the Protestant Reformation." (2) It was his firm belief that no church had the right to impose subscription to creeds as a test of their orthodoxy. Not all the reformers were on the side of Blackburne, for there were others who saw that it was not the subscription, but what was being subscribed to, that required attention. According to them the first requirement was to revise the Thirty Nine Articles and the prayer book, with the reform of subscription to follow later. Francis Blackburne came out in support of the doctrinal reformers in his book, The Confessional, which he wrote in 1766. "For my part", he stated, "I am neither afraid nor ashamed to call for a review of our Trinitarian forms as, what I think, is quite necessary for the honour of the Church herself." (3) Richard Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, was another who urged the reform, not only of the Articles and the Liturgy but the removal of the Athanasian creed from the prayer book. He wrote, "we do not object to the doctrine of the Trinity because it is above our reason, and we cannot comprehend it; but we do object to it, because we cannot find that it is either literally contained in any passage of the Holy Writ, or can by sound criticism be deduced from it." (4)

(1) G.R. Cragg, Reason and Authority in Eighteenth Century England (Cambridge, 1964), p.251

(2) F. Blackburne, The Confessional (London, 1766), p.50-51

(3) ibid., p.319

(4) R. Watson, Considerations on the Expediency of revising the Liturgy 1790 (London, 1815), p.107-108

The movement was supported by Theophilus Lindsey, vicar of Catterick and a neighbour of Archdeacon Blackburne with whom he corresponded. (1) Lindsey was no eccentric visionary, no doctrinaire reformer, but the confident of wealthy peers. A graduate of St. John's College, Cambridge, he was ordained in London and appointed chaplain to the Duke of Somerset. He relinquished this post upon his presentation to the living of Piddleton in Dorset in 1752. Ten years later he was preferred to the living of Catterick. An outspoken supporter of the American colonists in their quarrel with England, he acted as leader for a group which was alive to the contemporary cross currents of middle class Englishmen who were seeking to improve their environment. (2) His advanced views were to lead him in the end to reject the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, become a Unitarian, and so resign his living.

Francis Blackburne believed that an approach should be made to Parliament, as soon as possible, in an attempt to get reform in the matter of subscription. An association was formed at the Feathers Tavern in July 1771, for the express purpose of drawing up a petition asking for relief from subscription to the Articles in any form. The petition was in reality a plea that the clergy should be allowed to interpret the Bible in whatever sense appealed to them and not to be bound by creeds and formularies. There was a feeling amongst intelligent people that theology was petrified, its laws were antiquated and the attitude of the Anglican church, towards other Christians, was both exclusive and intolerant. Public worship ought to be brought into conformity with the prevailing standards of relief.

The petition was presented to the Commons on 6 February 1772, by William Meredith, member for Liverpool, who had the support of three independent members. Thomas Pitt, who seconded the motion, said that he, "had heard no argument urged against the petition, that would not impeach the Reformation." (3) Sir George Savile expressed a desire to, "lay aside subscription to the Articles,

(1) Dr. William's Library, Francis Blackburne MS.

(2) Huntingdon Library, Letters of Theophilus Lindsey, Ha8304-8306  
Notes and Queries, CLXXXII (1942), and CLXXXIII (1942), 2,3

(3) Parliamentary History ed. T.C. Hansard, (London, 1813), XVII, 294

and adopt the Scriptures in their room .... and adhering to the Scriptures in opposition to human inventions and corruptions, is the first principle of Protestantism ..." (1) John Sawbridge, the advocate of annual parliaments was the third supporter. Gibbon thought the whole affair was rather comic. "The rebellious sons .... of our dear Mamma the Church of England .... had tried to set aside her will on account of insanity." (2) Edmund Burke opposed the motion with all the vehemence of which he was capable and defended the Anglican church and her doctrines. "But if you have no evidence of this nature, it will become your gravity, on the petition of a few gentlemen, to listen to anything that tends to shake one of the capital pillars of the State and alarm the body of your people upon the one ground in which every hope and fear, every interest, passion, prejudice, everything that can affect the human breast are all involved together. If you make this a season of religious alterations, depend upon it, you will soon find it a season of religious tumults and religious wars." (3) After this it was only to be expected that the Commons would reject the petition, which they did by a majority of 217 votes to 71.

It was always difficult for the majority in the House to consider a matter of this nature on its merits. Hatred of nonconformity swayed some members to vote against it for they saw, behind the petition the shadow of more dissent which would follow any relaxation of the law. Others saw reform as a drift towards Arian, Socinian and Unitarian heresies as in part it was. Richard Watson was convinced that the Anglican church could only retain the loyalty of the people after it had expunged from its theology all that could not be defended. "I do not, indeed, expect much success in propagating Christianity by missionaries from any part of Christendom, but I expect much from the extension of science and commerce." (4)

Those who were convinced that the rejection of the petition meant the end of all reform resigned their livings. (5) Amongst them was Theophilus Lindsey.

- (1) Parliamentary History, ed. T.C. Hansard, (London, 1813), XVII, 290
- (2) G.R. Cragg, op.cit., p.253
- (3) E. Burke, The Works of the Rt. Hon. Edmund Burke (London, 1887), VII, 10-11
- (4) R. Watson, Anecdotes of the Life of Richard Watson, Bishop of Llandaff (London, 1819), p.198
- (5) J. Jebb, A Short State of the Reason for a late Resignation (London, 1775), passim

Preaching his farewell sermon at Catterick in 1774, he warned his parishioners that the prayer book was so full of errors that it needed amendment. At the same time he advised his hearers to be on their guard against Roman Catholic influences. He went on to refer to some of the ceremonies retained by that Church, including prayers in Latin, extreme unction, ashes on Ash Wednesday and Candles at Candlemas, ".... with the many idle fopperies and trumpery, which are still retained amongst the Papists, who are in no small number in your own parish, against whose seducing arts I beg you to be continually on your guard." (1) Lindsey had tried to teach the truth as he saw it, "that every house should be a little Church as it were, wherein all the members of it were carefully instructed in the things of God ...." (2) His great concern was that parents, who were usually ignorant, refused instruction and neglected the religious education of their children. On 17 April 1774 Lindsey preached his first sermon as minister of the new Unitarian chapel in Essex Street in the Strand. (3)

Edmund Law, Bishop of Carlisle, who had attended the meetings at the Feathers Tavern, thought that the petition would have had a better reception had it been presented to the bench of bishops first and then to Parliament. (4) The author of, A Letter to a Bishop, supported this point of view since in his opinion the bishops were, " .... the proper and only fit persons to suggest and conduct any reasonable alterations in our Ecclesiastical Establishment." (5) After the petition had been rejected, it was pointed out in a second letter to the bishops that since parliament had refused its consent it was their duty to undertake the reform. "The eyes of the Laity, and Clergy, of England, and of Europe, are fixed, with impatient speculation, upon the Bench of Bishops." (6)

- (1) T. Lindsey, A Farewell Address to the Parishioners of Catterick (London, 1774), p.8
- (2) ibid., p.16
- (3) T. Lindsey, A Sermon preached at the opening of the Chapel in the House of Essex Street (London, 1774)
- (4) G.R. Cragg, op.cit., p.281-282
- (5) A Letter to a Bishop occasioned by the late Petition to Parliament for Relief in the matter of Subscription (London, 1772), p.49
- (6) A Second Letter to Members of the Honourable the House of Commons relating to the Subscription required of graduates in the Universities by a Christian Whig 1772 (ed. London, 1815) p.48

By 1771 doctrinal differences had also appeared, in the pattern of the old dissent. The Independents now became the orthodox Calvinists, while the Presbyterians had moved towards Unitarianism and exceeded the former both in number and importance. In Cheshire the dissenting congregations at Silstock, Chester, Congleton, Dean Row, Dukinfield, Hale, Hyde, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Nantwich and Cross Street, Stockport had all advanced towards unitarian beliefs. The two chapels at Kinsley and Wheelock Heath became Baptist. Six chapels, at Chester, Hatherlow, Northwich, Partington, Stockport and Tintwhistle survived as orthodox Independent congregations. By 1772, these six were reported to be weak and struggling for survival. (1)

In Lancashire the pattern was much the same. All the other dissenting chapels had abandoned Calvinism except those at Tockholes, Greenacres, Whitworth, Darwen and Elswick for these formed links with the puritan past. (2) In Richmond archdeaconry there was little of the old dissent remaining except a declining number of Quakers. The presentments of the churchwardens reveal that dissenters were few in number and had every appearance of decline. (3) John Chedlow the minister of Crook Street chapel, Chester, who was the Cheshire correspondent to the London committee, wrote on the 24 July 1773 that, "The Dissenting interest in this county in general is in a very declining languishing state, and some of the congregations are likely to drop very soon. Congleton and Wheelock are without ministers, and likely to be so, as there are very few to minister to." (4) This was a common complaint in many reports which reveal a lack of spiritual life. Cold rationalism vied with a frigid and sterile orthodoxy to reduce the pulse of spiritual life to its feeblest beat. Wesley's preaching had scarcely touched the old dissent which lay at the point of death.

Not all was lost, for Jonathon Scott, who worked in Congleton, injected new life into the old dissent by preaching five or six times weekly in various places

(1) F.J. Powicke, op.cit., p.14

(2) R. Tudor-Jones, Congregationalism in England (London, 1962), p.153-154

(3) Leeds C.A., Churchwardens Presentments, RD/CB/8/10

(4) F.J. Powicke, op.cit., p.15



in Cheshire. One result of his work was the building of a chapel at Knutsford in 1770. In Lancashire the strong centre for revival was at Tockholes where a Scot, James McQuhae, the minister, attracted such large congregations that a gallery had to be erected to accommodate the additional numbers. He was a man of energy, of strong convictions, and had a genius for handling people, he also acted as tutor to young ministers in the area. He moved to Blackburn in 1777 to found Chapel Street Congregational Church. (1) Another revival took place around Elswick in 1776 when Thomas Philips came as minister and evangelised the surrounding area. Thomas Waldegrave, a pupil of James Scott, minister of Tockholes from 1750-1754, revived the High Meeting at Cockermouth. Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, also played her part in supporting the Calvinist chapel at Cannon Street, Preston, and High Street, Lancaster, where she paid the salaries of the ministers who were former students from her college at Trevecca. Two more chapels, under her support and patronage, were opened at Chorley and Duke's Alley, Bolton, in Lancashire and another chapel was established at Ulverston all staffed by ministers from Trevecca. (2) The outstanding evangelist of the period was undoubtedly Jonathon Scott, the converted captain of the seventh Dragoon Guards, who built churches at Nantwich, Congleton and Macclesfield, being ordained, 'Presbyter or teacher at large' at Lancaster on 18 September 1776.

Such was the state of the old dissent, but what of the new revival under Wesley with his new force of Methodists.?

For the greater part of the eighteenth century, the term Methodist was used to denote all sympathisers with revivalism whether of the established church or not. Much later the term, 'evangelical' came to be associated with a specific party in the Anglican church. For a considerable period the Methodists also attended their parish churches for the sacraments, for separation did not arise until the licensing of Lady Huntingdon's chapels in 1781 and Wesley's in 1787. (3) In the visitation returns the term

(1) R. Tudor-Jones, op.cit., p.154-156

(2) R. Tudor-Jones, op.cit., p.157-160

D. Mitchell, "Queen of the Methodists" (History Today), XV (1965), No.12

(3) Cheshire R.O., Articles Preparatory to Visitation 1778, EDV7/1

dissenter does not always mean Methodist for the influence of the old dissent often brought to Methodist societies their sense of independence from the Anglican church which applied in the diocese of Exeter as well as that of Chester. (1)

The attitude of the Methodists to the Anglican church was a source of trouble. They claimed to be members of that Church but attacked the clergy on the grounds that they did not preach the gospel, i.e. justification by faith, which was repugnant to orthodox clergy. Further irritation was caused by sending out laymen to preach in the parish of the legally appointed incumbent without invitation. (2) A.M. Lyles has described the average opinion of the Methodists, held by the majority of Anglicans. "The Methodist preacher came to an Anglican parish in the spirit, and with the language, of a missionary going, to the most ignorant heathens; and he asked the clergyman of the parish to lend him his pulpit, in order that he might instruct the parishioners - perhaps for the first time - in the true gospel of Christ." (3) The resentment of the clergy is understandable for they saw the establishment as the bulwark of law and order. As the size of the congregation increased there was a call for more ministers of a new type, who were less educated than those of the old dissent, and who followed a secular occupation during the week, taking up the task of itinerant preacher at the weekend.

The Anglican clergy taught that a sound faith produces good works, i.e. good morals and good behaviour. The Methodist placed his emphasis on faith and not on works so a conflict developed between the two. The overall impression made on the Anglicans was that the Methodist preacher, "asserts a maddening experience like his own to be necessary for salvation; he has only contempt for the Anglican priest, whom he considers non-Christian and actually vicious; he refers scornfully to the non-Methodist as the moral reprobate or the Almost Christian; and from his Sinai he brings down a new set of

(1) A. Warne, op.cit., p.127-128

(2) ibid, p.110

(3) A.M. Lyles, Methodism Mocked (London, 1960), p.28

commandments: Thou shalt not swear, thou shalt not dance, but particularly thou shalt not go to the playhouses where Methodists are likely to be reviled."

(1) So Methodism became the symbol of revolt against authority. Methodists believed that the church of God was a narrow company of saints and that the Anglican church was composed of nominal members, including sinners, so it was no church at all. However, Methodism did provide an emotional release for the mass of the people which the standard form of Anglican worship could not do. The method by which they preached free forgiveness of sins attracted those who had been given public penances to perform by an archdeacon's correction court.

John Wesley's attempt to rouse the Anglican church into action and especially in those areas where the population was increasing and the Anglican church was inactive and was frequently the excuse for a riot organised by his opponents. (2) In 1748, Wesley made his first visit to the Archdeaconry of Richmond and the following year he toured the western deaneries preaching at various places en route. (3) Between 1748 and 1790 Wesley visited the Lake District twenty-six times. He had some success at Whitehaven and Cockermouth, (4) but only twice did he attempt to visit the coastal strip south of St. Bees between 1759 and 1788. On the whole his mission did not meet with the success that had followed the preaching of George Fox a century earlier. Wesley did achieve some small success in Westmorland, chiefly in the Kendal area, through the help of Benjamin Ingham of Ossett, the founder of the Inghamites. (5)

There were two centres in Lancashire from which Methodism spread to the manufacturing districts. The first was at Bank Street Chapel in Bolton, where the Methodist preachers aroused the wrath of Thomas Dixon, the vicar, of Bolton. "He is so illiterate that he does not speak true English. He teaches faith, regeneration and instantaneous conversion, from whence good works will flow; ...

(1) ibid., p.163

(2) R.F. Wearmouth, Methodism and People of the Eighteenth Century (London, 1945) pp.141-164

(3) T.H. Bainbridge, "John Wesley's Travels in Cumberland", Cumberland & Westmorland Archaeological Society, XLVII(NS), p.96 et seq.

(4) T.H. Bainbridge, "Wesley's Travels in Westmorland", C. & W.A.S., LII(NS) 106 et.seq.

(5) C.M.L. Bouch & G.P. Jones, op.cit., p.192

He sells sixpennyworth of hymns, which, for the illiterateness of the composition and the strangeness of the sense, if they have any, are not to be matched." (1) In spite of this criticism it was necessary to enlarge Bank Street Chapel in 1760.

The other centre was in the large parish of Rochdale with its long tradition of puritanism. Matthew Mayor of Portwood Hall, Stockport, came to preach at Middleton and Oldham, forming a small Methodist society at Bruersil. Later he founded a preaching house in Rochdale where Wesley preached on 29 May 1770. The population of Milnrow chapel in Rochdale was 8,000 and the Methodists purchased the building erected by the Countess of Huntingdon for her Connexion, "... in which a school exists, numbers 261 scholars and 27 teachers. At the services 100 people attend." (2)

The growth of Methodism was slow during Markham's episcopate and few licences were issued by the Registrar. Two licences were granted in 1773 for a chapel at Pittsmoor, Bury and a house in Tarvin in Cheshire. In the following year only one licence was issued for a meeting house at Oldham. In 1775 a number of licences were granted for meeting houses, one in the silk mill yard at Knutsford, another in Failsworth, a barn at Ulverston, a barn in Garstang, a house in Melling and additional meeting houses in Bury and Overton. Two new chapels were licensed at Oldham and Festwick. A further two licences were granted in 1776 for a chapel in Standley Street, Liverpool, and a house in Barrow in Furness. (3) A number of licences were issued by the Lancashire Justices at Quarter Sessions. (4) On the whole the new movement had made little advance outside the industrial regions.

Since the Reformation the Lancashire and several of the Richmond deaneries had been a problem to the central government for the strength of the Catholic cause, and the diocese as a whole was regarded as a potential threat to the safety of the government. It was well known that the Catholics were well

(1) B. Nightingale, Lancashire Nonconformity (Manchester, 1890), II, 11

(2) B. Nightingale, op.cit., p.253

(3) Cheshire R.O., Meeting House Licences, EDVA/2

(4) Lancashire R.O., Quarter Sessions Orders, QSO/1770-1776  
Leeds C.A., Meeting House Licences, RD/M

organised, as a spiritual force, and until 1750 it was feared the whole region could well become a rallying point for the Jacobite cause. Hence the attention the diocese received from official quarters from time to time.

In Lancashire there had been a growth of toleration of Catholics by the entire community and the extent this had reached by 1709 may be noted from a letter, written to Bishop Dawes by John Holme, vicar of Blackburn, on the occasion of a visit by Bishop Smith to Salmesbury in July 1709. ".... multitudes goe that way past his house, some on foot, some on horseback, most of them with little Children in their Arms ... The neighbouring Protestants seemed to take little notice of the matter it being no novelty with them." Holme regretted that he could give but little information, "Not to my Negligence but to the unwillingness of the people in the County to intermeddle against the Papists ... 'tis dangerous meddling with them for they bear down all before them with power and interest". (1) On the other hand when the parishioners of Kirkham learned that their vicar, William Dickson, had presented a papist William Harrison, a nail maker, for non-attendance at church during 1739, they drew up a petition to the Bishop of Chester asking for leniency and moderation because Harrison was neither a disturber of the peace nor of his neighbours. (2) It is true that there was a strong centre of recusancy in the deanery of Amounderness as well as in other parts of Lancashire where protestants were often in a minority. Bishop Petre who lived in Ribchester from 1750 to 1775 estimated that the number of Catholics in Lancashire in 1773 was about 14,000. (3)

In Liverpool, the Catholic community was a respected one. After the burning of their chapel in 1746, a request was made to the Corporation for financial assistance in building a new one, but naturally they had officially to decline. Henry Pappar, who had married into the Blundell family of Crosby Hall, came to the rescue. He offered to build a warehouse but the

(1) Lambeth Palace Library, Archiepiscopal MSS. No.930, f.27  
(2) Lancashire R.O., Cause Papers, ARR/13/11  
(3) V.C.H. Lancashire, II, 93 et seq.  
J. Gamon, "Lancashire Catholicism", H.S.L. & C., XVIII (1904), 212-221

real purpose of the building was no secret in the town. The chapel was on the upper floor of a two storey building and the, 'warehouse' was surrounded by houses tenanted by Catholics. In 1773 there were two priests attached to the chapel, one of whom, Father Harris, made friends with the wealthy slave traders of Liverpool and did some good work amongst foreign prisoners who were brought in from ships captured in the wars of the late eighteenth century. (1)

The visitation returns made to the bishops show that the Anglican clergy were not anxious to call attention to the recusants within their parishes who caused no trouble, but they were very much concerned with the Quakers who refused to pay their tithes and were also alarmed at the growing influence of the Methodists. (2) The returns of Catholics in the eastern deaneries of Richmond for 1766/7 show a total of 981 laity with six priests at work. A few converts are named but the total does not exceed thirty. (3) The total number of recusants in the Archdeaconry of Richmond was 9,140 and for that of Chester 15,999. There were no recusants in the deaneries of Malpas and Bangor while Middlewich had 14, Nantwich 22 with the majority found in the deaneries of Leyland, Blackburn and Warrington namely 2,756, 1,974 and 10,168. (4) When account is taken of the immigration from Ireland then the real increase in the number of Catholics is small. It was the Irish immigrants who came to the new industrial regions who gave impetus to the increase in the numbers of Catholics.

- (1) M.D.R. Leys, Catholics in England (London, 1961), p.175
- (2) B.I.H.R., Archbishop Drummond's Visitation, V.1765
- (3) Leeds C.A., Return of Catholics 1766/7, RD/CB/11
- (4) Cheshire R.O., Returns of Catholics, 1767, EDA/6

CHAPTER SIXWILLIAM MARKHAM AND HIS EXTRA-DIOCESAN ACTIVITIES

Reference has already been made to the task Markham undertook of acting as preceptor to the Prince of Wales and to his diocesan duties, but unfortunately for the diocese of Chester, Markham was also Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, and a member of the House of Lords. Markham had been elected to the post of dean four years before his nomination to Chester. (1) Until his appointment as preceptor, followed by his elevation to the See of Chester, which involved attendance at the House of Lords, Markham was a regular attender at Chapter meetings.

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Meetings Attended</u> | <u>Absent</u> |
|-------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| 1768        | 20                       | 2             |
| 1769        | 23                       | 10            |
| 1770        | 22                       | 7             |
| 1771        | 22                       | 18            |
| 1772        | 35                       | 24            |
| 1773        | 26                       | 19            |
| 1774        | 30                       | 4             |
| 1775        | 26                       | 22            |
| 1776        | 26                       | 21 (2)        |

Markham made it a regular practice to be in residence at Christ Church for the chapter meeting, when the election of the Westminster students usually took place in July and December each year. It was due to Markham's initiative that Richard Burke was elected a student. "On 23 December 1772 six Westminster boys were selected. A new Roll having been made this day, the old one having been filled up, Richard Burke was elected a student." (3) Markham also concerned himself to see that the accommodation provided in Christ Church for the Westminster students was improved. On 23 December 1775 he acquired the consent of the Chapter that the surplus money from the benefaction of Dr. Matthew Lees be used, "to provide chambers . . . . by converting the Old Library into decent Rooms for the accommodation of such Westminster Students . . . ." (4) Before Markham left for Bishopthorpe Palace his last registered act was on 19

(1) Chapter Act Books, 1752-1775, 1776-1799

(2) Christ Church Library, Oxford, Chapter Act Books 1752-1775, 1776-1779

(3) Christ Church Library, Chapter Minute Book 1752-1775, f.111

(4) ibid., f.168

November 1776, "That Richard Burke have his Grace for the degree of B.A." (1)

Markham exercised his authority over the Chapter and students alike. On 13 December 1768 Markham sent for Dr. Francis Atterbury, grandson of the turbulent Bishop Atterbury, who was senior proctor, for his speech delivered in the hall the previous Saturday. In that speech Atterbury had made an incautious attack on Lord Chancellor Camden which brought down on him the wrath of Markham. (2) When he arrived Markham addressed him in these terms: "When your Speech was demanded your Answer was that you had burnt it; if the Speech had been before us we sh[oul]d have been better able to judge what Notice sh[oul]d be taken of it, but tho' we have an imperfect apprehension of it, as You were not distinctly heard, we are all of Opinion that there were Some Expressions in it which seemed to reflect on the Proceedings of our Visitor. It was at best very indiscreet to meddle with Matters wh[ic]h were foreign to the business of your Speech & no way Subject to your Cognizance." Markham then delivered his censure upon Atterbury. "You are to understand therefore that we consider that part of your Speech as very disrespectful to the Chancellor, as very offensive to your Hearers, & in every view highly improper. I am now in my own Name & that of the Chapter to express our strongest disapprobation of what You have done & You are to consider what I have said as a Censure". (3) Although censured, Atterbury went forward to a successful clerical career in Ireland.

Markham could deal affectively with riotous students. Two students, Akehurst and Montague, were involved in a riot, "in the town at a late hour, breaking windows ... & not giving up their Collections. It was ordered that they make each of them a Latin Speech to be spoken publicly in the Hall acknowledging their offences and imploring Forgiveness on a day to be appointed by the Dean the first week in the next full term & that they be confined to the College 'till that time ...." (4) Another student by the name of Markham

(1) ibid., f.170

(2) W.R. Ward, Georgian Oxford (Oxford, 1958), p.240

(3) Christ Church Library, Chapter Minute Book 1752-1775, f.53v

(4) ibid., f.64



appeared before the Dean on 28 July 1772 for, "having given up an insolent & abusive Exercise to one of the Canons be Ordered to carry an humble submission in writing to one of the Canons approved by the Dean .... that he be confined to the Walls of the College till the end of this term ..." (1)

Markham took an active part in the political life of the university, especially during parliamentary elections. In 1768 a member was to be elected to Parliament who would hold his seat for a short time since a general election was pending during the same year. ~~Sir~~ Charles Jenkinson, later to become the first Lord Liverpool, was invited to stand as Tory representative of the court party and Sir William Dolben was approached to stand as opponent to Jenkinson and maintain the independence of the university. Dolben was popular amongst the fellows but Markham knew the votes at Christ Church would be divided equally between the two candidates. Jenkinson, on the other hand, was relying on Markham's help to ensure a block vote from Christ Church for his success at the poll.

On 23 January, Jenkinson wrote to Markham pointing out that the Tories wished to have Sir William Dolben as their candidate but doubted if he would accept their offer, nevertheless Jenkinson was hoping, "that some Event will happen which may afford better hopes of success than We have at present ..." (2) However he felt that Markham knew all that was taking place but added that the bishop of Oxford had written to the warden of New College asking for votes for Jenkinson.

A further letter followed on the 25th January informing Markham that Jenkinson had prepared a letter for Dr. Wetherell which would be forwarded when Lord Mansfield had approved it. Matters seemed to be going well, "I understand that the Bishop of Bath & Wells has written a very Earnest Letter to Wadham College ...." (3) and that he had received a visit from Sir Francis

(1) *ibid.*, f.102

(2) British Museum, Additional MS. 38,305, f.45-46

(3) B.M. Add. MS., 38,305, f.45-46

Dashwood whom Lord Lichfield had canvassed on his behalf. All the same he felt that the university should have had nothing to do with an election at this time when the general election was so imminent. Jenkinson estimated the number of Tories who might vote for him to be fifty and that number with Whig support would be sufficient. Markham it appears had expressed quite a different view of the situation when writing to Jenkinson. "You say I think that I should not have above 20, I do not know whether you reckon into this Number some of the Gentlemen of Jesus where Mr. Hoare tells me I should have all the Residents but one & of the Non Residents I should have had almost all that were capable of coming up ..." (1) He thought the number must exceed that which Markham estimated. "My General Sentiments on this affair continue to be the same as when I wrote to you last ..." (2) News arrived in Oxford on the 25th that Sir William Dolben had accepted the offer to stand as candidate. Markham now despaired of any possible success for Jenkinson and was thoroughly annoyed by Sir William Dolben's decision. He lectured the warden of All Souls that it was not for Dolben's, "dignity," or the dignity of the university to lend himself to stop a gap merely to disappoint the fair pretensions of another gentleman, that it was too much in the system of a Borough Jobb. That it must be particularly resented at Ch[rist] Ch[urch] where Sir W. had many friends as it looked as if he meant to abuse their friendship and turn it to their embarrassment ... that this step of his would probably keep the university in hot water till the Gen[eral] Election" (3) Markham thought in all fairness that Jenkinson should withdraw but he declined to do so.

A further letter followed on the 27th from Jenkinson who felt that his cause would gain ground as tempers cooled following the announcement that Sir William Dolben would stand. He had taken steps to find out the state of every college in their attitude to the election. "I have sent your Letter

(1) British Museum, Additional MS. 38,305, f.45-46

(2) B.M., Add. MS. 38,305, f.45-46

(3) W.R. Ward, Georgian Oxford (Oxford, 1958) p.229

to the Good Archbishop of York & He informs me in answer that the Provost & Fellows of Queens are to dine with him on Friday when according to their Temper & occasion nothing shall be omitted that he can say ...." (1)

It appears from the correspondence that Jenkinson had complete trust in the advice which Markham gave him on the conduct of the election. "I refer everything to your Decision & shall act as you advise, I desire nothing which is not consistent with the prosperity of the University & the Credit of the Party to which I have the Honor to belong." (2)

Markham must have replied to this letter with one offering further advice for a reply from Jenkinson shows what this advice was. "I have written as you recommended to Dr. Cust & Dr. Tottie when you wish me to write to others you will give me the necessary Hints. I have spoken to Thurloe concerning his Brother, & I have written to the Duke of Grafton to do the same, Lord Harcourt will speak to Mr. Morton concerning Dr. Sharpe & Dr. Thorp of St. John's. I have written to the Duke of Grafton to desire He would do it likewise, & I shall write to Lord Mansfield on the same subject. I have seen a Letter from Dr. Nichols of St. John's promising me not only His Vote but all his Influence. I understand that Mr. Nicolson of Queens has done the same likewise, I have written to all Dr. Horne's Friends in Town to make a strenuous Attack upon Him, & I have desired the Bishop of London to go to the Bishop of Winchester for the same purpose. Dr. Wharton of Winchester writes word that He is with me & that His Brother of Trinity will also be with me, if the Interest He must preserve in His College does not make that impossible & at worst He will never act against me." (3)

Jenkinson was most grateful that Markham had proved to be better than his word in taking an active part in the election. He felt that without his efforts the election would have failed but thanks to him there is a chance of success. He had hopes, according to Dr. Leigh, of at least a part of the votes

(1) B.M. Add. MS. 38,305, f.48-49

(2) B.M. Add. MS., 38,305, f.48-49

(3) B.M. Add. MS. 38,305, f.47-48 f.50

at Balliol.

Another letter from Jenkinson lamented the fact that it was absurd to choose Sir William Dolben for two months in Parliament but although he may lose the election on this occasion the way would be prepared for Jenkinson's triumph later. "Such My Dr Sir being the State of Things, I shall wait to receive yr Opinions concerning Our future proceedings. If you think that I should uphold my pretensions & stand at the general Election, I will begin to take every proper Step with that view .... You have My dr Sir a difficult Task. The Success however will be the more glorious .... I am infinitely obliged to you for what you have already done ..." (1)

The election campaign was a disappointment for Jenkinson. The canvass in the colleges was not so good as expected. At the poll, Jenkinson came third with Sir William Dolben as the elected member so the university had rejected the court candidate.

Upon his election as Archbishop of York, Markham severed his connection with Oxford on 18 March 1779 and the following entry appears in the act book. "The Arch Bishop of York having presented the College with his portrait painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds it was referred to the Dean to write a letter of Thanks to his Grace." (2)

Markham continued to take an interest in the appointments at Christ Church after he had severed his connection. When Dr. Hesington, canon of Christ Church, died in 1792, Markham wrote to Lord Liverpool upon the appointment to the vacant canonry. The Dean of Christ Church, Dr. Cyril Jackson, a former pupil of Markham at Westminster School, had written to him asking him to use his influence to obtain the nomination to the canonry for Jackson's brother. Markham asked Lord Liverpool to use his influence to get the Dean's brother nominated. (3)

Markham's other sphere of activity was in the House of Lords, first as

(1) B.M. Add. MS. 38,305, f.47-48

(2) Christ Church Library, Chapter Act Book 1776-1799, f.398

(3) B.M. Add. MS. 38,227, f.351

Bishop of Chester and then as Archbishop of York. He made his first appearance in the House on 26 February 1771 when to took the oaths. To his credit he was one of the most regular attenders and rarely missed a day when the House was in session. One result was that he found himself appointed to sit on committees dealing with a variety of matters from enclosures, Irish estates, canal construction, paving and lighting of towns, Ayr harbour and road construction to Tweed fishing rights. (1) When the session terminated at the end of June, Markham went north to attend to the affairs of his diocese holding ordinations and administering the rite of confirmation.

Markham seldom spoke in the Lords but when he was the subject of an attack he could defend himself with great spirit and eloquence. (2) His sermon before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel on 21 February 1777 aroused widespread comment. His criticism of the handling of the affairs of the American Colonists which had led them to revolt was outspoken. Markham pointed out that English society had been established in a period favourable to civil liberty, but many English subjects in America seemed to be abandoned to atheism and infidelity. He said that fifty per cent of the settlers were alleged to be members of the Church of England but outside Virginia and Maryland there were only five churches in the reign of William III. Private charity had provided, by 1777, some hundreds of churches with numbers of itinerant ministers, schoolmasters, and catechists who were at work amongst, "the adult savages and negroes which were instructed for baptism, and the prospect of successful missions among the Indian tribes." (3) This situation had been reversed since 1775. Now the laity are confiscated and imprisoned for no offence other than living as peaceable subjects. Ministers of the Church were being pursued with cruelty, "of which no Christian country can afford an example, the neighbouring savages perhaps may." (4) Markham outlined the course of the American disasters and attempted to place the blame on the government. Ever

(1) House of Lords Journals, 1771-1776, passim

(2) Gentleman's Magazine 1807, p.1042-1043

(3) W. Markham, Sermon preached before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (London, 1777), p.13

(4) ibid., p.14

since the colonies began they had been subject to the mistakes and inattention of governments, assisted by a low standard of morals and opinion. In the matter of civil and religious liberty the supporters of the various sects claimed more than they were prepared to give and at the same time tried to ensure for themselves an unrestrained right to preach and propagate their opinions. At any time it is always difficult for religion to keep itself apart from the world and a sect often rose to become a political party in the state. Markham illustrated his point by reference to the anti-papal legislation as political and not religious, for papists found it impossible to give security for their obedience. If a similar sect arose in England with the same attitudes then a similar type of restraint would have to be applied.

Markham delivered a strong attack on political parties. "Parties once had a principle belonging to them, absurd perhaps, and indefensible, but still carrying a notion of duty by which honest minds might easily be caught ... But they are now combinations of individuals, who instead of being sons and servants of the community, make a league for advancing their private interests."

(1) Neither did he spare the politicians stating that they do not support the supremacy of the law but maintain that a charter from the king is as valid as an Act of Parliament. They assert that the king can discharge his subjects from their allegiance which is due to the state and they use every endeavour to throw the weight of the colonies into the scale of the Crown but, "we, thank God's good providence that we had a prince upon the throne whose magnanimity and justice were superior to such temptations." (2)

During the sitting of the House of Lords on 5 December 1777, Markham was fiercely attacked by the Duke of Grafton for this sermon. "Room was found for a strong censure on the Archbishop of York as also on his principles, who had dared to stigmatize the fair character of the Marquis of Rockingham .... and his adherents as traitors to their country .... But Lord Shelbourne in his

(1) ibid, p.21

(2) W. Markham, op.cit., p.23

speech spared his Grace still less, and Lord Chatham learning at the moment only the circumstances from me, exceeded us both in the strength of his attack on the Archbishop." (1) Markham replied that he was prepared to defend his position which he had stated during his sermon. He demonstrated his position during the objections he raised in the debate on the bill to award a pension of £4,000 a year to the Earl of Chatham for three lives, for he maintained that the money was urgently needed for public services during a time of crisis.

Markham hated and detested persecution, and especially the treatment meted out to Warren Hastings during his trial and it was this case which terminated the long close friendship between Markham and Edmund Burke. On 23 May 1793 Markham interrupted Burke who was cross examining Mr. Auriol and said, that it was impossible for him, "silently to listen to the illiberal conduct of the examiner; that he was examining the witness as if he were examining not a gentleman but a pickpocket; that the illiberality and inhumanity of the managers, in the course of this long trial, could not be exceeded by Marat or Robespierre, had the conduct of the trial been committed to them." (2) Once again on 23 March 1795 Markham took up the defence of Warren Hastings against the bullying, and insinuation during the course of his trial. "What is the case of Mr. Hastings? No consideration for his high character, no consideration for his special services, for the esteem, love and veneration in which he was held by the millions he governed for so many years. No my Lords; he is treated, not as if he were a gentleman whose case is before you, but as if you were trying a horse-stealer." (3)

For a long time Markham held the view that the church in America should be governed by the Church of England as an integral part of the latter. The events of 1775 and subsequent years caused him to change his mind on the subject of bishops for the American Church. In the course of his sermon to the S.P.G. in 1777 he said, ".... we hope the reasoning, which was so just in the case of

(1) C.R. Markham, Memoir of Archbishop Markham 1719-1807 (Oxford, 1906), p.50

(2) C.R. Markham, op.cit., p.66

(3) ibid., p.67

Canada, that if you allowed their religion you must allow a maintenance for their clergy .... that those who are disposed to worship God in peace and charity, may be entitled to a regular and decent support for their ministers; that they may not continue to want the important office of confirmation without the benefit of which even a toleration is not complete; and that those who have a call to the ministry, may not be obliged to seek ordination, at an expense(sic) which is very grievous, and with the hazards of a long voyage, which has been fatal to many of them; We have surely a right to expect, that the only established church, should not .... remain in a state of oppression;"(1) Markham henceforward agreed to join with the Archbishop of Canterbury in consecrating bishops for America.

Markham's attitude towards society and public institutions of a charitable nature may be observed from a study of his address to the governors of the Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford, in 1771. He considered the public infirmary to be a most useful charity which could cover the sins of a vicious age. He saw these infirmaries as necessary institutions for the relief of the distress of the lower classes in society, whom God in his wisdom had placed in a subordinate position for the common good of all classes. These lower orders, he held, were essential for maintaining the structure and well being of trade, the earning of wealth, the strength and support of the state, but due to their condition they were easily attacked by disease, were prone to accidents and the tricks of unskilled doctors.

Markham maintained that Oxford was richly endowed with vast stores of knowledge and skill, so that practice in the infirmary would enable students to increase their knowledge of medicine. This was not the sole purpose of the institution, for like so many others he believed that the patients removed from their old habits, and vices, would be open to admonition and could in their illness be trained to reflect upon death and judgement. There were endless

(1) W. Markham, A Sermon preached before the Governors of the S.P.G. 1777 (London, 1777), p.23-24



opportunities of instructing the ignorant and exciting the careless, for reproving those who were vicious, reclaiming the bad, confirming the good and supporting those who were weak. He saw that infirmaries could be used as training institutions for clergy who would learn more of the working of the mind than from reading many books on the subject. Indeed infirmaries had more uses than mere healing of bodily ailments. (1)

Alongside his support for the rigid divisions of society of his time went a condemnation of the new philosophy of Deism and the anti-Trinitarian theology. These he compared to the pagan ideas of Greece and Rome. In the course of his address to the convocation of Canterbury in 1769, Markham openly attacked the ideas of the eighteenth century as contrary to the teachings of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Collossians and to Christianity in general. (2) He developed this theme in his sermon before the House of Lords in 1774 which commemorated the execution of Charles I. He went to some pains to trace the motives that caused Parliament to decline in respect and stated that the conspiracy against English liberty would have succeeded if it had not been tied up with popery. Sobriety of manners are now replaced by vice and irreligion which has been the result of importing French manners and ideas into England. He considered it, "A most dangerous experiment, to assist in raising the popular Tide, without being able to say to it, 'Thus far shalt thou pass'." From this point Markham reveals his traditionalist ideas that the orders of English society were regarded as fixed and almost sacred. (3)

A very different appreciation of William Markham, to the one which introduced the review of his career, can be obtained from the study of a pamphlet commenting on his visitation charge of 1781 to his clergy in the diocese of York. During the course of his address Markham seems to have attacked a number of his clergy who had openly expressed certain political views which differed widely from his own and indeed appear to have caused him

- (1) W. Markham, A Sermon preached before the Governors of the Radcliffe Infirmary (Oxford, 1771), passim
- (2) W. Markham, Concio ad Clerum in Synodio provinciale Cantuar provinciae 1769 (London, 1769), passim
- (3) W. Markham, A Sermon preached before the Lords Spiritual and Temporal 31 January 1774 (London, 1774), p.21

alarm. Markham referred to the Gordon Riots, in which he had been involved, and advised his clergy, "to preach up obedience to their Superiors, Magistrates etc." and the unknown author of the pamphlet wonders what effect these remarks would have on the general public. He indicated that the, "road to honours and exclusive favour lies in a different direction!, that is by not being too critical of the establishment although he added, "we live in times when ecclesiastical, as well as secular preferments are too frequently conferred as the Wages of Iniquity." (1) The author declares that Markham castigated his clergy on the grounds that they, "having dared to join themselves with a numerous and splendid band of their compatriots, and declaring that some reform was necessary to be <sup>m</sup>ade in the expenditure and application of the public money which they conceived had been wantonly and wickedly squandered away; They further conceived it to be the just and inherent right of every Freeholder of England to endeavour, by legal and pacific efforts, to correct the abuses of Parliamentary representation, and to check the progress of unconstitutional influence." (2) This is a reference to the activities of Christopher Wyvill and the Yorkshire Association, for reform of parliament which was active during the crisis of 1779-1780. Doubtless Markham felt that this kind of thing was a movement that should not be encouraged.

The point the author is making seems to be that the clergy can in their own interests no longer stand aloof from the American war while the majority of the bishops support a policy of the, "Tomahawk and the Scalping Knife", instead of working actively for peace. There was another danger in that the remarks of the Archbishop would leave an impression on the minds of the lower classes that in the long run the gap between clergy and laity would be enlarged to a far wider extent than it was in 1781. There could be no improvement until the episcopate changed in the several attitudes: "Till they leave off procuring comendams and heaping up riches and preferments on themselves, their

(1) Remarks upon a Charge delivered by the Archbishop of York at the several Visitations lately held within his Diocese 1781 (York, 1781), p.4,5

(2) W. Markham, op.cit., p.6

relations and favourites; nay, till they correct their non-residence, till they leave the Court, the Parliament, and their politics, and go down to their several dioceses and there labour in the vineyard of Christ, instead of standing most part of the day idle at the Metropolis, they may write what learned vindications and pastoral letters they please; the observing Unbelievers will not be satisfied they are in earnest, and by consequence, will be little moved by all their arguments and exhortations." (1) Such action was not to be contemplated by William Markham or any other traditionalist bishop of the eighteenth century.

It is not here that an assessment can be made of his episcopate at Chester nor his contribution, if any, to the life and well being of his diocese. This can only be done after a survey of the work of his successor at Chester, Beilby Porteus. Suffice it at this point to state that the evidence points to a man whose interest was aristocratic, opportunist and authoritarian while at the same time supporting the twin pillars of church and state under the blessings of the Hanoverian governments.

(1) ibid., p.7

CHAPTER SEVENBEILBY PORTEUS

Beilby Porteus was a bishop whose background was far different from that of William Markham. In the first place his parents were from the colony of Virginia, where his father Robert Porteus, owned tobacco plantations. His mother was a daughter of Colonel Jennings of Ripon, who had spent the greater part of her married life in the colonies. Porteus's parents returned to England in order to provide for their children a better education than was obtainable in Virginia at that time. Upon their return to England, the family settled in York where Beilby, the youngest of nineteen children, was born on 8 May 1731. Beilby spent a great deal of his time as a child and youth at Ripon with his relatives and it was to this Yorkshire city that Beilby Porteus returned each year from Cambridge to spend a part of the summer vacation. By the time Beilby Porteus was born the family had been resident in York for eleven years and knew the facilities for education that existed in the city. Beilby received his early education in York but when he attained the age of thirteen years he was sent to Ripon to be educated under Mr. Gyde from whose school he was admitted as sizar to Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1749. (1) After three years of study Porteus was awarded his bachelors degree in arts and obtained one of the Duke of Newcastle's gold medals for the high standard of his performance. In the spring of 1752, Porteus was elected a fellow of Christ's College. (2)

Porteus's friends at Cambridge, solicited for him the office of beadle which became vacant when James Burroughs was elected as head of Caius College. His first reaction was to decline the offer, but to express his appreciation of the efforts made on his behalf to obtain the post he accepted it, though he only kept the office for two years. It was during this period that he accepted private pupils, one of whom was Thomas Robinson, son of Thomas Robinson, later Lord Grantham, of Newby Hall, Ripon. He formed a lasting friendship with the

(1) Christ's College Register, ed. J. Peile (Cambridge, 1910), II, 252

(2) R. Hodgson, Works of Beilby Porteus (London, 1811) I, 7-8

family and corresponded with Lord Grantham both during the time he was ambassador at Madrid and afterwards.

Thomas Robinson junior entered Christ's College at the commencement of the Michaelmas term in 1754. On 2 March 1755, Porteus wrote to Robinson to congratulate him on his sons's religious and moral standards. He hoped that contacts with Cambridge society would not lead to his moral degeneration, but Porteus felt that his time spent at Westminster School, under Dr. Markham, would have laid a sure foundation for young Thomas. "He has indeed had great Advantages in having been at so large a School as Westminster under so excellent a Master as Dr. Markham & above all in having been your constant companion ....." (1)

On 1 April 1755, Porteus was anxious to keep young Robinson away from Newmarket races, for these were then notorious for the amount of licence and vice that prevailed. Accordingly Porteus wrote to Robinson senior at Newby Hall outlining a proposition designed to keep young Thomas out of temptation. "It is now Newmarket Week & tho' I am far from distrusting Mr. Robinson's Prudence, I should not chuse to have him within reach of those Temptations to every kind of Vice, with which Newmarket at present abounds. I have therefore laid out a little Expedition to Easton, where we are to Stay a Night or two with the Duke's Chaplain & Entertain ourselves with what is Worth seeing in that Country. At the same time His curiosity in regard to the Races will be satisfied, for we shall take Newmarket in our Way home again." (2) At the close of Trinity term, Porteus wrote to Robinson's father giving him a detailed report on his son's first year at Cambridge. He was pleased with the attention Robinson gave to his studies and his attitude to scholastic work. Porteus felt that three years were far too few for the complete education of any gentleman. It was at the close of this term that Porteus resigned his office of beadle but informed Thomas Robinson senior that he would see his present pupils through their course. (3)

(1) Leeds C.A., Vyner Mss. 60626, No. 13721 (2 March, 1755)

(2) ibid., No. 13718 (1 April, 1755)

(3) ibid., No. 13698 (6 July, 1755)

Porteus's health always seems to have been a source of anxiety for him and the subject is mentioned in many of his letters. It would seem that upon the death of his mother, Porteus returned to York for a while and there contracted a serious illness which had effects upon him for a long time. He was sent to Scarborough to convalesce and became so much attracted to the town that he returned to it for two months each year in the long vacation, finding the place beneficial to his health. "I have nothing to wish for to make it perfectly agreeable but my Health, which is indeed very precarious, but I hope for great relief from the Sea-water for this purpose. I expect the Physicians will send me to Scarborough & there we may lodge together ...";(1) for he intended to take young Thomas with him as a companion. In the June of the following year Porteus indicated to Thomas Robinson that he intended to spend two months in Scarborough and one at Ripon to improve his health. "My Health is greatly improv'd & I hope by the Help of Scarborough perfectly to reestablish it ...." (2)

During the spring of 1756, Porteus, now a young man of twenty-five, began to look round for some preferment, as was the custom, for his fellowship was small in monetary value and Porteus was an ambitious young man. A rumour was abroad that Mr. Richardson, fellow of Emmanuel, had reported that Porteus<sup>e</sup> was expected to succeed to the next vacancy in the Whitehall preach<sup>e</sup>rship. Porteus had already, it appears, written to the Bishop of London asking for preferment and so he wrote to Robinson asking him to remind the Bishop of London of his promise. "I had a promise under the Bp's own hand to succeed Mr Hurd ...." (3) as a preacher. Two months later on 8 April another rumour was around which Porteus thought it worth while to pursue. This was to the effect that Dr. Barnard master of Eton had resigned his office as Whitehall preacher. Porteus intimated to Robinson that he would like this post, although it was worth only £25 per annum, moreover if he obtained this post it would enable him to visit the Robinsons frequently. Not yet in Holy

(1) Leeds C.A., Vyner Mss. 6026, No.13714 (4 May, 1755)

(2) ibid., No. 13663 (24 June, 1756)

(3) ibid., No. 13680 (8 February, 1756)

Orders, Porteus knew that he must seek ordination, being of age, if he wished for preferment. He intended to take deacon's orders at Trinity 1756 but if the situation become urgent then he was prepared to seek a private ordination (opportunities for Orders were frequently available in many London churches), rather than delay matters until Trinity Sunday. He felt that on this occasion the Duke of Newcastle could be of assistance if only Robinson would speak with the Duke on his behalf. (1) Later on that same April day, Porteus learned that a mistake had been made. It was not Dr. Barnard, master of Eton, who held the Whitehall preachership, but Dr. Barnard of St. John's College, who had not resigned. Porteus requested Robinson not to make any approach to the Duke of Newcastle, on this matter. "I have accidentally heard that there is another Barnard of St. John's, & that he is the White-Hall preacher, & not the Master of Eaton as I imagined .... If you have not spoken to the Duke of Newcastle, there will be now no occasion; if you have, I hope his Grace will remember me, if there should be a vacancy ...." (2)

Robinson did approach the Bishop of London on Porteus's behalf and obtained a promise of the next vacancy that arose in a preachership. Porteus was not ungrateful to learn this, but realised that he had been hasty in his search for preferment. "... A vacancy in these Preacherships happens so seldom that I was willing to lay hold on the first, that offer'd, which made me perhaps a little too hasty. I am quite ashamed of having given you so much unnecessary trouble .... I shall not now go into Orders until Trinity Sunday ...." (3) Porteus was made deacon in Buckden church on Trinity Sunday 1756. Writing later to Thomas Robinson he outlined his future plans. "I took Deacons Orders about a fortnight since under the Bishop of Lincoln, & shall (God willing) in September he ordained Priest ...." (4) This was contrary to the Canons of 1604 but a common practice in the eighteenth century for those who were well connected. Robert Hodgson in his life of

(1) Leeds C.A., Vyner Mss. 6026, No. 13670 (8 April, 1756)

(2) *ibid.*, No. 13699 (8 April, 1756)

(3) *ibid.*, No. 13666 (11 April, 1756)

(4) *ibid.*, No. 13663 (24 June, 1756)

Beilby Porteus gives the date of Porteus's ordination to the priesthood as 1757 which according to the letter Porteus wrote to Thomas Robinson took place in September 1756. The ordination to the priesthood was performed by Archbishop Hutton in York Minister when Porteus was honoured by an invitation to preach the ordination sermon. (1)

It had been suggested to Archbishop Secker that Beilby Porteus was a suitable candidate for promotion but it would appear that Porteus was not considered as a suitable chaplain for the Archbishop for the post went to Dr. Wray the future vicar of Rochdale. (2) Having failed in the 'lottery' for an archbishop's chaplaincy, the hopes of Porteus rose again when he heard that Hurd, fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, had been presented to a college living, a move which meant Hurd would have to resign his preachership. (3) In expectation that something would turn up, Porteus wrote to Thomas Robinson asking for his support in a request to the Bishop of London for preferment to the vacant preachership. (4) "I have no personal acquaintance with Mr. Hurd; & have no doubt but you will have interest enough with the next Bishop, (if the Present should drop) to get your promise confirmed; I shall rest satisfied with that. You have already (if I mistake not) a promise from the present Bishop of the next that fell, & therefore will meet with no difficulties there; & whoever succeeds him cannot I think refuse you so small a favour." (5) Robinson wrote to Porteus asking for further details and in return Porteus promised to find out when Hurd would resign his office of preacher at Whitehall. "... but in the meanwhile it seems to me sufficient to let the Bishop know by means of your Friend, that there certainly will be a vacancy in a short time, ... & to procure a promise of my supplying that vacancy whenever it happens .."

(6) Nothing emerged from this proposition and by January 1757, Porteus had realised that he would have to continue to make a living by accepting private

(1) R. Hodgson, Works of Beilby Porteus (London, 1811), I.11

(2) Leeds C.A., Vyner Mss. 6026 No.13660 (8 October, 1756)

(3) ibid., 6026 No. 13659 (21 October, 1756)

(4) ibid., No.13658 (25 October, 1756)

(5) ibid., No. 13657 (31 October, 1756)

(6) ibid., No. 13656 (1 November, 1756)



pupils, "..... 'till Providence throws in my way some other means of Subsistence." (1) In May of the same year, the Bishop of London wrote to Porteus expressing his regret that he had been unable to give him some preferment. Porteus followed this up by writing once again to Robinson thanking him most profusely for all his help. (2) 1757 saw no preferment come the way of Porteus, but in March 1758, another opportunity presented itself when Dr. Young, master of Jesus College, Cambridge, was elected Bishop of Bristol. Porteus's hopes rose at once and again he wrote to Robinson on the subject of Dr. Young's election. "By Dr. Young's promotion to the Bishoprick of Bristol, the Mastership of Jesus becomes vacant, & Dr. Caryl our present Register is talk'd of for it. If he should succeed The Register-ship will be vacant. It is a good 80£ a year, consistent with Orders & tenable with any preferment." (3) asking at the same time for a hint to be dropped to the Duke of Newcastle. Porteus seems to have had second thoughts about the wisdom of applying for Dr. Caryl's post and wrote to Robinson asking him not to press the Duke of Newcastle too far in the matter of filling the vacant post, for his rival, Mr. Hubbard of Emmanuel was in a very strong position and if it came to a poll then Hubbard would win. (4) By mid-April Porteus felt that his chance of securing the post of register was doubtful but still he hoped that with the assistance of the Duke of Newcastle and Robinson's friend, Lord Dupplin he would be successful in the end. (5)

An alternative opening presented itself to Porteus about the same time and that was the possibility of an appointment as chaplain to the new Bishop of Bristol. "The new Bishop", he wrote to Robinson, "must have two Chaplains. He is a Cambridge Man & knows me. Half a word drop't by the Duke & seconded by you might place me in that Situation which would certainly be most desirable. This however I leave entirely to your discretion ...." (6). Nevertheless the

(1) Leeds C.A., Vyner Mss. 6026 No.13640 (20 January, 1757)

(2) ibid., No.13644 (19 May, 1757)

(3) ibid., No.13617 (30 March, 1758)

(4) ibid., No.13611 (1 April, 1758)

(5) ibid., No.13613 (18 April, 1758)

(6) ibid., No.13615 (8 April, 1758)

election to the vacant post at Christ's College, dominated his mind and he believed that if only the Duke of Newcastle and Lord Dupplin would intervene in the election he would be successful, but if they should appear cool towards him that he felt that his chances of success would be poor, "Tho' it would be a very fine addition to my Fellowship ....." (1) But another disappointment followed for Robinson wrote to Porteus stating that the Duke would not intervene so that majority of votes would fall to Hubbard. "Both the Duke & Ld. Dupplin have it in their power to serve me more effectually, and more agreeably to me; which possibly this might be no improper time to insinuate. There are three of his (Robinson's) Friends who have Votes, Mr. Montague, Mr. Harry Pelham & Mr. Stonehaven if they chose to be at the trouble of coming down. But in all Likelihood, this affair is now at an End for it would not do without the interposition of superior influence." (2) Towards the end of April 1758, Porteus received a letter from the Duke of Newcastle intimating that Hubbard might obtain the vacant post. Once again Porteus wrote to Robinson about the matter. "The Duke was at the same time pleas'd to say something in my favour & to intimate, that other openings might possibly be found more suitable to a young Man. I leave you to make what use you think proper of the Intimation ..." (3) By the end of July, Porteus was feeling somewhat depressed for a number of his friends had left Cambridge and once more a letter went from Porteus to Robinson asking him to use his influence. "Confin'd as I am to this place & very much unacquainted with things of this nature, it is not likely that anything should come to my knowledge ....." Everything is now praeengag'd long before it drops, & therefore if you could find a favourable opportunity of obtaining a promise of any thing Tolerable from the Duke of Newcastle, or the Lord Keeper it would make me very happy," (4) but again nothing came of this proposal.

By the close of the Michaelmas term 1759, Porteus had changed his tactics.

(1) Leeds C.S., Vyner Mss. 6026, No.13612 (16 April, 1758)

(2) ibid., No.13611 (18 April, 1758)

(3) ibid., No.13664 (20 April, 1758)

(4) ibid., No.13725 (28 July, 1758)

Now he sought preferment for himself and a Virginian friend of his. He asked Robinson to use his influence to obtain a place on the Council of Virginia for his friend Presley Thornton when the next vacancy arose. For his own part Porteus, bewailing the poverty of college livings, turned his attention to the prebends as preferment tenable with his fellowship. "The only things almost that are so, are some of the Smaller Prebends - Norwich, Rochester & Bristol are, I believe all so. They are in the Gift of the King, or Lord Keeper, about £150 a year & if you thought it possible to improve my Interest so far with the Duke of Newcastle as to procure a promise of one of them you would confer an obligation upon me which it would be impossible for me ever to express a Proper Sense of." (1) Implying thereby that he would be forever in Robinson's debt.

He had also discovered during his summer visit to Yorkshire a living in the East Riding that was expected to become vacant and in the manner of the time he asked for it. "There is a Living in the East-riding of Yorkshire not far from Beverley call'd Sigglesthorne or Siglestone, likely to be soon vacant, it is about 180£ a year, in the Gift of the Crown, & possess'd by an incumbent, old and Dropsical. His name is Thomlinson ... it is said by some the Living has been already applied for; which I am told is the case with every one that is likely to be vacant. I am inclin'd to think that this Living would suit me extremely well, & it certainly would be more <sup>s</sup>easily procur'd, & is likely to drop very soon." (2) This was a common state of affairs for in desirable places there were too many curates pursuing a restricted number of vacant livings.

In January 1759, Porteus found it necessary to write an apology to Robinson who had taken exception to certain remarks he had made, but it is quite clear from the tone of the letter that preferment is uppermost in his mind. He now considered an approach to Lord Kinnoull either for his own patronage or his influence with the Duke of Newcastle. "He has a great many good livings in his own disposal in Yorkshire as Chancellor of the Duchy, and one particularly, no very great one, which is likely to be soon vacant. I

(1) Leeds C.A., Newby Hall Mss. 2837, No.6 (6 December, 1758)

(2) ibid

know he intends to provide for Mr Skinner first ...." (1) By the late spring of 1759, Porteus seems to have come to terms with the working of the ladder of preferment. "I have at last learnt a Lesson which will perhaps do me more real service in Life than the Success I wish'd for; and that is never to form any Expectations, for then It is impossible I can ever be disappointed. If I have formerly seem'd rather too sanguine in my hopes, you will impute it to that ardour & alacrity in Pursuit so natural to Young Men". (2)

Two years later Porteus was still at Cambridge without any preferment having been offered to him. In June 1760 he had written to the Duke of Newcastle indicating that he would accept any offer that should be made to him.

"....Though, I believe, means might be found of making application in my behalf to Lady Portsmouth, I chuse rather to throw myself on your Grace's Goodness, to which, without any further importunity, I now committ my Cause, in full confidence of your doing every Thing that is reasonable & proper. Your Grace is, I hope, convinc'd by former Instances, how ready I am to relinquish any claim, which you think it necessary to discourage; and this I hope will induce your Grace, in other cases, to show me all the favour that you think due to my pretensions, & the Solicitations of my Friends ...." (3)

No reply was received from the Duke of Newcastle so once again Porteus wrote to Robinson, now Lord Grantham, giving him some polite intimation that he was still without preferment but that the hope of some coming his way remained. "As I shall shortly have occasion to write to Mr Grant, I shall sound him in relation to Ld. K[innoul]l and the B. of St. A[saph]; but from the conversation I had with Mr Lorimer, there seems not much to be expected from his influence. I suppose that the D. of N[ewcastle]'s recommendation would always have weight with them; & that degree of Power he can never want. The Chaplains that are to go to Ireland are already appointed .... My own wishes are for a moderate Provision at a tolerable time of Life. My Friends are apt to look further & higher for me than I think reasonable." (4) No offer of

(1) Leeds C.A., Newby Hall Mss. 2837, No.9 (9 January, 1759)

(2) ibid., Vyner Mss. 6026, N .13607 (28 May, 1759)

(3) B.M., Add. MS.32,907, f.164

(4) Leeds C.A., Newby Hall MS.2837, No.18

any preferment came to Porteus throughout the whole of 1760. In January 1761, he learned that a living in the gift of the Duke of Newcastle was vacant and he promptly wrote to the Duke asking to be presented to it. "I take the Liberty of entreating by Letter your Grace's recommendation to the Living of St. Olave's in the Old Jewry now vacant by the Death of the Bishop of St. David's. Your Grace will by this do what is very agreeable to several of your Friends who are so good as to support my interest, & will confer a very singular Obligation on your Grace's most dutifull & most Obedient Servant ..."(1)

The publication of the right kind of sermon dedicated to the Duke of Newcastle brought the long sought for offer of preferment. On Advent Sunday 1761, Porteus preached a sermon before the university of Cambridge as a reply to a pamphlet that had been circulating and was widely read entitled, The History of the Man after God's own Heart and which attacked revealed religion. Porteus refuted the arguments put forward in this pamphlet with such skill that his status rose considerably in the academic world. (2) Dr. Law and Dr. Thomas, two of his colleagues who had been present for the sermon, encouraged him to publish this as quickly as possible. The idea came to Porteus to dedicate this to the Duke of Newcastle. "... I presume to beg the Honour of inscribing it to your Grace, as a small testimony of my Gratitude for the countenance you have been always pleas'd to show me. Your Grace will double the Obligation by ordering your Secretary to signify your Intentions by the return of the Post, because the Sermon is already in the Press ..." (3)

On this occasion the approach to the Duke of Newcastle ended in a recommendation by the Duke to Archbishop Secker, that Porteus would be suitable for his Cambridge chaplain, the post being vacant due to the preferment of Dr. Thomas Wray to the living of Rochdale in Chester Diocese, a living in the gift of Secker.

On 13 May 1762, Porteus departed from Cambridge and took up his residence at Lambeth Palace. During his time as chaplain he acted as secretary to

(1) B.M., Add. MS.32, 917, f.445

(2) R. Hodgson, op.cit., I, 13-14

(3) B.M., Add. MS.32, 932, f.13

Archbishop Secker and handled his correspondence for during the years 1764 and 1765, Secker suffered badly from gout in his right hand. (1) The correspondence of Mrs. Talbot shows how popular Porteus was as chaplain for on 30 September 1762 she wrote, "Mr .Porteus, the Cambridge Chaplain, was also there with whom we are all much delighted, and who proved to be an old friend of the Sharp's" (2) To provide some additional stipend for Porteus, the Archbishop collated him to the living of Wittresham which was in his gift, vacant upon the preferment of Dr. Thomas Wray to the living of Rochdale, Lancashire which was also in the gift of Secker. (3) Another small living, that of Rucking, was presented, to Porteus to hold in plurality with Wittresham on the cessation of John Benson the last incumbent. (4)

In the spring of 1765, Porteus married Margaret Hodgson of Ashbourne, near Derby, and to enable him to enjoy a better standard of living Archbishop Secker allowed him to resign his two vicarages of Wittresham and Rucking upon his preferment to the rectory of Hunton, a living in the gift of Secker, on the cession of John Fewell the last incumbent. (5) About the same time Porteus was collated to a prebend at Peterborough. When Dr. J. Denne, rector of Lambeth, died in 1767 Secker presented Porteus to the living which was then in the diocese of Winchester. On 10 August, Porteus was inducted and instituted to the rectory by Bishop John Thomas of Winchester. (6) He was allowed to retain his living of Hunton and hold both in plurality. Shortly afterwards Porteus received his doctorate at Cambridge and preached the commencement sermon at

- (1) B.M., Add. MS.32,963, f.413: 32,964, f.964
- (2) B.M. Correspondence of Mrs. Talbot (I owe this reference to Dr. J.A. Woods) Porteus Diary 1788-1800 contains many references to Granville Sharp, the grandson of Archbishop John Sharp and with whom Porteus and his family were great friends.
- (3) Lambeth Palace Library, Archhishop Secker's Register 1758-1768, f.304v
- (4) ibid., f.312v
- (5) ibid., f.324v. Hunton was in the Deanery of Shoreham and Porteus attended some visitations and on 2 May 1771 Porteus preached the visitation Sermon. Deanery of Shoreham Visitations VP.IIa/3/16
- (6) Hampshire R.O., Bishop John Thomas Register 1761-1781, f.50

the University. During the course of his address, Porteus stressed the urgency for ordinands to be instructed in revealed religion to counter the attacks being levelled against it.

"I ventured to recommend it to the University to pay a little more attention to the instruction of their youth, especially those designed for orders, in the principles of revealed religion. I proposed .... they should have the same encouragement given to them as all other sciences; that they should be made an indispensable branch of academical education, and have their full share of academical honours and rewards ...." (1) The publication of the sermon ended in the foundation of a chair in revealed religion in the university of Cambridge by a Mr. Morris of Norfolk.

Returning from a holiday of two months in Yorkshire, Porteus wrote to the Duke of Newcastle about some further preferment, as a reward for furthering the Duke's interests at Cambridge. "... My excellent Patron the Archbishop gives me every day fresh reason to acknowledge with the deepest Gratitude your Grace's kindness in recommending me some years ago to his Protection; & his Bounty to me has left me nothing further to wish than a little appendage to my preferment of more honour than profit, which it is in your Grace's Power to obtain for me, I mean a Chaplainship to the King. If you are of Opinion that I should not discredit his Majesty's Service, it would make me very happy to receive this further mark of your Grace's favour, which I should consider as a proof that you thought my conduct since you placed me in this family, not unworthy your notice, & in particular that you approved the Share, I took in the late contests at Cambridge. To be considered in the number of those who have uniformly and steadily adhered to your Grace's interests in that place & consulted at the same time the real honour & welfare of that University has been my constant aim & I hope that I have not been wholly unsuccessful in my Endeavours ..." (2) Lord Grantham obliged Porteus by handing the letter to the Duke in person. Success again waited upon him and in 1769, Porteus was appointed a royal chaplain.

(1) R. Hodgson, op.cit., I, 18

(2) B.M., Add. MS. 32,969, f.249

Following the death of Archbishop Secker, Porteus turned his full attention to his livings at Hunton and Lambeth. He resided at Linton for the parsonage at Hunton was derelict there having been no resident incumbent for thirty years. Porteus had the house rebuilt. The Hunton society was composed in the main of gentry who were cultured and of, 'exemplary piety', Porteus was an energetic and faithful parish priest. He preached twice each Sunday, catechised the youth of the parish, admonished in private, visited the sick, comforted the afflicted and relieved the poor. "I had the happiness to see my church well filled with a congregation, neat and decent in their attire, with cheerful and satisfied looks, seriousness in their devotions, and attentive and grateful to their instructor." (1) It was this experience gained at Hunton and Lambeth as a parish priest that was to be of immense value to him as Bishop of Chester.

During the winter months Porteus resided at Lambeth where he planned to build a rectory and personally took over and reorganised the confused finances of the parish officials. At the same time he repaired the neglected parish church making considerable improvements to the old structure. He investigated the valuation of his tithes and checked any discrepancies. On 3 October 1767, Porteus obtained details of the amount of land owned by Sir Joseph Mawbey of Vauxhall and the tithe paid on the land, for it appeared that Mawbey was in arrears. (2) On 30 May 1768, he wrote to a Mr. Angel pointing out that the tithes on his farm were valued at 3s.6d. per acre which came to a total of £12.5s.0d. but in 1741 the sum paid for tithe was only £11.10s.0d. and that last year he received only £4.12s.6d. Porteus asked that a search into the accounts be made, the error corrected, and £12.10s.0d. paid to Porteus's collector. (3)

The manner in which the citizens of London and Westminster observed Good Friday was a great distress to him and before the next observance of the day came round again in 1768, Porteus wrote a public letter to the inhabitants of Lambeth on this subject, which produced a remarkable change. "... on the very next return of that day, the shops were all shut up, the churches were

(1) R. Hodgson, op.cit., I, 31-32

(2) Greater London R.O., Lambeth Parish Papers, P85/MRY1/50/15

(3) ibid., P85/MRY1/50/20



crowded, and the utmost seriousness and decorum took place, throughout the cities of London and Westminster, and their environs." (1)

During his time as rector of Lambeth, Porteus became involved in the movement to revise subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles and to amend certain sections of the prayer book, but Porteus was disturbed by the action of Archdeacon Blackburne and his colleagues as being too extravagant.

During 1772, Porteus associated himself with Frances Wollaston, Dr. Percy, Bishop of Dromore, and Dr. Yorke, later Bishop of Ely, to promote a review of the Thirty Nine Articles and to amend certain parts of the liturgy. This movement was designed as an alternative to all similar but otherwise extravagant projects. Their aim was to strengthen the Establishment, to interpret Article 17 (on predestination) in a non-Calvinistic sense, to improve piety in the church and to strengthen the church against the attacks of philosophers, Deists, anti-Trinitarians and the like by bringing, "all the moderate and well-disposed of other persuasions, "into the national church. (2) Accordingly they presented a petition to Archbishop Cornwallis who sent them the following reply on 11 February 1773. "I have consulted severally my brethren the Bishops and it is the opinion of the bench in general, that nothing can in prudence be done in the matter that has been submitted to our consideration." (3) Porteus and his colleagues reluctantly accepted this decision for they felt that there were changes which ought to be made for the well-being both of church and state and that the time was ripe for such changes.

While Porteus and his colleagues were anxious to review and amend the Liturgy and Thirty Nine Articles, a layman, Sir Henry Hoghton the member for Preston was eager to organise means for the relief of the dissenters from the Test Act and subscription to the Articles. On 3 April 1772, he introduced a bill into the Commons, which Sir George Savile seconded, "for the enlargement of the Toleration Act". George III, who feared that such a measure would

(1) R. Hodgson, op.cit., I,36

(2) R. Hodgson, op.cit., I,40

(3) R. Hodgson, op.cit., I,40

upset both Church and Constitution, urged Lord North to, "oppose it personally at every Stage, which will gain You the Applause of the Established Church and every real friend of the Constitution." (1) Lord North ignored the King's wishes and the bill passed the Commons by seventy votes to nine. In the Lords, the Duke of Richmond failed to get support for it and it was rejected by 102 votes to 29. A further attempt by Sir Henry Houghton the following year was successful in the Commons but was thrown out by the Lords who voted sixty-five against to twenty-six for, (2) The result of this defeat was the departure of a small number of Anglican clergy from the Church of England to become Unitarian ministers.

Some further preferment came the way of Porteus on 2 May 1776 when Archbishop Cornwallis and Bishop Terrick of London, as trustees of Archbishop Secker's will, presented him to the mastership of St. Cross Hospital at Winchester. He was admitted and instituted, "to the Office of Master or Guardian of the House or Hospital of St. Cross near the City of Winchester ... void by the Death of John Hoadly clerk. D.D...." (3) The stipend attached to this post enabled Porteus to resign his prebend at Peterborough without suffering any financial loss. His diary reveals how much he enjoyed his annual visit to St. Cross where he usually resided for a full month.\* In his diary, Porteus described the life at St. Cross. "The Foundation Consists of a Master & 21 Brothers as they are called who are maintained by the Master are well supplied with good wholesome diet ... They wear a black cloth gown with a Silver Cross upon it, & when I see myself surrounded by them in the fine old Saxon Chancel of the Church, I cannot help fancying myself a Abbot in the midst of my Monks ....." Porteus not only enjoyed the opportunity for quiet and relaxation that his sojourn brought but also the society of Winchester." .... I indulge myself for a few weeks in the Summer, but confess that I might mingle with it a little of the excellent society at

- (1) Correspondence of George III, ed. J. Fortescue (London, 1927-28), II, 334-335  
 (2) Parliamentary History, XVII, 766, 786, 790  
 (3) Hampshire R.O., Register of Bishop John Thomas 1761-1781, f.123

Winchester, it Consists of Many eminent men of distinguished Talents & Learning, Dr. Butler, Mr. Stenges .... Dr. Joseph Watson & his brother Mr. Thomas Watson. An assemblage such as this of distinguished Scholars, Poets and Divines is not easy to be met with in any other Provincial Town & I derive from it ... no small share of Advantage & Delight." (1)

Towards the end of 1776, Porteus received his due reward for all his efforts. The part he had taken in the anti-subscription movement had not gone unnoticed by George III. When Archbishop Drummond died at York, in early December, George III commanded that Terrick, Bishop of London, should be offered a translation to York. Terrick declined the offer on account of his advanced age and so, on the King's instructions, William Markham, Bishop of Chester was offered the Archbishopric of York which he accepted. To fill the vacant see of Chester, the King nominated Beilby Porteus, as the next bishop. The King insisted that Porteus as bishop, "would be an ample match in any debate in the House of Lords in answering the Bishop of Peterborough." (2) The reason behind this was the opposition of Bishop Hinchliffe to the policy of the administration concerning the American colonies and on this subject, Hinchliffe was most outspoken. Dr. Sykes states that Porteus owed his preferment, "to the very proper conduct held by Porteus on the attempts to alter the Liturgy." (3)

On 30 December 1776, Beilby Porteus was elected Bishop of Chester and confirmed in his office by the Dean and Chapter of Chester on 28 January 1777. He was consecrated bishop, in Whitehall Chapel on 9 February, by Archbishop Markham assisted by the Bishops of Carlisle, Durham and Llandaff. (4) His enthronement followed on 14 February, not in person as Markham had been, but by proxy when the vice-dean stood for the bishop. Since the revenue of the see of Chester was small, Porteus was allowed to retain the living of Hunton and the mastership of St. Cross Hospital in commendam but decided to resign the rectory of Lambeth, because he would be unable to attend to its needs.

(1) Lambeth Palace Library, Porteus Diaries, MS.2099, II, 123-125

(2) N. Sykes, Church and State in England in the Eighteenth Century, p.399

(3) ibid., p.399

(4) Cheshire R.O., Act Book, EDA1/8, f.1

CHAPTER EIGHT

BEILBY PORTEUS AND THE DIOCESE OF CHESTER

Presbyterians, Methodists, Roman Catholics and Anglicans were, when Porteus came to his diocese, engaged in the employment of their energies, their scholarship, their eloquence, fortune and influence to prevent the incroachment of another party, to enervate their neighbours and exhibit a show of vigour. All the time this was going on, ignorance, immorality, neglect and indifference for the spiritual welfare of those citizens confined in the expanding urban centres tended to become more pronounced.

Beilby Porteus realised the responsibility thrust upon him by his preferment. This is emphasised by the first entry in his diary for 1777. "Jan[uary] the 1st. I enter on the New Year in a new scene of life and to me a most awful one. God grant I may act my part in it as I ought.

On the 20 Dec[embe]r last I kissed the Kings hand for the See of Chester; a preferment for which no sollicitation was made to the Minister by Me and of which, tilla short time before it happened (being then only a private Parochial Clergyman) I never had the least idea or expectation." (1) He was to be a conscientious bishop who took his duties seriously and his responsibility to a greater degree than many of his brethren on the bench.

The costs of maintaining his office as Bishop of Chester were no less than they has been for his predecessor. Porteus was burdened with the costs of sending out to the parishes in his diocese the orders for special prayers in time of war. He also met, out of his own pocket, the cost of printing his speech in the House of Lords on the state of the Roman Catholics in England. He was always grateful to the registrar for forwarding his revenues to Hunton.

"Your accounts arrived safe & in due time, & I ought to have told you so; but I have since then <sup>been</sup> a Week in Hampshire, then a Week in London, arranging all my matters, then am just arrived in Hunton, so that I have not had leisure yet to look at your accounts .... I will no longer delay Informing you that they are in my Hands & that the Balance was paid to me by the Banker ...." (2)

(1) Lambeth Palace Library, MS.2098, B. Porteus's Diary, I,1

(2) J.H.E. Bennett, "Revenues and Disbursements of the Bishops of Chester 1754-1800", H.S.L. & C., XCVIII, 95-98

William Markham had never experienced the life of a parish priest, but Beilby Porteus knew intimately the conditions of parochial life in both town and country and was capable of dealing with these in an efficient yet sympathetic way. He considered that his first duty was to undertake a thorough visitation of his diocese, which had last been carried out in detail by Bishop Gastrell in 1723, upon which Porteus modelled his own visitation. (1) The Articles of Enquiry, which were sent out preparatory to the visitation, were drawn up by Porteus at Lambeth. When printed they were sent by post to each parish and chapel within the diocese. The questions posed were searching, for detailed information was asked about the size of the parish, the number of houses or families, the numbers of Catholics and Dissenters. Full details were to be furnished about the residence or otherwise of the incumbent, the performance of divine service, the catechising of children, the number of celebrations of Holy Communion each year and the number of communicants. Additional information was required concerning any augmentation by Queen Anne's Bounty, full details of provision for education of all types with accounts of hospitals and charities. A final request was added to the effect that the incumbent could add to his return any additional information likely to be of use to the Bishop and which concerned the parish. The preamble to the Articles sums up the aims of Porteus.

"BEING desirous to obtain as exact and particular an Account as I can of the State of my Diocese, that I may be the better enabled to be useful in it, and to discharge properly the many and great Duties incumbent upon me, I send you the following Questions: under each of which I must beg the favour of you to write an Answer, after making all the necessary Inquiries; and at the End of the whole to sign your Name. By doing this as accurately as you are able, and delivering your Answers to me at my Visitation, you will greatly assist and oblige .... (2)

The first important evidence that these returns reveal is the enormous size of many parishes. In Cheshire the parish of Great Budworth was fourteen miles by twelve miles, that of Mottram some fourteen miles by four. Prestbury

- (1) Chester Cathedral Library, MS. Copy of Bishop Gastrell's visitation 1723, with notes added by Bishop Porteus in 1779
- (2) Cheshire R.O., Articles Preparatory to Visitation 1778, EDV7/1 No.83

parish, including the rapidly expanding towns of Macclesfield and Congleton, was fifteen miles by fourteen and the parish of Stockport included no fewer than fourteen townships within its boundaries. Excluding the large towns of Manchester and Liverpool, there were six large parishes, <sup>in Lancashire,</sup> Bolton had a perimeter of twenty miles; Bury was rectangular in size being eleven miles by eight while that of Middleton comprised eight townships, many of which were ten or twelve miles distant from that parish church. Both Rochdale and Leyland were twenty miles in extent and the parish of Whalley covered one half the deanery of Blackburn. The parishes within the Archdeaconry of Richmond were equally comparable in size with those of the neighbouring Archdeaconry of Chester. Melling, in Kirby Lonsdale deanery, was twelve miles by seven. Sedbergh had a perimeter of twenty or more miles. The largest in the whole diocese was that of Kendal which was twenty-eight miles in extent and included twenty-four townships and fifteen chapels within its boundaries. The expanding population added an increasing problem to the oversight of these vast parishes of which the following are but a sample; Liverpool (8,000 houses), Bolton (6,500 houses), Manchester (6,960 houses and 42,938 persons), and Ormskirk with 6,000 houses. The Anglican church in parishes of this nature was badly equipped to act effectively.

The paucity of information which some clergy appear to have had about their parishes, may be illustrated by reference to the return made for Manchester. The Warden and Fellows of the Collegiate Church of Manchester replied in the following manner;

"The Chaplains of the Collegiate, and Parish Church of Christ in Manchester, beg their humble Duty to Your Lordship; and desire to observe, that as they have no concern with the Parish at large; they cannot be supposed to be acquainted with the several Townships, Chapels and Curates in the said Parish. Upon which they humbly hope, your Lordship will give them leave to refer the Answers to the several Queries, with which they have been favoured, to the Revd. Gentlemen more particularly concerned in them." (2)

(1) Cheshire R.O., Articles preparatory to Visitation 1778 EDV7/1, Nos.70,96,104,138,163,174,252,309,334

(2) ibid., No.148b

The senior chaplain, Richard Millward, outlined the duties of the chaplains, stating that these were,

"chiefly confined to the several Offices, and Services to be performed at the Collegiate Church. They read Morning, and Evening Prayer, every day throughout the Year, excepting Sundays, when Prayers are read, and Sermons are preached<sup>2</sup> by the Revd the Warden and Fellows of the said Church. They perform likewise all the Parochial Duties in the said Church, and in the Town of Manchester; They also Baptize Infants on all Sundays, and Holy days in the Year, within the said Church: upon due Notice; and they Bury the Dead." (1)

These were their principle duties but it was hoped a general answer would suffice since their superiors resided in Manchester and they were unwilling to offend their patrons the warden and fellows. The names of some fifteen families of standing and who were resident in the parish were recorded. In the last quarter of the eighteenth century the annual number of marriages at Manchester parish church numbered 3,000. (2)

The vicar of Bury had a more compact parish than Manchester, but it was a still far too large. It did retain its gentry who had not, as yet, felt the need to move to a more desirable residential area.

"The Extent of this Parish from its Northern to its Southern Extremity is about eleven Miles - from the Eastern to the Western Boundary about eight, & in no Parts less than Six, it lies Compact, without being broken into by other Parishes. It is divided into Six Townships .... which upon the whole, contain about two thousand Houses the fourth part of which are in the Town of Bury.. There are no Families of any very great Note in the Parish; as the principal part of it belongs to Lord Derby: of those that are considerable - are - Mrs Bamford of Bamford, Mr Starkey of Heywood, Mr Matthews of Brandlesome & Mrs Nuttall living in Bury ...." (3)

- (1) Cheshire R.O., Articles preparatory to Visitation 1778, EDV7/1 No. 148 and 148b. (The families of note were; Lord Ducie, Strangeways, Lady Assheton, Lady Egerton, Revd. Sir John Mosley, Ancoats, Trafford of Trafford Esquire, Booth of Salford, Clowes of Broughton, Greaves of Culcheth, Caryl Worsley of Platt, Pelpoe Birth Manchester, Birch of Ardwick, Aytoun of Chorlton, Gartside of Crumpsal, Broom of Didsbury, John Howarth Manchester)
- (2) Lancashire R.O., Register Transcripts, DRM/BT (Manchester)
- (3) Cheshire R.O., Visitation Articles 1778, EDV7/1 No. 133

The incumbent concludes his remarks by noting that the leading parishioners are wealthy tradesmen thus pointing to the growth of the cotton industry.

Bolton was already on its way to becoming an industrial region and a centre of the cotton manufacture.

"The Parish of Bolton is from its Southern to its Northern Extremity twenty miles in Extent - from East to West its Breadth is considerable, but frequently intermix'd on the S.W. Side with the Parishes of Middleton, Dean and Standish - it contains ... 16 Townships ... Bolton being the Center of the Cotton Manufacture is extremely populous, but too near Manchester which is the great Mart, to have many opulent Tradesmen resident in it - the Number of Houses in Bolton are about 1500 and in the rest of the Parish not less than 9000, three fourths of which are Cottages inhabited by Weavers and other labouring Poor. In different Parts of the Parish are many old deserted Mansions formerly the Residences of Families of some Note. At present James Bradshaw Esq. of Darcy Lever and Robert Andrews Esq. of Rivington, two Gentlemen in the Commission of the Peace are its principal Inhabitants." (1)

Already in 1778 the expansion of industry was driving away the country gentry from the growing industrial towns to seek more desirable areas in which to live.

A complete contrast to this picture of country parishes being transformed into towns, may be obtained from the return made for the chapel of Clitheroe, in the parish of Whalley, "The Extent of the Chapelry of Clitheroe is about three Miles. It contains four Townships, viz, Clitheroe, Chatburn, Worston and Mearley, in which are 290 Families & 1160 Inhabitants." (2) One of the smallest parishes in the whole diocese was that of Capesthorne, in Macclesfield deanery, which could boast of having but eleven houses. (3)

In order to discover the type of priest who had the spiritual oversight of these large parishes, at the time when the Christian faith was under attack, Porteus planned his visitation programme with this in mind. Thomas Secker later Archbishop of Canterbury had been aware of the problem when he wrote, "Christianity is now railed at and ridiculed with very little reserve, and its teachers without any at all. Against us our adversaries appear to have set themselves to be as bitter as they can, not only beyond all truth, but beyond

(1) Cheshire R.O., Articles preparatory to Visitation 1778, EDV7/1 No.133

(2) ibid., EDV7/1 No.233

(3) ibid., EDV7/1 No.93



all probability, exaggerating without mercy." (1)

Porteus resolved to find out for himself the qualifications of his clergy, their resident or otherwise upon their livings as the case might be and above all their relationships with their parishioners. Few clergy were willing to commit to paper their opinions on this delicate matter for fear of repercussions from their bishop. On the whole the spiritual direction of these growing or expanding industrial centres, as well as the enormous northern, but ill-endowed, parishes and chapelries was entrusted to a wide variety of clergy. Some were graduates of indifferent ability, about 200 were non-graduates and some 95 were non-resident. Overall these figures are comparable with those for the diocese of Oxford in 1779. (2) Several clergy were already divorced from their parishioners, and especially in those parishes served by a stipendiary curate as the substitute for a non-resident incumbent. The comments of some of the clergy in their visitation returns show how deep that division had become. For example, the vicar of Claughton commented that, "they are at best, but the dregs of the people who do not attend church." The curate of Hornby chapel, in Kirby Lonsdale deanery, used the identical words in his report. The vicar of Whittington stated that the poorest had no decent clothes in which to attend church. The vicar of Bury blamed the existence of alehouses for the decline in church attendance." "... there are a great number of Alehouses Licens'd, too many pervert the Sabbath, from a Day of Rest from Labour into a Day of Licentiousness." Conditions, in Middleton parish, according to the vicar's report seemed even worse, "... truly shocking are the Scenes which are constantly exhibited on the evening of that day, & for the most part continued thro' out the whole night & succeeding day .... Attempts to suppress alehouses has had no effect." (3) Thomas Hest, vicar of Warton, then seventy years of age, summed up his own opinions on the attitude of the northern parishioners towards religion and the church.

"We have alass many who have no Regard for Religion, who commonly

- (1) G.R. Cragg, The Church in the Age of Reason 1648-1789 (London, 1960) p.127
- (2) D. McClatchey, Oxfordshire Clergy 1777-1869 (Oxford, 1960), p.31
- (3) Cheshire R.O., Articles preparatory to Visitation 1778, EDV7/1  
Claughton (298), Hornby (308), Bury (138), Middleton (163),  
Whittington (318)

X absent themselves from the public worship of God; some I believe, thro' Indolence, others thinking themselves witty, employ their Talents in ridiculing the Scriptures, and laughing at those who are disposed to be serious, and have thereby corrupted the Principles of the lower and more ignorant Rank of the People. What Number we have of such I am not able to judge, but fear they still increase, for what Reformation can be expected from the rising Generation, when they have daily before their Eyes such very bad Examples of thdir own wicked and profane Parents and Neighbours? (1)

The receipt of these reports no doubt influenced Porteus to base his visitation charge of 1778 on the standards which he would, in future, expect the clergy to have. Since it was his intention to do his utmost to raise the educational standards of the clergy, he emphasised the importance of Christian evidences, of doctrine and moral teaching. There was not a single reference to any method that ought to be adopted in coping with the spiritual needs of the increasing urban population, nor the rising tide of Irish immigration to Liverpool and Workington. At this early stage in his episcopate it is probable that Porteus knew little about the prevailing conditions in his diocese.

One thing he did realise was that those who offered themselves for ordination were by no manner of means always well prepared. Those who had been educated at the universities were very often no better than those who were ordained directly from the country grammar schools. Although many of the graduate ordinands were very highly qualified men yet they had no idea how to undertake the pastoral care of the smallest country cure. Porteus hoped that in the long run this state of affairs could be improved since Oxford university had appointed Dr. Bentham to lecture on the evidence, and doctrine of the Christian faith and Cambridge university was expected to follow suit.

The clergy, Porteus emphasised, had an important task to perform in offering advice to those prospective ordinands who had neither relatives nor friends who could advise them upon the wisdom of offering themselves for

(1) ibid., EDV7/1 No.350

orders. It was most essential to impress upon all would be ordinands the urgent necessity for study and to realise that the office of a priest in the church was of great importance. k Indeed the same duty was obligatory upon all those schoolmasters who were training non-graduate ordinands. The last two years of final preparation were most important and therefore the supervision of these men should not be neglected. "The greater part of those who apply for ordination in this diocese are of that description; and therefore it is certainly incumbent on their masters to take care they do not come unqualified." (1)

The minimum standards could never be regarded as the maximum, for ordination was not the end but the beginning of a priest's career. From now onwards, Porteus was going to demand that all his clergy should have a full knowledge of the scriptures, in Greek, combined with sound instruction in ecclesiastical history in general and of the Church of England in particular. The controversies of the eighteenth century were of sufficient importance to warrant a serious study - the objections of the Deists to revealed religion - of atheists to all religion - of the differences between the church of Rome and the Anglican church. In addition to these the incumbent would be expected to understand the doctrines, tenets and worship of protestant bodies everywhere so that they were equipped to meet the challenge from these bodies in their own parishes.

Study was not the only duty in the life of the parish priest although the discharge of his spiritual functions was of paramount importance as emphasised in the Ordinal. "... that you never cease your labour, your care and diligence, until you have done all that lieth in you .... to bring all such as are or shall be committed to your charge, unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God ... that there be no place left among you, either for error in religion, or for viciousness in life ...." (2) This does not imply that clerical duties were fulfilled by reciting the statutory services of the prayer

(1) B. Porteus, A Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Chester at the Primary Visitation of Beilby Porteus 1778 (Chester, 1779), p.9

(2) Book of Common Prayer, Ordination of Priests

book which appears to have been the accepted norm in far too many parishes in the diocese. If any real work is to be done, then the clergy must be known by their parishioners both as friends and ministers whose work it was to win their affections, to instruct those who were ignorant, to strengthen the weak, to reclaim the sinner, to convert the unbeliever and help those who were in distress.

These tasks could not be undertaken by non-resident incumbents, so Porteus attacked both non-residence and plurality as elements which contributed to the weakness of the church in many parishes. The law required them to be resident and their duty made this essential. If the clergy were pluralists then they must divide their time between their livings and work harder in each. The ideal was that each incumbent should have a parsonage house and so reside upon his cure, but the only too frequent absence of a house made it compulsory for him to live outside the parish with the inevitable result that a Sunday visit to his church was considered to be the norm. The need to make provision for parsonage houses was one of the problems Porteus had to face.

The desire of some clergy for emoluments and honours of office, led to the practice of the pursuit of gaiety, amusements, levity in conversation and a desire to appear in public dressed in the same manner as the laity, all of which were to be deprecated. The clerical habit was the mark of the clergyman's calling and to pursue the peculiarities of current fashion endeared him to no one. Warnings were given of the danger of rushing headlong into litigation especially in the matter of tithes and church rates for which the records of the consistory courts can produce a vast quantity of evidence.<sup>(1)</sup> Porteus added a warning about this in his charge to the clergy.

"We are indeed sometimes, unhappily and unavoidably forced by unreasonable and litigious men into contests about our property, which whenever it is unjustly and materially invaded, diminished, or withheld, it is our duty not to give up without asserting our just rights. But let us have good reason to presume, in the

(1) Leeds C.A., Tithe Cause Papers, RD/AC/1-10  
Lancashire R.O., Tithe Cause Papers, ARR13/10  
Cheshire R.O., Consistory Court Papers, EDC/5 (unsorted)

first place, that they are our rights. Let us be very clear that we are not ourselves to blame; that we are not ourselves litigious, unreasonable and perverse", (1)

To maintain peace and harmony in a parish then such cases should be settled out of court.

Porteus, in common with the majority of his contemporaries, saw the disasters of the seventies as the sign of the wrath of God against a nation whose standards of life have been so effectively depicted by Hogarth. The deluge of impiety, irreligion, dissipation and extravagance which had spread through the land, and which were the basic causes of present misfortunes could only be dispelled by prayer, exhortation and a sincere endeavour to promote public welfare.

If the clergy continue the pursuit of preferments, disregarding the duties and services with which they are charged, they will assist the enemies of the church. Only the pursuit of the reformation of manners could save the country from destruction. The bishops thundered away on this theme without realising that the real weakness lay in the organisation of the church which was obsolete and unable to cope with the flood of change beginning to sweep through the country.

Porteus was firm in his assertion that it was his duty to call to mind certain important facts.

"I have not attempted to entertain you with ingenious novelties (for entertainment I apprehend is not our present business), but to remind you only of a few plain truths, which is of the utmost importance, that both you and I should have deeply impressed both upon our memories and our hearts .... I am very sensible how much I stand in need of all your indulgence toward me, of which, indeed I have already received very convincing and very encouraging proofs." (2)

This type of charge was by no means entirely new in 1778. Two years previously, Archdeacon Francis Blackburne, rector of Richmond, when he visited the clergy of his Archdeaconry of Cleveland had made very similar comments. If the practices of the clergy were viewed in the light of the law that bound them, the result was a general dissatisfaction for the profession and the persons of

(1) B. Porteus, op.cit., p.23

(2) B. Porteus, op.cit., p.28

the clergy. The few cases which involved weak clergy became the reason for charging the whole body of the clergy with faults and offences they never commit. Those clergy who mixed secular employment with clerical duties could always put forward a plausible apology for their action. It should be noted that when a parish priest is absent, engaged in the pursuit of some other calling, or being resident, is too busy with matters outside his calling, then little will result from either sermons or instructions.

Blackburne felt that the times in which he lived were identical with those prophesied in the New Testament - times of peril and apostasy pointing to the end of the world. He realised that many Christians would abandon the gospel and reject the labours of those whose duty it was to revive a better spirit for many were openly saying that there was little hope in religion at this time. The corruption of the period was used as an argument for the clergy to conform to the prevailing tastes and manners. To practice a religion which tolerated sinners in vice and folly would in the end encourage people to believe that they would lose more by conversion than by staying as they were. The truths of the gospel are always unpalatable to delicate ears to the clergy must realise this and not be alarmed when they receive the enmity and contempt of those whom they serve. The wealthy can always provide a decent excuse for their practice of avarice by pleading that they must be prudent and provide for the future, while at the same time insisting on the necessity to keep up appearances and so enhancing their worldly reputation. If the clergy follow such an example and do not practice what they preach then they must express no surprise when their parishioners become members of other bodies.

Blackburne was a realist and acknowledged that the Anglican Church with its two hundred year old tradition needed reform. As it was, the papists, the infidels and the enthusiasts, by which he meant the Methodists, were presenting the characters of the obnoxious clergy as the norm in the Anglican communion. There was a very real danger that as the clergy increased their standards of

living and their stipends grew larger, then they were becoming politically important hence politicians were willing to give a great deal in indulgence to the clergy to win their votes. (1)

The existence of a large body of non-graduate clergy in his diocese gave Porteus some cause for alarm for he soon realised that these were men whose training made them ill-equipped to do battle with the forces ranged against them. He quickly discovered that many were made deacon and proceeded no further in Orders. These men were often presented to the care of a chapelry with a school attached and remained there for life. (2) Only a few examples out of the many can be quoted. To the chapels of Borwick, Woodland, Wythop and Seathwaite where stipends were small, the curates who were appointed when ordained deacon gave undertakings not to proceed to priest's orders without written permission from the incumbent of the parish. This was rarely, if ever, given. (3)

Porteus considered that appointments of this nature were most irregular. So in 1781 he issued a set of instructions for ordinands which dealt with this matter.

"It is necessary to inform those who may offer themselves for Orders, that a Chapelry or perpetual Curacy is not a proper title for Deacon's Orders. The reason is, because no one can be licensed to a Chapelry till he is in Priest's Orders. And as a Licence is the only mode of obtaining legal possession of such benefices, it is evident that no Deacon can be regularly appointed to them. But he may be appointed assistant Curate to the person who is already licensed to a Chapelry, or to any other beneficed Clergyman, and this will be his proper title. (4)

In future clergy who appointed curates as assistants must give their reasons for doing so in full. Porteus seems to have been determined to enforce the canon relating to ordination so he firmly refused to consider any ordinand under twenty-three years of age. Incumbents tried to get Porteus to waive his

- (1) F. Blackburne, A Charge delivered at Several Visitations of the Clergy held in the North Riding of Yorkshire 1776 (York, 1776) passim
- (2) Carlisle R.O., Parish Papers, DRC/10  
Lancashire R.O., Parish Papers DRCh/37  
Leeds C.A., Richmond Parish Papers CD/PB/1-9  
Cheshire R.O., Parish Papers EDP/1-
- (3) Lancashire R.O., Woodland, Borwick and Seathwaite Parish Papers DRCh/37  
Carlisle R.O. Wythop Parish Papers, DRC/10
- (4) B. Porteus, Conditions relating to Orders, Licences, Institution 1781 (Chester, 1781) p.24

regulation. On 8 August 1778, Christopher Couperthwaite, vicar of Dalton in Furness, wanted a curate for his chapel of Rampside, some four miles distant from the parish. He wrote to Bishop Porteus and asked him to make William Jackson, aged twenty-two, a deacon to act as his assistant. The intention behind this was to appoint his curate at Rampside. Porteus wasted no time on this application, merely appending a very rough note to the original stating that if the nomination was to a perpetual curacy it would not do and furthermore Jackson was under age. Jackson was rejected and in 1782 John Addison, vicar of Urswick agreed to serve the chapelry. (1)

Finding that there was no specified reading list or course of study for the non-graduate ordinand, Porteus issued one in 1783, in which he set out his intentions.

"I will specify a few cheap and common books, which I expect every One to have read and digested well before he offers himself to me for Orders.

Seckers Lectures on the Catechism

Seckers Charges

Burnets Exposition of the Thirty Nine Articles

Burnets Pastoral Care

Grotius: de Veritate Religionis Christianae

Pearson On the Creed

Percy's key to the New Testament

The Four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles in the original

Greek with some good Comment

Wheatlye on Common Prayer

To which I must add a frequent and careful Perusal of the Ordination Office." (2)

Porteus pointed out that the books he specified were easy to obtain or easy to borrow, but he added a warning that they provided the minimum standard that could be accepted from a non-graduate ordinand. For those with leisure time for study or whose possessed a university degree then the standard would be made much higher. "But whoever is destitute of these cannot, I am sure, be thought fit to undertake the Instruction of others in the Doctrines and Duties of revealed Religion; and therefore must not think himself hardly dealt with, if after this plain and public Notice he is refused Ordination." (3)

(1) Cheshire R.O., Rampside Parish Papers, DRCh/37

(2) B. Porteus, Directions relating to Orders, Institutions etc., (Chester, 1783), p.2

(3) ibid., p.2-3



Another disturbing factor was his discovery of the careless manner in which letters testimonial were granted and often to bogus clerics, so this loophole was closed. "As some Persons have lately offered themselves for Curacies who have never been ordained, and others with false Letters of Orders, I hope no One will accept a Curate without first seeing and examining carefully his Letter of Orders, nor without previously acquainting me with the Name and Character of the Curate, and the Reasons which render an Assistant necessary." (1) The case of the curate of Embleton in 1778 is an illustration of the way in which Porteus dealt with suspected irregularities. Fisher, the perpetual curate of Lorton, nominated Joseph Gilbanks to be his assistant curate in charge of Lorton chapel. On 11 June 1778, Fisher wrote to Porteus stating that he had received a letter from the Bishop of Carlisle reporting that he had examined the papers of Joseph Gilbanks and all appeared to be in order. The 8 July saw a prompt reply from Porteus on the matter. Although Gilbanks had brought Letters Dimissory with him from the Bishop of Carlisle yet Porteus was not prepared to accept him for priest's orders unless he had first been examined by Fisher and a detailed report presented to him. (2) Clearly orders and licences were not in the future to be granted without examination.

It would appear from the surviving correspondence that nominations to assistant curacies, which involved the oversight of parochial chapelries, were often irregular. A letter from Robert Scott, vicar of St. Bees, to Porteus dated 20 August 1784 concerned such an irregularity. After pointing out to the Bishop that he had successfully settled the case of Joseph Gilbanks he informed him of the problem at Ennerdale. The patrons of Ennerdale chapel has nominated, "a young Man whom they had fixed upon to be their School-Master ....." when the present curate Mr. Bowman, resigned, who was unsatisfactory. Mr. Hamilton, one of the patrons described what took place on Sunday evening.

(1) ibid., p.3-4

(2) Carlisle R.O., Embleton and Lorton Parish Papers, DRC/10

"He informed me (Scott) that since the duty was done in the Afternoon, he had been Eye-Witness to great Irregularities on the Sunday Evening from several repairing to the public House after Service in the Chapel".

Scott pointed out that the young man they wished to nominate could not hold the curacy while he remained a Deacon as it would be no title. In the end the patrons told Scott that on Mr. Bowman's resignation, "They wou'd give me the Nomination to be licensed to the Chapel & I might appoint him Assistant Curate - but this was left in your Lordship's Breast to point out what Method was most advisable." (1)

Porteus could sympathise with and help an incumbent in distress. When William Sedgwick, curate of Mansergh and Hutton Roof, wrote to him on 23 November 1782 to say that, "... I had the misfortune to break my leg in 2 places by a slip of the Turnpike Road 5 mile distant from home, where I am obliged to continue as I cannot yet be removed with safety." He pointed out that the neighbouring clergy were most kind, but with two chapels to serve it was impossible for them to supply these and their own in addition. "I should be glad to know if it may be consistent with your Lordships rules to indulge me in giving a young man a Title to be my assistant during my incapacity.

There is one John Wilson who teaches a School about 3 miles from my chapelries whose character I presume your Lordship is not unacquainted with; He should have gone as an assistant to the Rev. Mr. Sisson at his school at Reigate and curate .... He is a modest young man .... If I have asked too much freedom upon this occasion I must beg your Lordship's pardon." (2)

He received a gracious and sympathetic reply from Porteus who expressed himself as being quite willing to ordain Wilson if the position remained unchanged. Sedgwick delayed his acknowledgement of this letter until the 26 December, hoping that he would have some favourable progress to report but he had none. He was compelled to use the services of Wilson as a reader because his condition had not materially improved, "... a circumstance I fear your Lordship may not approve but hope in such a case of necessity it may be

(1) Carlisle R.O., <sup>Ennerdale</sup> ~~Ebbleston and Linton~~ Parish Papers, DRC/10  
 (2) ibid., <sup>Mansergh</sup> ~~Ennerdale~~ Parish Papers, DRC/10

overlooked ...." (1) In the last resort Sedgwick agreed to abide by the decision of Porteus which in this case was a favourable one.

There were some clergy in similar circumstances to those of Sedgwick who refused to apply for an assistant curate although their parishioners could see the necessity for one. In December 1778 Reginald Braithwaite, churchwarden of Broughton in Furness, wrote to Porteus concerning the state of health of their curate Mr. Cooperson. "... he is so much disordered and unsettled in his Mind that he cannot perform Divine Service, and at the same time so whimsical that he won't employ a Substitute. The Parishioners of Broughton are greatly desirous that a young Gent, whose name is Robinson shou'd be appointed their officiating Minister, and Mr Cooperson's Lady wou'd be willing to allow him such Salary as His Lordship of Chester shou'd fix;" (2)

There was an objection raised by Porteus to the provision of an assistant curate for Embleton chapel but the curate of Setmurthy supported and insisted upon provision of some assistance. On 9 October 1786, William Sewel, curate of Setmurthy, wrote to Porteus upon the matter. "(I) .... am perswaded (sic) that if you knew Mr Fisher's condition, you would never object to his having an Assistant. It is not easy to imagine an instance, where assistance is more highly requisite. He has had a par<sup>a</sup>lytic complaint upon his for several years, which has in a great measure disqualified him from walking. His circumstances will not admit of his keeping a horse of his own; and I am far from being certain that it would be practicable in the present state of the law, for a person in such a situation, to borrow one. ... Embleton is two or three miles Distant from the place of his residence; therefore he could not regularly attend his Church there with any sort of oonvenience. But were there nothing in this; his speech has suffered so much from the paralytic complaint that he is scarcely at all intelligible. I am sure his hearers might on the justest Grounds remonstrate against his being unprovided with an Assistant;

(1) ibid.,

(2) Lancashire R.O., Broughton Parish Papers, DRCh/37

and it is to be wished, both for their sakes and for the credit of religion, that under his present infirmity, there may, at least, be no necessity for his appearing in the pulpit oftener than he has done." (1) There was however the problem of a suitable stipend for an assistant since the entire stipend of the curate amounted to no more than £40 it would mean that the parishioners would have to find the stipend out of their own pockets, something they appeared to be willing to do.

Another problem was the frequent change of curate in many of the chapelries. It appears from the surviving nominations that many often remained in the cure for one year or even less and then moved to another living. Wythop chapel is an excellent example where during the twenty years from 1760-1780 there was on average a new curate each year. (2) It was this kind of rapid turnover in curates that led Porteus to stipulate the minimum period of residence he would require on a first curacy. "To prevent those very frequent Changes which are continually taking place in the small Chapelries of the Northern Parts of the Diocese, to the great Inconvenience of the Inhabitants, I shall require every Person to continue at least Two Years on the Chapelry to which he is first appointed." (3) One important point Porteus forgot to recall was the low stipend in many chapelries. It was impossible for any curate to support himself, let alone a wife and family upon a stipend of £9 to £15 per annum.

Porteus used the examination system devised by Bishop Keene so far as the non-graduates were concerned. He still insisted upon details of the place of birth of each candidate, education, and occupation since he left school. This included those who had been ordained into the Church of Scotland. John Currie, a minister in the Scottish Church, wrote to Porteus asking for Anglican Orders. He stated he had been born at Dumfries, educated there and at Edinburgh University. He had been stationed in the Western Highlands

(1) Carlisle R.O., Setmurthy Parish Papers, DRC/10

(2) ibid., Wythop Parish Papers, DRC/10. Similar instances can be found in the chapels of Hugil, Rampside, Cartmel Fell and Ingleton.

(3) B. Porteus, Directions relating to Orders, Licences, Institutions and Resignations (Chester, 1783), p.4

where he also acted as tutor to Mr. Knott's children; he was the owner of some ironworks there. He then gives his reasons for seeking admission to the Anglican Church. "1st The Church of England comes nearest to that established by the Apostles, for by them Bishops, Priests, and Deacons were ordained, and appointed to continue in the Church - 2nd That her Doctrine, and Form of Worship, is the most Rational and agreeable to God's word, of any Church in the World, being free from Enthusiasm on the one hand, and Superstition on the other -" (1) Further evidence recently discovered appears to indicate that Porteus instituted some form of examination for his ordinands, a practice which was somewhat unusual at this time. One of Porteus's examiners was William Thomas Addison, vicar of Workington, whose report on Richard Poole is extant. In 1780 Poole was offering himself for the diaconate with a title to Gosforth chapel in Cumberland at a stipend of £20 per annum. Before Porteus would accept him he had to produce an examiner's report.

"I have examined Mr. Richard Poole, pursuant to your Lordships request, & find that he has read & understands the Books mentioned in your Lordships printed directions, except Percys Key to the New Testament, which he has not been able to meet with; but he has read other useful Books, particularly Bishop Pearson on the Creed; & has moreover employed much time & attention to extract from Burnet & other Authors, Explanations of each of the Articles, with the Chief Arguments used in support of the Doctrines therein contained, confirmed by suitable Scripture proofs, which he has digested into the form of question & Answer: and he appears to me properly qualified to be admitted to the Holy Order of Deacons ..." (2)

Porteus acknowledged the report and expressed his willingness to admit Poole to the diaconate. Letters Dimissory were given to Poole for his ordination by the Bishop of Sodor and Man in 1781. Thomas Addison also examined a Mr. Asbridge to be ordained at the same time as Richard Poole for the curacy of Wasdalehead, which was, "a very retired place, containing only about Eight familys, & the value of the Chapel about £22 p.ann." (3) A more searching type of examination was used by Robert Scott, master of St. Bees school, and

(1) Carlisle R.O., Coniston Parish Papers, DRC/10

(2) ibid., Gosforth Parish Papers, DRC/10

(3) ibid., Wasdalehead Parish Papers, DRC/10

vicar of the parish. On 28 November 1784 he reported upon a Mr. Adderton's suitability for orders. "He translated some Verses out of the Greek Testament into Latin & from Grotius into English. He had read most of the Books recommended by your Lordship, and made very pertinent Answers to the Questions proposed to him. He also construed a few Verses out of the Greek Testament into english, & a part of Grotius ...." (1)

Another of Porteus's examiners was Dr. Richard Hind, vicar of Rochdale. He appears to have instituted a written examination for those whom he examined. A letter dated 20 October 1782 gives details of his examination of a Mr. Brookes. "On my Examination of him, I found that He had not read the Books required by your Lordship. I ask'd him some Questions, to w<sup>h</sup>i<sup>ch</sup> his answers were pertinent; and you will see from the Inclos'd that his Translations are tolerable, and truly his own. But as he had not prepared himself agreeable to your printed Directions (for which he pleaded his Ignorance or those Directions till very lately) and begg'd his Examinations might be consider'd as in part, adjourn'd, to the last Moment of time that was left to him before the Ordination - I readily complied with his Request, and am to see him again. (2)

Porteus also specified the conditions which a candidate for Orders must fulfil or be rejected. First he must produce a Si Quis signed by the incumbent and churchwardens. "It is my desire that the Si Quis may be published in the Parish Church or Chapel where the Candidate resides, three Sundays before he offers himself for Ordination ...." (3) This he was to bring with him and without it a candidate would not be ordained. A letter from Humphrey Drape shows the anxiety roused by the lack of a Si Quis.

"I was born at Kirkbride in this County and Diocese of Carlisle and went to School there till sixteen Years of Age then taught School in that Neighbourhood for some Time and afterwards went to School to the Revd Mr Pape Westward in the said Diocese for upwards of three years and have now taught School for the last three Years and upwards at Little Clifton in the Parish of

- (1) ibid., Harrington Parish Papers, DRC/10
- (2) Lancashire R.O., Rochdale Parish Papers, DR/CH/37. The questions set and the candidate's answers have survived since they were forwarded to Porteus by Dr. Hind and remained attached to his letter. It is rare to find any examples of written examination papers in the eighteenth century.
- (3) B. Porteus, Directions relating to Orders etc. (Chester, 1783) p.25

Workington. Being uncertain whether it would be sufficient to have my Siquis published in Clifton Chapel only where I reside [I] thought it most advisable to have another published in the Parish Church at the same Time." (1)

In addition each candidate must give his name, address and a letter of intention to offer himself for Orders, producing at the same time his Letters Testimonial concerning his life and conduct for the previous three years, together with a letter of Nomination from the incumbent who offers him the title but who must not sign the testimonial. In addition to these documents a certificate of the age of the ordinand, taken from the baptism register and the title to which he would be ordained. No haphazard presentation of documents immediately before the ordination would be tolerated and in future all ordination papers must be in the hands of the bishop at least one month prior to the ordination. Finally the ordinand must present himself at the place of ordination three or four days before the ordination Sunday.

Porteus also improved the method of instituting an incumbent to a living. No candidate would in future be instituted unless he presented himself to the bishop for his decision and produced at the interview his Letters of Orders and his Letters Testimonial. After his institution he must pay his first fruits, unless the living was a discharged vicarage or rectory or one less than £50 per annum. (2) The mandate for his induction must then be presented to the archdeacon or his commissary before whom he must make his assent to the Book of Common Prayer, followed by a public declaration in church of his conformity to the liturgy of the Church of England, and Thirty Nine Articles and a declaration of consent to these. Finally the new incumbent had to attend the next Quarter Sessions to take the oath of Abjuration. (3)

The method of accepting or resigning curacies to the chapelries had become very slack indeed, especially in the northern deaneries, so Porteus introduced a reform in this procedure. No longer would it be acceptable to write out a resignation in the following form, "This is to certifie, whom it may concern,

(1) Carlisle R.O., Embleston Parish Papers, DRC/10

(2) First Fruits, 26 Henry VIII c.3; Discharged rectories and vicarages, 1 Elizabeth I, c.4;5 & 6 Anne, c.24

(3) 13 & 14 Charles II, c.4

yt by Virtue of this I fully resign up all my Right & Title to the Cure of  
Crook Chapel in the parish of Kendal

Doncaster May 16th 1745

as Witness my Hand  
Thomas Smith (1)

Henceforward the rule would be in this manner; "It seems to be a prevailing Opinion in some Parts of this Diocese, that when Chapelries or perpetual Curacies are to be resigned, nothing more is necessary than for the incumbent to declare that he has relinquished the Cure, and to return his License to the Bishop or His Chancellor. This is a great Mistake, and creates much Trouble and Confusion. No augmented Chapelry or perpetual Curacy can be legally resigned but by the same Means that any other Benefice is resigned; that is by Written Instrument drawn up in due Form, executed before a Notary Public, then tendered to the Bishop .... and accepted by him. For till he hath done this the Benefice is not vacant, and of course the Nomination is of no Effect." (2) By 1784 the new method was in operation. ".... Mr Mossop's Resignation of the Perpetual Curacy of Mosser, which he has made before me today. I have put in your Lord[shi]ps Servant to exhibit it - therefore you will please to let him just hand it to you, & then your Lord [shi]p will be pleased to sign the Acceptance which I have written on the back ...." (3) so wrote Caleb Clapham the notary public from Dartmouth Street, London, to Porteus, on 6 April 1784.

Having settled the procedure to be followed in the matter of resignations, Porteus turned his attention to the clerks who attempted to serve chapels without a licence, in order to avoid paying fees, by adopting delaying tactics. Porteus wrote from London on 12 January 1783 to Thomas Seddon of Wigan upon this subject.

"When I was at Wigan in the Year 1781, you desired I would defer licencing you to the Chapel there (St George) for some short time. I asked you for what time? You said about a twelvemonth. It is now a year and a half since, & you have made no application for a Licence. I have very material reasons for not allowing any one to

- (1) Carlisle R.O., Crook Parish Papers, CRC/10
- (2) B. Porteus, op.cit., p.28
- (3) Carlisle R.O., Mosser Parish Papers, DRC/10



officiate without a Licence in any new erected Chapel & therefore must desire you will take one ...." (1)

No one would be able to escape the vigilance of Porteus who was determined to bring his clergy into line.

Having discussed the methods by which Porteus reorganised the procedure for accepting and resigning livings as well as the regulations for would be ordinands, some attention must be paid to his ordination. The figures extracted from his act book show that his statements concerning the proportion of non-graduate to graduate ordinands to be correct. Arthur Warne, in his study of the diocese of Exeter, believes that the proportion of graduate to non-graduate clergy was greater in the eighteenth century than it is today, but the ordination lists in Chester indicate that there were fewer graduates who were willing to serve in that enormous diocese, where stipends were frequently very poor. On the whole the disparity between the two groups in the twentieth century would appear to be rather closer than it is usual to accept. (2)

With four exceptions, omitting his ordinations in London, the diocesan ordinations were held at Chester; the four occasions when he ordained elsewhere in the diocese were in 1778 at Ulverston, two at Ashbourne in 1780 and 1783 and one at Richmond in 1778. The final list appears as follows:

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Total</u> | <u>Graduate</u> | <u>Non-Graduate</u> |
|-------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1777        | 29           | 8               | 21                  |
| 1778        | 47           | 3               | 44                  |
| 1779        | 40           | 6               | 34                  |
| 1780        | 45           | 8               | 37                  |
| 1781        | 51           | 13              | 38                  |
| 1782        | 26           | 5               | 21                  |
| 1783        | 51           | 22              | 29                  |
| 1784        | 19           | 5               | 14                  |
| 1785        | 38           | 10              | 28                  |
| 1786        | 27           | 8               | 19                  |
| 1787        | <u>29</u>    | <u>10</u>       | <u>19</u> (3)       |
|             | <u>402</u>   | <u>98</u>       | <u>304</u>          |

Following the customary practice, Porteus ordained candidates for other bishops on Letters Dimissory and though these are included in the above list,

- (1) Lancashire R.O., Wigan Parish Papers, DRCh/37
- (2) A. Warne, Church and Society in Eighteenth Century Devon (Newton Abbot, 1969) p.37
- (3) Cheshire R.O., Act Book, EDA1/8. The total number of ordinands at Chester always exceeded the number at Carlisle, which remained at a steady 20 to 26 each year, throughout this period.

many were not afterwards beneficed in Chester. Porteus himself gave Letters Dimissory for the ordination of six graduates by the Bishop of Oxford between 1778 and 1781. He also issued Letters Dimissory for five deacons and three priests to be ordained by the Bishops of Lincoln, Bristol, Sodor and Man and the Archbishop of York between 1780 and 1786. (1) During the ten years of his tenure of the diocese of Chester, Porteus instituted 120 graduates to livings within his diocese in an attempt to raise the standards of preaching.

Out of this total of graduates, 57 were from Oxford, with Brasenose graduates in the majority and 62 from Cambridge, chiefly men from Trinity and St. John's, for both these Cambridge colleges held the advowsons of several livings in the diocese. One graduate came from Glasgow university, for Scottish graduates had begun to penetrate into the northern dioceses after 1690. The total number of non-graduate clergy who were presented and licenced to perpetual curacies, or as assistant curates, was 176. Many who were licenced as assistant curates remained in their first curacy the Bishop's minimum of two years but no one remained for a shorter period as had been the former custom. Only two clergy were ordained by Porteus outside the minimum period required by canon law and these were Thomas Bancroft made deacon in June and ordained priest in September 1783 to fill the vacancy at King's School, Chester, and Thomas Briggs who was made deacon and ordained priest in April and November 1786 for an emergency at Stalmine chapel. (2)

During his episcopate, Porteus nominated four of his clergy to George III for admission to the sinecure office of King's Preacher. Three of the four were well-connected and likely to be welcomed amongst the gentry of the north. Thomas ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~<sup>Baldwin</sup>, curate of St. Martin, Chester, belonged to the landowning Baldwin family of Leyland, Geoffrey Hornby, vicar of Winwick and relative of the Earl of Derby, and Croxton Johnson vicar of Wilmslow and the son of a wealthy Manchester merchant. The fourth was Reginald Bligh, rector of

- (1) Bodleian Library, Bishop's Register 1737-1802, Ms. Oxford Diocesan Papers, B21  
Cheshire R.O., Act Book, EDA1/8, f.1-163
- (2) Cheshire R.O., Act Book, EDA1/8, f.104,142

Romaldkirk in Richmond. The custom of presenting relatives to family livings, which was practised under Markham, continued under Porteus. Croxton Johnson was presented to the living of Wilmslow by his father, who had purchased the advowson for his son's benefit. Henry Todd, already incumbent of the two livings of Orgarswick and Melton in Kent, was presented by his father to the living of Workington and Geoffrey Hornby by his relative the Earl of Derby to his rich living of Winwick (£3,000 pa). Archbishop Markham came to an agreement with Porteus that he should grant him the patronage of the living of Tattenhall for his son George Markham. Porteus agreed that the Archbishop should be patron for one turn only in 1781. George Markham had already been instituted to the living of Carlton in Craven by his father on the presentation of the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church, Oxford, on 27 November 1779. (1)

On the whole, the number of pluralist clergy and poor livings were much the same as Markham had found seven years before. The number of non-resident clergy appears to have varied from one region to another. In the Chester deaneries 35 clergy were non-resident in 1778. Of these twenty-four held other benefices or were schoolmasters who lived in their schools. Five stated that the lack of a house was their reason for absence. A further seven had other reasons; the vicar of Runcorn resided on his benefice in Devon, the incumbents of Neston and Bebington resided during the summer only; while the vicars of Wybunbury and Tilston had additional duties as vicars choral at Lichfield. The vicar of Aldford was also chaplain to Lord Grosvenor and the incumbent of Audlem had been in Bilson lunatic asylum for the previous eight years. (2)

The Lancashire deaneries presented a rather different pattern. There were twenty-five non-resident clergy of whom eight gave the lack of a house as their reason for absence and a further five because they lived in their schools. (3) The rich living of Walton was held in commendam by the Bishop

(1) B.I.H.R., B. Institution Act Book 15, p.273

(2) Cheshire R.O., Articles preparatory to Visitation, EDV7/1  
Nos. 34, 28, 124, 66, 53, 46, 57

(3) These schools were at Clitheroe, Bury, Rivington, Stockport and Burnley.

of Sodor and Man. A further nine held other livings in the diocese and the vicar of Colne lived at Otley, in York diocese, where he was rector. The return from Saddleworth revealed that their curate was permanently resident at Cranbrook in Kent and never once came north. The new incumbent of Downham, in 1778, was the first to reside for twenty years. (1)

The deaneries of the Archdeaconry of Richmond are less easily assessed due to incomplete returns from certain deaneries. Hence the information presented has had to be compiled, partly from the returns of 1778, and partly from notes added by Porteus to the earlier visitation record of Bishop Gastrell. In the western deaneries of Amounderness, Kendal, Furness, Copeland and Kirby Lonsdale there were twenty non-resident clergy of whom six stated they had no house. Twelve were beneficed elsewhere including the vicar of Croscrake who lived in Heversham grammar school. The vicar of Lytham had been absent for eighteen years and the rector of Tatham was beneficed in London. The returns for the eastern deaneries of Catterick, Richmond and Boroughbridge give the real reason for clerical non-residence as the lack of a house, and here there were seventeen cases; there were also a number of poor chapelries which were held in plurality. (2) This problem was not confined to Chester only. In Devon there were 231 resident and 159 non-resident clergy in 1779 (3) and in the diocese of Oxford 100 non-resident and 65 resident clergy in the same year. (4) So Chester diocese was no worse than other dioceses of comparable size and condition, so far as the problem of non-residence was concerned. Richard Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, outlined the problem in his diocese during the course of his visitation charge.

"At present Pluralities and Non-Residence are such a disgrace to our Establishment as all serious Men wish to see removed; they are, I am disposed to own, necessary Evils springing from the great Number of Appropriations and Improvements ... by which some thousands of livings are become of so little

(1) Cheshire R.O., op.cit., Nos. 28, 34, 46, 53, 53, 57, 66, 124, 178, 209, 235

(2) Leeds CA., Richmond Call Books, RD/CB/4a

(3) A. Warne, op.cit., p.42

(4) D. McClatchey, Oxfordshire Clergy 1778-1880, p.31

value, as to be utterly inadequate to the decent Maintenance if a Clergyman and we all know how the poverty of the Minister brings Religion itself into contempt, with the rude and undisciplined part of mankind." (1)

The poverty indicated as existing by Watson was soon discovered in Chester by Porteus. On Good Friday 1778 he received a letter from Matthew Worthington, the perpetual curate of Woodplumpton near Preston, a letter which is worthy of quoting almost in its entirety.

"My Lord,

Impelled by a Gloomy fit of Reflexion (& many I have God knows) on my condition; I prostrate myself at your feet, imploring in the humblest manner compassion and regard. If Distress has Eloquence & may be permitted to plead, I have alas; but too powerful an advocate in my favour.

I am My Lord the Curate of Wood Plumpton near Preston, where I have served as such for about 42 years successively & led withal an obscure contemplative life, .... I am now in the 67th year of my age, & have brought up six sons & six daughters to Men's and Women's Estate. I am grandfather to 27 children. All my annual income is only something better than £40. I had a small tenement here that came by my wife, but as I had contracted small debts time after time in so long a series of family occasion here sold it to discharge those engagements; so that my bare salary is all that I now enjoy for the support of myself & family; and such is the Indigence I am reduced to at present (and which dwells upon my Spirits) that were it not for Religious Prospects, I should be wretched beyond the utmost energy of Language to express .... My Lord, the thing that enervates all my fortitude and cuts me to the heart is to see these poor Creatures in want. To be chained down here a Spectator of their misery without the power of Relief. In this wearisome State, My Lord, I drag on life amidst the sneers & insults of Papists & their gay brilliant Priests; whose Triumphs in my Misery I cannot but expect for a refutation of the pretended Antiquity of their religion in a Treatise entitled - The Church of England old as Christianity.

As you may have the Direction of some Charities, please to use your influence .... in the case of .... Matthew Worthington" (2)

There was little delay in making a response to his plea. Porteus opened a public subscription assisted by Chancellor Peploe, who between them, raised a substantial sum of money for his immediate relief. It did not rest there, for when the living of Childwall fell vacant in September 1778, of which the Bishop was patron, he presented Matthew Worthington to the vicarage to alleviate

- (1) R. Watson, A Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Llandaff 1791, (London, 1792), p.6
- (2) Lambeth Palace Library, MS.2098, B. Porteus, Diary, I,67-69  
future references as B. Porteus - Diary

his poverty. This was not an isolated case, for in 1785 John Addison, vicar of Urswick, wrote to Porteus to say he was now 67 years of age and had been vicar for 38 years and master of the grammar school for 47 years. The joint stipend amounted to £49 per annum and he needed some assistance in his old age. He hoped that Porteus would approve of a young man, aged 23, usher at Bardsea school, whose name was William Ashburner. The patron of Urswick, Wilson Bradyll of Ulverston Priory, had approved him as a candidate for orders to act as assistant curate if Porteus would ordain him. Porteus accepted the petition and made Ashburner deacon. (1) Another case was that of John Jackson, curate of Burnside, who asked Porteus to allow him to hold the curacy of Satterthwaite, in plurality with Burnside, for he had a wife and nine children whom he could not support on the single stipend attached to Burnside chapel. (2) The letter addressed to Porteus by Thomas Nicholson, perpetual curate of Caton, reveals the struggle to continue serving a poorly endowed parish long after a man's health had deteriorated.

"I am now entered the 77th year and can't without the greatest difficulty perform the whole duty of reading prayers and preaching twice every Sunday. Had your Lordship seen me struggling with the storm on foot the 8th instant, supporting myself with my staff, it would have excited your compassion". (3)

William Smith, curate of Whicham, wrote to Porteus on 13 October 1786 about his problems, due to age, and the preferment of his assistant to Rampside chapel, whom Porteus had not replaced though he had promised to do so. Porteus must have replied to Smith and objected to him granting "two or three Titles in a few years," so Smith sent the following letter

".... I am now, My Lord, in the Sixty sixth Year of my Age, and have enjoy'd this Living upwards of forty Years; but about six Years ago I was seized with a very violent Fever which confined me to my Chambers near eight Weeks, and without the least hopes of recovery, but when it pleas'd God to restore me, I found my sight so much impaired that I could not read the largest print without the help of Glasses, and with them, even now it is often with much difficulty that I can go

- (1) Lancashire R.O., Urswick Parish Papers, DRCh/37
- (2) Carlisle R.O., Burnside Parish Papers, DRC/10
- (3) V.C.H. Lancashire, VIII, 84

through all the Duty on the Sabbath Day. - The first Assistant, I requested of your Lordship was immediately after my recovery, who serv'd me upwards of two years - The Second also assisted me till your Lordship thought proper to remove him to the Chapel of Ramside in Lancashire.

The next was lately ordained by Your Lordship at London he made me a full promise to return and assist me, but find he has been advised by some of his friends to go to America without ever assisting me .... this greatly disappointed me to be left without help when I much wanted it ...." (1)

Smith expressed the hope that Porteus would accept his title for Mr. Kirkby.

There were those who required a title for a son at the university to enable his younger brothers to follow in his steps. Thomas Tyson, curate of Ireleth in Dalton parish, wrote to Porteus on 25 February 1784, about the problem of educating his children.

"I have a Son at Emmanuel, Cambridge, who is desirous of entering into holy Orders, but is greatly distressed for want of a Title. Now if your Lordship would be so kind as to accept of one from me of twenty-five Pound P. Annum, you would do me the Greatest Service. It is indeed, my Lord, a Case of Necessity that presseth me to make this application to you. For I have another Son, above eighteen, anxious of Having an university Education, as well as his Brother; - but my Circumstances are so limited, that they are in no wise adequate to the Support of two Students at College at one Time; yet by your Lordship's Indulgence in ordaining the elder, and rendering him capable of procuring something towards his support, I should, by a prudent management of the Income of my Place, which amounts to fifty Pounds a Year, and Benefit of the savings I have made in forty Years Residence upon it, be enabled to send the Younger also to College, which would give me the sincerest Pleasure and Satisfaction." (2)

Porteus was never unsympathetic to letters asking for some assistance. He realised that Queen Anne's Bounty had been of great value in this respect by assisting necessitous clergy through an augmentation of the living.

".... It has been of infinite use to the Inferior Clergy, more especially in Wales & the Northern Counties of England. In the Diocese of Chester alone £175,000 has been expended in purchasing land for the Augmentation of small livings" (3)

But something more than this was needed and in 1785, Porteus hit upon the idea of establishing an annual subscription fund for the

- (1) Carlisle R.O., Whicham Parish Papers, DRC/10
- (2) Lancashire R.O., Ireleth in Dalton Parish Papers DRCh/37
- (3) Lambeth Palace Library MS 2099, B. Porteus, Diary II, 117. Future references as B. Porteus, Diary II

"Poor Clergy & their Widows and Orphans in the Five Deaneries of Amunderness, Lonsdale, Kendal, Furness and Copeland in the Archdeaconry of Richmond and the Diocese of Chester. This was greatly wanted in these parts; & in consequence of a Circular Letter addressed by me to the Clergy, A Meeting was held at Kendal for the purpose of raising a Fund on 4th of this month (August) when 44 guineas were immediately subscribed & a permanent Foundation laid for so useful an Institution" (1)

In later years this fund proved to be of inestimable value to the northern clergy.

The incident of Plowes, vicar of St. John, Manchester, reveals the tolerant side to Porteus's character. On 1 September 1783, Charles Baldwin, a wealthy layman, and others complained to Porteus that Mr. Plowes, vicar of St. John's, Manchester, had adopted the teachings of Emmanuel Swedenborg, "one of the wildest & most absurd Fanatics that ever appeared in this world" and was preaching heresy to his congregation. Porteus sent for Baldwin, "who from his Letters appeared to me a furious Bigot, of an intolerant & persecuting Spirit, coarse in his manners and vulgar in his Language", so he sent for Plowes to find out the truth. With great patience, Porteus discussed the charges preferred against him but was so impressed by the replies of Plowes that he decided here was, "much too valuable a Man to be driven out of our Church by Harsh & Violent Measures at least without first trying mild & Gentle Remedies". The remedies were effective and having dismissed Plowes with an admonition there were no further complaints made against him. (2)

The unsatisfactory conditions prevailing amongst the clergy in the northern half of his diocese and the shortage of parsonage houses led Porteus to undertake a survey of the state of churches and parsonages in the five western deaneries of the Archdeaconry of Richmond in 1782, to discover for himself the true position. Although an act had been passed in 1776 to encourage the clergy to reside on their benefices by raising mortgages for the erection of new parsonage houses, little advantage appears to have been taken of this opportunity. (3) The results of the enquiry revealed some strange comments

(1) *ibid.*, II, 129-130 Much more detailed information is available on the working of this Fund in 1795 in the various parish papers and records.

(2) B. Porteus, *Diaries*, II, 77

(3) 16 George III, c. 4



about non-residence and the state of the parsonage.

The reasons given for non-residence and plurality were found to be many and various. The common reason was, 'no house' or 'bad house', as well as the details of the stipends which only too frequently were totally inadequate to permit a resident curate. In the chapels of Ribby cum Wray, Singleton, Silverdale and Winster the stipends were miserably low and the curate of the latter was struggling manfully to rear a family on a stipend of £28 per annum gross yield. (1) Canon 31 allowed a priest, who possessed the degree of Master of Arts, to hold two benefices providing these were not more than thirty miles apart, but there were instances where this rule was ignored. Admittedly a number were within the limit - that is within two to twenty-eight miles apart. However the vicar of Pennington resided at Waverton in Cheshire some eighty miles distant and the rector of Egremont resided as a curate in Dublin to the annoyance of his parishioners. (2) There were three instances where the incumbents were officiating under serious difficulties, at Poulton le Fylde where he had been totally blind for seven years past; at Bispham and Middleton where both curates suffered from the effects of extreme old age. (3)

In other cases the churchwardens were often very frank in their remarks concerning their non-resident incumbents. The churchwardens of Ribchester replied to the question asking why their curate was non-resident, "Truly that's to us a secret - and not known". The churchwardens of Cockerham were more polite considering their incumbent was a Cambridge graduate and therefore a person of some consequence. "We suppose the reason of his Non-residence is, that the yearly Income of his Chapel in Kendal which is not above £60 P. annum is not sufficient to support the Dignity of a Clergyman in that large and Populous Town, having had a Liberal and expensive Education at Cambridge & taken a Master of Arts Degree there - moreover we believe .... his non Residence is dispensed with by the Bishop of Chester." (4) The reply from Bolton le Sands

(1) Lancashire R.O., A survey of Churches and Parsonages Houses in the Deaneries of Amounderness, Furness, Copeland, Kendal and Kirby Lonsdale 1782, DRCh/4, Nos. f.5,7,81, No.83

Note that this volume has been foliated only in part and the original numbers left for the remainder. This is a task yet to complete.

(2) Lancashire R.O., op.cit., Nos.105,127

(3) ibid., f.25, f.87, f.105

(4) ibid., f.29

was somewhat caustic; "He resides four Miles from the Parish Church. We imagine for his Own Benefit." An equally caustic reply was received from the churchwardens of Hayle where the curate was a pluralist. "Having three other Benefices every one better than this we presume to be the Reason." (1) This incumbent incidentally maintained no assistant curate but relied upon the neighbouring clergy doing duty on occasional Sunday afternoons. The rector of Grasmere resided at Chorley solely because, "He is in a state of insanity (sic)". Ill health was stated to be the reason for non-residence at Corney Island. (2)

The parsonage house posed acute problems which were not easily solved. In his primary visitation of 1778, Porteus had asked for details of the parsonage house to be recorded in the Terriers presented to him at the visitation. These reveal that the housing problem was a more serious one in the Lancashire deaneries and those of the Archdeaconry of Richmond than in the Chester deaneries. A number of parsonage houses were entirely unsuitable for the eighteenth-century incumbent, for they were little more than farm houses built round a courtyard with the farm buildings on either side of the house. At Drigg, for example, the parsonage was described in this manner:

"The Dwelling-House is a little clay Daubing about 5½ feet high. Side Wall, the out Houses much the same when standing but are fallen down about 3 years ago." (3)

The parsonage at Nidd was built in 1698 but by 1778 it was a typical labourer's cottage being constructed from cobble stones, covered with thatch, consisting of five low rooms with floors of stone, brick and clay and only two bedrooms. This was rented out to a farm labourer. (4) At West Tanfield the parsonage was a peculiar building arranged in the shape of a letter I, being constructed in three sections from brick, river pebbles and plaster. There were nine rooms in the house, of which six were open to the roof tiles, none had ceilings nor wainscotting. (5) The house at Coniston was almost uninhabitable being,

(1) ibid., f.45, No.130

(2) ibid., f.126, No.124

(3) Lancashire R.O., Survey of Churches and Parsonages in the Deaneries of Amounderness, Furness, Kendal, Copeland and Kirby Lonsdale, DRCh/4, No.126

(4) Leeds C.A., Richmond Glebe Terriers, CD/RG (Nidd)

(5) ibid., RD/RG/47 (West Tanfield)

"A very ancient building built with stone mixed with clay mortar and covered with slate and floored with flags; .... The walls bulged and cracked in several places and the roof with great difficulty kept on, the timber much decayed by length of time." (1) The parish of Millom had had no parsonage since 1644 for it had been demolished during the Civil War because it stood near the castle and could be used by rebels. (2) One final example must suffice out of the wide list of complaints. The parsonage at Langton on Swale had been built near the river Swale and since the river had changed course, the house now stood on the very bank of the river; ".... the said parsonage house stands so near to the River that it is in continual danger of being thrown down or washed away by the floods & great inundations that frequently happen in these parts ...." (3)

Evidence does exist to show that the picture was not entirely one of gloom. In some parishes the parsonage had been rebuilt by 1778. One example must suffice of the style the rebuilding took, and Scruton rectory illustrates quite well the rising standards of living and comfort now desired, by the use of stuccoe, wainscot, wallpaper and separate servants' quarters.

"A Rectory House built of Brick & covered with Tiles, consisting of a vestibule flagg'd & Whitewash. A wainscotted & Boarded Parlour on the Right Hand & a small House Keepers Room. A smaller Parlour on the left Boarded and Whitewash imitation of Stuccoe. A small Pantry, Kitchen, Servants Hall & Shoe Room with a Larder, Dairy & Cellars under them. Six Lodging Rooms & one small Breckfast Room or Study all Boarded & Papered with Garretts over them. One small Coal House & a Brew-house at the End. One Hen-house Tiled." (4)

It was in the deanery of Copeland that the least building took place and the farm house type of parsonage built round three sides of a square court yard remained until well into the nineteenth century. (5) Elsewhere in the diocese parsonages were being rebuilt or substantially repaired in those

- (1) R. Sharpe France, "Lancashire Parsonages", H.S.L. & C. (Record Series) CIX, (1965), 14
- (2) Carlisle R.O., Millom Terriers, DRC/10
- (3) Leeds C.A., Sequestrations, RD/AQ/1
- (4) Leeds C.A., Richmond Glebe Terriers, CD/RG (Scruton)
- (5) C.M.L. Bouch, Prelates and People of the Lake Counties (Kendal, 1948), p.237

parishes which were able to finance such reconstruction programmes. The new Lancashire parsonages seem to have been built of brick for the most part. By 1778, Salmesbury parsonage had been rebuilt followed by that at Leigh in 1782. (1) Faculties were issued to rebuild parsonages at Rainford and Marton in 1781 by raising mortgages to finance the work. (2)

An analysis of the returns of 1782 on the state of parsonage houses in the 148 parishes and chapelries in the five western deaneries reveal that sixty livings had no house. A further eight were in need of repair especially at Ellel, Barboq, Hambleton, Winster, Cockerham, Hawkshead, Old Hutton and Staveley. Those at Firbank, Burton Kendal, Bootle and Arlecdon had been completely rebuilt and £80 spent on improvements to Sedbergh parsonage. (3) There does not appear to have been any intensive move made to improve houses or to build new ones where they were non-existent. It was 1789 before this problem was tackled seriously and the new buildings that followed reflected the increasing prosperity of the clergy. The new vicarage at Kendal is a fine example of this new style of parsonage with its lawns, carriage drive and commodious house. (4) Archbishop Drummond's visitation of the neighbouring diocese of York in 1765 shows there was little difference in the matter of provision of parsonage houses. (5)

Some attention must, at this point, be paid to the role of the clergy in their parishes and the discharge or otherwise of their parochial duties. By 1778 the normal pattern of Sunday service appears to have been matins, litany and the ante-Communion with a sermon in the morning, followed by evensong either with or without a sermon in the afternoon. Two thirds of the parishes in the visitation returns had two services every Sunday. A further thirty-two had one service and out of this total, seventeen were in the three deaneries of Richmond, Catterick and Boroughbridge. Seven parishes, chiefly in Cumberland, and Westmorland, had two services in summer and one in winter due to the difficulties of travel during the bad weather. Three chapelries had one service only on alternate Sundays. Five churches in the

(1) R. Sharpe France, 'loc.cit'., p.18

(2) Cheshire R.O., Bishop's Register 1779-1791, EDA2/8, ff. 12,70

(3) Lancashire R.O., Survey of Church and Parsonages etc. 1782, DRCh/4, f.41,99,3,29,122,91, Nos. 79,84,83,101,112,113

(4) Leeds CA., Cause Papers, WD/2E/1

(5) B.I.H.R., Visitation Court Book, v.1765

diocese being those at Chester cathedral, Manchester Collegiate Church, Liverpool, Kendal and Wath, (where the schoolboys attended daily matins and evensong) had daily services. (1)

These figures do not show that church life was as lethargic as some writers on the period would have us believe. In addition to the Sunday duty, prayers were recited on Wednesdays and Fridays in three parishes, and on Holy Days in twenty-two, of which the majority were in the northern deaneries. These figures contrast most favourably with the diocese of Devon which recorded no weekday services or Holy Day observances in 1779. (2) Mrs McClatchey records that in the diocese of Oxford, at the same time, there were no weekday services except in some small market towns and villages. (3) The standard pattern in Oxford appears to have been that 118 parishes had two services each Sunday, fifty-eight with one service and six had services on alternate Sundays while only two parishes had one service in winter and two in summer. (4)

On the whole the evidence supports the view that the accepted standard of churchmanship in the last quarter of the century may be too pessimistic when we include details of the celebrations of the holy communion. Dr. Norman Sykes's researches into the subject of the frequency of communions led him to draw the following conclusion, "... the general standard in country parishes was established at four Sacrament Sundays each year, on the three great festivals of the Church, and in the autumn after the ingathering of the harvest." (5) Archbishop John Sharp, of York, and after him Archbishop Secker, of Canterbury, had been advocates of frequent communion but despite their efforts the number of communicants was not large. In relation to the population, Manchester Collegiate Church with a weekly ~~celebration~~ <sup>celebration</sup> had but an average of 200 communicants. Liverpool was somewhat better with 2,000 communicants at the monthly celebration but at Beetham in Kendal deanery, there were only ten

- (1) Cheshire R.O., Articles preparatory to Visitation, EDV1/7m 148, 194, 334
- (2) Leeds CA., Churchwardens Presentments, RD/CB/8
- (3) A. Warne, op.cit., p.43-44
- (4) D. McClatchey, Oxfordshire Clergy 1778-1880, p.80-81
- (5) N. Sykes, op.cit., p.250

communicants. (1) No doubt Archbishop Secker's comments were correct; "Some imagine that the Sacrament belongs to persons of advanced years, or high attainments in religion, and is a very dangerous thing for common persons to venture on." (2) An interesting comparison in the light of the above remarks can be observed by studying the number of celebrations in the diocese of Oxford in relation to that of Chester.

| <u>Number of celebrations per annum</u> | <u>Oxford</u> | <u>Chester</u> |
|---|---------------|----------------|
| less than 3                             | 0             | 17             |
| 3                                       | 40            | 13             |
| 4                                       | 86            | 66             |
| 5                                       | 14            | 33             |
| 6                                       | 6             | 27             |
| 7                                       | 1             | 10             |
| 8                                       | 2             | 11             |
| 9                                       | 0             | 2              |
| 10/11                                   | 1             | 1              |
| 12                                      | 6             | 64             |
| 13                                      | 0             | 4              |
| 17                                      | 0             | 1 (3)          |

Of the sixty-four parishes with twelve celebrations per annum, there were twenty-one which had additional celebrations on the great feast days. The frequencies of four and below are the country chapels where these were held in plurality and where the custom survived of the congregations attending the parish church on the great feast days. Looking at the above table, one can by no means affirm that the Chester clergy were lethargic in performing their sacramental duties.

On the other hand one may enquire as to their attitude in the matter of instruction and preparation for confirmation. The regular weekly custom of catechising seems to have been, by and large, abandoned and replaced by a series of instructions during the summer months of in Lent. Porteus refers to this problem in his letter addressed to his clergy on the matter of Sunday Schools.

- (1) Cheshire R.O., Articles preparatory to Visitation, EDV7/1, Nos.148,194,319
- (2) S.C. Carpenter, Eighteenth Century Church and People (London, 1959), p.188  
A. Tindal Hart, Clergy and Society 1600-1800, (London, 1968), p.78
- (3) D. McClatchey, op.cit., p.80-84

"Unfortunately in too many instances parents are extremely backward in sending their children so catechising is dropped for want of attenders .... Give a course of plain and short lectures on the Church Catechism, on Sundays in the afternoon for three or four of the Summer months and the child will bless you when grown up ...." (1) From the visitation returns of 1778, the following information is available on catechising. Only in the four parishes of Kendal, Heversham, Manchester and Liverpool was it the custom to catechise weekly. Elsewhere it was confined to Lent or Eastertide, or to the summer months. At Heysham the vicar specifically stated that he catechised a month before the visitation was due. (2) Porteus was not the only bishop concerned about the catechising of the young. In 1784 the Bishop of Bangor pointed out the matter to his clergy at his visitation. He told them that the catechising of the young was important, for religion was always best learned when young. The main care for education must lie with the parents and it was the duty of the clergy to remind them frequently of their duty and help them to fulfil it. Confirmation was important but the ancient solemnity was impossible in present society. He felt that the rite should be given more credit and esteem than it appeared to receive. (3)

The pattern of confirmation in Chester seems to have followed that of other dioceses and to be held at the time of the visitation, or locally when Porteus was resident in Chester for his ordinations. He records in his act book the details of his first confirmations held in July 1777 which were confined to the Cheshire deaneries.

|        |  |                 |
|--------|--|-----------------|
| July 4 | At Nantwich for Chester Deanery with Stoke Backford and Shotwick in Wirral Deanery | 3556            |
| 8      | At Chester   | 2469            |
| 15     | At Neston-Wirral Deanery   | 984             |
| 22     | At Mapas-Malpas Deanery  | <u>1362</u>     |
|        |  | <u>8371</u> (4) |

- (1) B. Porteus, A Letter to the Clergy of Chester concerning Sunday Schools 1786 (Chester, 1786), p.14,15
- (2) Cheshire R.O. Articles preparatory to Visitation, EDV7/1 Nos. 148,194,330,333, 334
- (3) John, Bishop of Bangor, A Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of Bangor 1784 (London, 1785), passim
- (4) Cheshire R.O., Act Book, EDA1/8, f.2

The following year Porteus confirmed 2,000 persons on 23 June in Manchester Collegiate Church where he also preached the sermon. (1) During the second visitation of his diocese on 15 July 1783, Dr. Hind, the vicar of Rochdale, preached the confirmation sermon in Manchester when a further 2,842 were confirmed. (2) In his diary, Porteus recorded additional details about his confirmations in general, "My confirmations this year (1783) amounted to 26,024 in 1777 they were 8371 - in 1778 - 29<sup>601</sup> In 81-17,992 - The whole number confirmed in the space of eight years 82,193". (3) These gross figures for biennial or triennial confirmations compare favourably with those for the neighbouring diocese of York which totalled 41,600 for the three years from 1768-1771. (4)

Such large numbers meant that the rite could not be administered with dignity, and it was frequently connected with a day out at some large centre inevitably followed by excesses. It was this state of affairs that lay behind the visitation charge of Bishop Law in 1820. He stated, in the course of his charge, that, in future, confirmations must be better organised, supervised and conducted while the orgies that followed were to be suppressed. (5) There appears to have been little improvement made in this field after Porteus was translated to London. This apart, the evidence points to the existence of a number of clergy who were devoting thought as well as time to the preparation of the young in more than one diocese. (6)

The rapid increase in population, especially in the industrial areas, called for a church building programme of some size, but little appears to have been undertaken. In 1777 two rebuildings took place, one at Ardwick in order to enlarge the chapel, and the second at Edenfield where services had been discontinued for more than twelve months because the fabric was in such a poor

(1) Leeds Mercury, 23 June 1778

(2) ibid., 15 July 1783

(3) B. Porteus, Diaries, II, 74

(4) N. Sykes, op.cit., p.124

(5) G.H. Law, A Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Chester (Chester, 1820), passim

(6) D. McClatchey, op.cit., p.144



state. Over the succeeding years the churches at Haslingden, St. James and St. Paul's, Manchester, were enlarged to make room for the growing population.<sup>(1)</sup> On the whole the existence of decayed church fabrics on a large scale is not apparent. The returns of 1782 show that some decayed churches did exist but they were scattered. What is striking is the extensive repair programme that appears to have been put in hand following the visitation of 1778. Whittington churchwardens reported that the fabric was not in sound repair. The steeple at Dent church was bulging and out of line on the north side. Burnside chapel, built in 1602, compared badly with more recent buildings but nevertheless was structurally sound. Staveley chapel was in a bad state; "Steeple, Side Walls, Roof etc are all out of Repair. Indeed it is in as ragged a Condition as you imagine a Chapel possibly to be." The curate of Thwaite chapel complained that, "The Walls of my Chapel are, very indecent not having had a Covering of Lime upon them since the Chapel was built which is now near 70 years ago ..... The Roof also is in a very shaken Condition; insomuch that whilst I was attending a Corpse at the Grave .... a slate falling from the Roof was within a few inches of my Head ....."<sup>(2)</sup> The curate asked the Bishop to send the churchwardens an order to put the place in sound repair. One of the problems in effecting repairs to this chapel arose from the reluctance of the parishioners to pay for the cost of maintenance; nor was this an isolated instance.

A number of new churches were built between 1779 and 1786 some of them by private patronage. Charles Wroe built Christ Church at Macclesfield where his family were patrons of the living and the church was consecrated on 16 November 1779. Sir George Warren built, at his own cost, a new church for the people of Poynton in Prestbury parish in 1786. <sup>(3)</sup> In September 1781 Porteus consecrated three new churches at Wigan, Skelmersdale and Lackford.

(1) Cheshire R.O., Bishops Register 1768-1779, EDV2/7, ff.62,303,404,463  
Lancashire R.O., Ardwick, Edenfield, St. James and St. Paul, Manchester  
Parish Papers, DRCh/37

(2) Lancashire R.O., Survey of Church and Parsonages etc 1782, DRCh/4  
f.113,117,70, No. 93,134

(3) Cheshire R.O., Bishops Register 1779-1791, EDA2/8, ff 17,30,280

Enlargement of the churches of Aston in Winwick, Horwich, Goodshaw in Whalley took place in 1782. On 9 June, Porteus consecrated the new church of St. John in Liverpool. (1) Recourse was made to the use of Briefs for the building or rebuilding of churches during Porteus's episcopate. Between 1779 and 1785 money was raised for the building of the church at Dean, in Horwich parish, and the rebuilding of those at Burton Leonard, Kirkhammerton, Goodshaw, St. Peter, Chester, and Milnrow in Rochdale parish. (2)

These rebuildings and extensions apart, extra accommodation was now provided by the erection of galleries. Between 1779 and 1786, faculties were issued for the erection of galleries in St. Peter, Stockport, Cheadle, Pendleton, Warrington and Newchurch in Winwick. In the case of the latter the cost was met by using money left for the relief of the poor, no details were known how this legacy was intended to be used. (3) These galleries were not exclusively devoted to the provision of additional seats but as places to install an organ, in order to provide an accompaniment to the singing, and the bands of trained singers who were now appearing in church. In 1780 the metrical psalms of Sternhold and Hopkins or Tate and Brady were used for these parts of the service now being sung in parish churches, accompanied by stringed instruments if no organ was available. (4) These bands of singers could be a source of trouble to many clergy and congregations of which one example will suffice. In 1784 a band of "select Psalm Singers" behaved badly during the service at Nantwich church. Instead of singing the psalms as announced by the clerk, ".... betixt the first and second Service and afterwards immediately before the Sermon ...." the singers rendered a different psalm to the one being sung by clerk and congregation. The case was taken to the consistory court at the request of the Select Vestry on 14 November 1785 to obtain a ruling on such singers. A petition was presented on behalf of the congregation that the clerk

(1) Cheshire R.O., Bishops Register 1779-1791, EDA2/8 ff.93, 117, 125, 165, 175, 203, 225

(2) W.A. Bewes, Church Briefs (London, 1896), passim

(3) Cheshire R.O., Bishops Register 1779-1791, EDA2/8 ff.143, 256, 170, 215, 235

(4) Midhope church, near Sheffield, retains its string orchestra to accompany services at the present day

should be allowed to select three persons to sit under his desk and assist him in singing, "the old Tunes," so that worship could be decently conducted. Porteus rejected this petition and ordered that the singers should render the psalm as announced by the clerk. (1)

The Methodists by their use of hymns influenced the singing in Anglican churches. Porteus himself took a keen interest in music and was particularly concerned about the musical standards in those churches where there was an organist or a group of school children available for use as singers. He thought that the attitude to the singing of the psalms had been grossly neglected in England and that improvements were needed to, "Church Music of all kinds & that of Psalm singing in particular." (2) Reform, he believed, would assist devotion but, "as it is at present managed & conducted it is, I fear far from producing these desirable Effects. The Versions we use are bad, & the Best old established Tunes are neglected or Spoilt in the Execution .... the flourishes of the Organist or the unmelodious Voices of the Charity Children destroy all harmony. Or what is perhaps still worse a Clerk without either voice or skill is left to answer himself with a Solo whilst the Congregation is either talking or sleeping & seems not to think itself in any degree concerned or interested in what is going forwards ...." (3)

Like the Nantwich congregation, Porteus disliked itinerant singers for everyone knew the standards of their performances. "Psalmody which was surely meant to be not merely an exercise of Skill confined to a few Men in a corner of the Church, but an Act of Devotion .... in which all the Congregation are to join ...." (4) As was only to be expected the conservative parts of the diocese resisted change and Porteus had to admit that although he had advocated reform in Chester he despaired of making, "any impression on half the Northern Countries (sic) in the Kingdom". (5)

(1) Cheshire R.O., Consistory Court Papers, EDC/5 (unsorted)

(2) B. Porteus, Diaries, I, 105

(3) ibid., I, 105-6

(4) ibid., I, 106

(5) ibid., I, 107

While visiting Yorkshire in the summer of 1783, Porteus went to Aston near Rotherham to see the new parsonage house, which he at once approved as a model for a, "plain convenient Parsonage House." (1) What impressed him the most was the standard of the music in Aston Church. A barrel organ with twenty-four psalm tunes, had been installed and Mason, the vicar, had improved portions of the metrical psalms as arranged by Sternhold and Hopkins. The parish clerk, who was a musician, sang these tunes and taught the parish children to sing them to the accompaniment of the organ. Porteus thought that this was a great improvement. "I have had much correspondence with Mr. Mason about it. I heartily wish the whole of our Psalmody was put on a better footing." (2)

Doubtless the customary slovenly rendering of the musical portion of the Anglican services drove many to the Dissenting chapels where hymns were sung to rousing tunes. In the course of his visitation charge to the diocese of London in 1790, Porteus emphasised the desirability of improving the music. The select bands of singers in the country parishes who were trained by itinerant masters were bad. The fashion of singing psalms in four part harmony made congregational participation impossible "... a most wretched set of psalm tunes in three for four parts, so complex, so difficult and totally void of all <sup>true</sup> ~~tune~~ harmony that it is altogether impossible for any of the congregation to <sup>take</sup> ~~take~~ a part with them, who therefore sit absorbed in silent admiration, or total inattention." (3) In London itself, judging from Porteus's remarks, the singing appears to have been a contest between the Charity school children and the organist as to who could make the most noise. He advised that the children should be taught to sing and the organist should, "not overpower the singer by the unremitted loudness and violent intonation of the full organ ...." (4) In those parishes where there were no Charity school children then the Sunday School pupils should be trained. Porteus was a lone voice in calling for full

(1) ibid., II,75

(2) B. Porteus, op.cit., II,77

(3) B. Porteus, A Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of London at the Primary Visitation of the Diocese 1790 (London, 1790), p.16

(4) ibid., pp.16-17

congregational participation in worship, far in advance of his time, for almost two centuries later this ideal is not yet fully achieved.

During the course of his episcopate, four of the six prebends fell vacant and Porteus was able to appoint young men to the vacancies. In 1779, Thomas Ward, son of Archdeacon Ward of Chester and fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, was presented to a prebend and the livings of Neston and Handley, at the age of twenty-four. The next vacancy in 1781 led to the appointment of Thomas Pearce, vicar of West Kirby and a graduate of Oriel College, Oxford. John Briggs, (1) fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, was presented to a prebend in 1782 to be followed the next year by his appointment as Chancellor of Chester in succession to Samuel Peploe who had died. The last vacancy occurred in 1786 when George Travis, a graduate of St. John's, Cambridge, who was vicar of Eastham, was presented to a prebend to be followed by his further promotion to the Archdeacon of Chester and rector of Handley. (2) So Porteus ensured that his policies had support in the Cathedral Chapter.

(1) John Briggs was, in addition to his appointments in the diocese, presented by George III to the rectory of Methley where he became involved in a lengthy tithe dispute with the Earl of Mexborough.

(2) Chester Cathedral Library, Dean and Chapter Act Book 1747-1816, ff.200-242

CHAPTER NINE

EDUCATION IN THE DIOCESE OF CHESTER 1771-1787

From time immemorial English education has been closely allied to the Church. Virtually all early schools sprang from an ecclesiastical foundation and a large number of these schools were staffed by clerks who were attached to the original foundations. For very long periods in their history both the Anglican schools and their schoolmasters were supervised by the Church far more closely than they are now inspected by the State. During the greater part of its history, English education has been, not only Christian in its basis but for two centuries after the Reformation, with the exception of the dissenting academies founded after the Bartholomew evictions of 1662, almost exclusively Anglican.

From time to time legislation was enacted concerning the grammar schools, some of the earliest on their organisation is to be found in Canon 55 of the fourth Lateran Council of 1215. (1) In 1597, and again in 1601, provision was made for Commissions of Pious Uses to be created to enquire into and amend all abuses in the conduct of schools and their endowments. (2) From a very early period the grammar school masters were subject to Licensing by the bishop or his chancellor. Canon 138 of 1604 ordered every bishop to summon all schoolmasters to attend his primary visitation in order that he might inspect their licences. Canons 77 and 79 required all school masters to subscribe to section one of Canon 36 and the first part of section two of the same Canon relating to the Prayer Book and the Ordinal. In addition to these requirements, the schoolmasters were to swear to the Oath of Allegiance and abjuration of 1610. (3) The Test Act of 1672 (4) required all schoolmasters to furnish a sacrament certificate, before being licensed, testifying that they had received the Holy Communion according to the Anglican rites and taken the oath against

(1) J. Mansi, Acta Conciliorum (ed. Venice, 1798) , VII,30

(2) 39 Elizabeth I repealed by 43 Elizabeth I c.9 and replaced by 45 Elizabeth I c.4 amended by 52 George III c.10 and repealed by 51 and 52 Victoria c.42

(3) 3 James I c.4;7 James I c.6

(4) 25 Charles II c.1

transubstantiation before the magistrates at Quarter Sessions. This legislation militated against efficient teaching in schools because a definite bias was implied by the act and from about this time the grammar schools began to decline in standards, for a too rigid control militated against good teaching. The decline developed slowly, so the foundation of grammar schools continued into the early decades of the eighteenth century, but there was a rapid falling off as the years went by. Ebenezer Elliott summarised the general pattern of English education at the turn of the eighteenth century.

"There near the church, the stocks and cucking stool,  
 Abode the sovereign of the village school.  
 A half-fac'd man, too timid for his trade,  
 And paid as timid men are ever paid;  
 He taught twelve pupils for six pounds a year,  
 Caught a consumption and was buried here.  
 None said of him he reaped the crop he grew,  
 And liv'd by teaching what he never knew.  
 His school is gone, but still we have a school,  
 Kept by an ignoramus - not a fool;  
 For o'er his mansion written large, we see  
 'Mister John Suckemwell's Academy'." (1)

By 1770 the education in many grammar schools throughout the diocese was arid, formal and unrealistic, so that many boys left school with an intense dislike of the classics. If pupils did not go forward to the universities to study law or theology, their education had not prepared them for a career in commerce or in industry. The foundation statutes of the schools were restrictive in character and could not be amended except by an Act of Parliament. There were few outstanding masters in the schools for the salaries, fixed at the foundation, had declined in value by 1771, as the currency depreciated and was worth far less than the founder originally intended. Also the expanding population required an education service designed to meet the needs created by the industrial changes.

In some schools by the mid-century, subjects such as mathematics, and navigation were taught to assist young men in their careers at sea. These subjects were not taught free of charge and had to be paid for by their parents. Latin grammar and the reading of classical authors were still the basis of education at a time when new inventions were opening up new fields in industry.

(1) Ebenezer Elliott, "The Splendid Village", Poetical Works (London, 1833) p.20-21

By 1771 there was an urgent need for mathematics and science to be added to the curriculum so that pupils could take the advantage of the opportunities opening for them in an expanding industrial community.

Disatisfaction with these old grammar schools in their content of education, led several families like the Leighs of High Leigh, Cheshire, to provide private tutors for their children. By 1780 it was clear to many that more schools were needed and that the control of schoolmasters should not be the prerogative of bishops and feoffees only. Others, in order to combat the ideas of the eighteenth century, which were believed to contaminate the poor, and also to counteract the influence of the nonconformists, thought the solution was to have more schools under the direct control of the Church. There was also a demand, an ever-growing one, for literate employees. The increasing production of manufactured goods to satisfy the demands of expanding overseas markets, called for more clerks to handle accounts and read shipping bills for which skill in reading Latin and Greek was of little use. (1)

The nature of the grammar schools varied in accordance with the aims of the founders. Ten schools in Cheshire, including those at Stockport, Tarvin, Lymm, Wilton and Macclesfield, offered free education to the boys of the parish. The King's School, in Chester, offered free places to twenty boys. (2) At Middlewich and Nantwich there were eight free places in each school, but only six at Knutsford. The school at Congleton was controlled by the borough and education was free to the sons of burgesses of the town only, while at Malpas school free education was restricted to the descendants of the founders. All other boys who wished to attend the school had to pay fees. The visitation returns of 1778 show that the following schools were offering free places, in addition to those already mentioned: Hargreave (120), Marple (30 boys and 14 girls), Mottram (30), Sandbach (20), Tarvin (20), Wallasey (30) and Witton (50-60). (3) There were admissions to the universities during the century, chiefly to

(1) D. Robson, "Some Aspects of Education in Cheshire in the Eighteenth Century", (Chetham Society, 3rd series), XIII (1966), 10-14

(2) Chester Cathedral Library, Treasurer's Accounts

(3) Cheshire R.O., Articles Preparatory to Visitation 1778, EDV7/1 Nos. 23,24,39,50,65,70,75,78,88,108,117,122



Trinity, Cambridge, and St. John's, Oxford, but the numbers applying for admission from the diocese as a whole were falling.

During the latter half of the century the curriculum of many grammar schools was widened to meet the needs of an increasing population and to supplement the fixed salaries of schoolmasters by allowing them to charge fees for subjects outside the specifications of the statutes of the schools. In 1778 there were some twenty-six schools in Cheshire which were providing a classical education, but there were others which had begun to change in character. One of the first schools to be re-organised was at Macclesfield. An Act of Parliament in 1774 changed the statutes and named fourteen townsmen as governors. Amongst other matters they were, "to appoint such or so many .... persons as shall be proper and necessary to be Master or Masters, with suitable Salaries, to be paid out of the revenues of the said school, to teach and instruct the Children and Youth educated at the said School, not only in Grammar and Classical Learning, but also in writing, arithmetick, geography, navigation, mathematicks, the modern languages, and other branches of Literature and Education, as shall from time to time in the judgement of the Governors be proper and necessary." (1) Towards the close of the century, in addition to English, Greek and Latin, instruction was given in, "Writing, Arithmetick, the use of the Globes, modern and ancient Geography". Some French was taught to those who were not intended for the universities or the professions. Elements of algebra and Euclid were the preserve of the higher forms, but all classes enjoyed, "a suitable collection of English Authors". (2)

At Congleton school the curriculum was widened to include writing, arithmetic, 'merchants' accounts, elementary branches of mathematics, French, and geography, if parents desired their children to be taught these subjects. (3) West Kirby grammar school was offering to teach, "the elements of mathematical science with geometry and navigation" as extra subjects for fee paying pupils. (4)

(1) D. Robson, op.cit., p.55

(2) N. Carlisle, Endowed Schools of England and Wales (London, 1818), p.120,121

(3) J. Addy, "Penistone Grammar School in the Nineteenth Century" (Yorkshire Archaeological Journal, XL (1959), 112-119  
Jonathon Wood, usher at Congleton School, was appointed master of Penistone Grammar School in 1785 to introduce the progressive ideas of Congleton to Penistone

(4) D. Robson, op.cit., p.55-56

On 27 March 1770, the following advertisement appeared in the press, informing the public that a revised curriculum had been introduced into Woodchurch school:

"At the ancient grammar school of Woodchurch .... languages taught after the most expeditious and rational method; also Arithmetic, Algebra, Bookeeping, Logarithms and other Constructions and Use, Geometry, theoretical and practical, Mensuration .... Gauging, Trigonometry both plain and spherical, Mechanics, Surveying of Land, Levelling, Navigation, Geography, ancient and modern, Natural Philosophy, Astronomy, and the Use of Globes." The introduction of apparatus to assist pupils, the ancestors of the modern visual aids, appear for the first time in this school. "The Theory and Practice of the above Mathematical Arts are much facilitated and rendered obvious to the Generality of Capacities by actual and experienced assistance of Instruments ...." (1)

Those grammar schools whose endowments were chiefly based on rent charges, suffered from the depreciation of the currency, a matter which played no small part in the decline of these schools and which was to last until the Taunton Commission of 1868. Some schools were vested in the London livery companies as trustees. Stockport was in the control of the Goldsmiths company; Bunbury was governed by the Haberdasher's company; the Merchant Taylors were the governing body of Audlem school and the Apothecaries company of Chester controlled the school at Frodsham. These schools were well provided for by their wealthy governors but others such as those at Daresbury, Haslingden and Disley were reduced to the situation of providing elementary education only. (2)

The position of the Cheshire grammar schools was by and large one of decline at this period in both efficiency and scholarship. An enthusiastic master could build up the reputation of a school, as for example at Congleton, where the corporation were in control and were able to provide both buildings and finance. Some schools like Bunbury declined as the result of the changing needs of an agricultural community. Overall this decay was connected with an

(1) Adam's Weekly Courant, 27 March 1770

(2) D. Robson, op.cit., p.11-12

ever increasing inability to provide sound instruction in the classics, alongside the failure to introduce new subjects where they were required. Another factor which contributed to the decline was the inability of many masters to teach in a competent manner, as at Mottram, where out of a total of twenty boys there were none above ten years of age. Greedy, dishonest and incompetent feoffees mismanaged the finances so that stipends fell to a low level in real terms. Apart from Congleton school, the salaries of the masters at Knutsford school were improved by the Act of Parliament which reformed the administration.

Schools which benefitted were those which were situated in the important areas of the county. Macclesfield and Congleton were both centres of an expanding textile industry. Chester was the headquarters of the county administration and the centre of the diocesan organisation. The schools at Frodsham, Weaverham and Witton catered for the interests of the salt industry. In general it may be stated that Cheshire in the eighteenth century was typical of the period and reflected in its schools the characteristics that were found elsewhere. (1)

On the other hand, Lancashire was a county of late development. There was no great church of any importance, except Manchester Collegiate Church, nor was it the home of any great school, except Manchester Grammar, which resulted from the existence of the Collegiate Church. Lancashire was a mountainous county to the east, thinly populated and before 1730 had little industrial activity and so no ports of any size. Lancaster was the chief port for Ireland, and had had a grammar school since the thirteenth century, but had no hinterland of any importance. The second port at Preston had a hinterland so by the end of the sixteenth century there were, in addition to Manchester, schools at Middleton, Blackburn, Leyland, Whalley, Prescott, Farnworth, Bolton le Moors, Warrington, St. Michael on Wyre, and Kirkham. There was an Edward VI grammar school, formed out of the chantry, at Penwortham for the children of the parish to be taught, "the catechism, primer and accidence". (2) The grammar school in Clitheroe had

(1) D. Robson, op.cit., passim

(2) V.C.H. Lancashire, II, 561

been founded by Philip and Mary in 1554 as a centre for catholic education, but it never established itself as a seminary and continued under Elizabeth as a grammar school. Two Elizabethan archbishops and two bishops were instrumental in founding schools at Rochdale, Warton Hawkshead and Rivington to combat the persistent catholicism of the region.

By 1723 there was a reasonable spread of grammar schools over the county especially in Blackrod, Halsall, Wigan, Churchtown, Burnley, Standish, Cartmel, Crosby, Bispham, Bury, Bolton le Sands, Upholland, Ormskirk, Oldham, Chorley, Leigh, Bury, Over Kellett and Cockerham. Two additional schools were founded during the reign of George II, one at Ulverston in 1736, and the other at Tunstall in 1753. (1) The school at Prescott was rebuilt on land given by Basil Thomas Eccleston of Scarisbrick Hall. (2) 'Petty' boys had so over crowded the grammar school in Blackburn that the master demanded an entrance fee of five shillings for all boys entered for instruction under the usher. (3) The death of John Baines in 1808 ended the provision of grammar school education in Liverpool, for not until 1902 was another established. (4) Secondary education was available in private schools, of which the city had a fair number.

The school at Bolton le Moors was reorganised in 1784 to develop the estates for the benefit of the school. Only freeholders who had land of £100 per annum in value, lying in the parish of Bolton and who were members of the Anglican Church were eligible to become feoffees. The master and usher were to have a salary of £80 and £40 per annum respectively. They were required to teach not only, "grammar and classical learning", but also, "writing, arithmetic, geography, navigation, mathematics, the modern languages". (5) Thomas Wilson, the vicar of Clitheroe, reporting on his school in 1778 wrote, "I am the Head-master of the said School and the revd. Tho[ma]s Heaton is Usher. The Number of Boys at present under our Care is 65. They are taught English, Latin, and the

(1) ibid., II, 611-615

(2) ibid., II, 578

(3) ibid., II, 590

(4) ibid., II, 594-595

(5) ibid., II, 598

Greek Languages - Every attention is paid to their Morals and care taken to instill into their Minds the principles of the Christian Religion." (1) A refoundation of the school at Bury had been undertaken in 1726, "for the glory of God and for good literature and ingenious education". The master upon his election had to enter bond for £500 not to serve the cure of Bury as a joint office with the school headship. (2)

The pattern of education in the Archdeaconry of Richmond was of a similar type. By 1700 there were thirty-one grammar schools in existence throughout the region. Of Urswick school, it was said the vicar, "takes all children, boys or girls, in the parish or neighbourhood without any demand; but they generally pay him a trifling gratuity at Shrovetide, called a Cockpenny. He has now about 40 scholars, whom he instructs in reading, writing and arithmetic. Ten of them are also learning Latin, and one is advance in Greek!" (3) Ulverston school had about eighty boys and twenty girls attending it, of whom twenty were reading classics. Although the master at Broughton in Furness school was competent to teach Latin, his pupils did not advance beyond arithmetic, reading and writing. (4) Two grammar schools one at Kendal and the other at Richmond were controlled by the respective corporations, being founded by Royal Charter and endowed with property vested in the two corporate bodies.

Studying the educational archives of this archdeaconry, gives the impression that the population within its boundaries were sufficiently concerned about education as to provide the means for educating their children. Old Hutton school had been rebuilt in 1753 at the cost of the parish as well as the school at Beethom. English and classics were taught free of charge to the sons of the parishioners at Hawkshead but an additional fee had to be paid for writing and accounts. The sons of Sir Daniel Fleming had been educated in this school, where in 1787 there were twenty borders, one of whom was William Wordsworth. (5)

(1) Cheshire R.O., Articles preparatory to Visitation, EDV7/1, No.233

(2) V.C.H. Lancashire, II,612

(3) C.M.L. Bouch & G.P. Jones, A Short Social and Economic History of the Lake Counties 1500-1800 (Manchester, 1962), p.196

(4) J.D. Marshall, Furness and the Industrial Revolution (Barrow, 1958), passim

(5) C.M.L. Bouch & G.P. Jones, op.cit., p.201

The master at Hawkshead during part of the time that Wordsworth was a pupil there, was William Taylor, MA, of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, who held the post from 1781 until his death in 1786. The second centenary of the foundation of the school by Archbishop Sandys in 1585, (1) occurred during Wordsworth's time at school. He, along with the other boys, was given the task of writing an exercise in the form of a poem to commemorate this event. The only part of the poem which has survived is the conclusion,

"The Power of EDUCATION seemed to rise;  
Not she whose rigid precepts trained the boy,  
Dead to the sense of every finer joy;  
Nor that vile wretch who bade the tender age,  
Spurn Reason's law and humour Passion's rage;  
But she who trains the generous British youth,  
In the bright paths of fair majestic Truth.

The noble Sandys inspir'd with great design,  
Reared Hawkshead's happy roof and call'd it mine.  
There have I loved to show the tender age,  
The golden precepts of the classic page;  
To lead the mind to those Elysian plains,  
Where throned in gold, immortal Science reigns .... (2)

There were many schools in the diocese, especially in the northern half, which continued their proper function as grammar schools. Hawkshead, St. Bees, Kendal and Ulverston may be cited as examples, where the training of students for the priesthood as non-graduate ordinands continued until the foundation of the College of St. Bees as a theological college in the first decade of the following century. Others reflected the abuses of the eighteenth century. By 1787 Bedale school had sixty boys who were studying elementary subjects only. The number of free scholars at Catterick school had fallen to sixteen and the teaching of classics had lapsed. Grinton school was another where only elementary subjects were taught. At Scorton school, whose revenues amounted to £200 per annum, only twelve boys could be found to learn Latin. Thomas Wharton's foundation at Hartforth for thirty boys had a closed exhibition to Cambridge on which no claim had been made for at least thirty years. The schools at Kirby Ravensworth and Sedbergh were in a poor state and though the latter had twelve closed scholarships to St. John's College, Cambridge, the

(1) The original foundation deed of Hawkshead School in 1585, was recently found in the Bishopthorpe papers, York, in a most dilapidated condition. Skilled craftsmanship has enabled this deed to be restored to something of its original splendour. B.I.H.R., Bishopthorpe Papers

(2) W. Wordsworth, Poetical Works (Oxford, 1940)

places were rarely taken up. (1) Richmond school passed through a similar  
 X period of decline until the work of James Tait rescued it from decay. (2)

The thirteen scholarships to Brasenose, Oxford, from Middleton school, were consolidated into one due to the depreciation in the value of the currency. (3) Manchester Grammar school, however, expanded to become the leading school of South Lancashire and Cheshire for the sons of professional men and the clergy, by 1787, and had formed strong connections with Trinity, Cambridge, and Brasenose, Oxford. A survey of the Registers of Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cheshire grammar schools, reveals a sharp decline in the number of boys going up to university between 1730 and 1800. (4) From 1662 onwards there were other schools available than the grammar schools. These were the dissenting academies which were established by those who had been evicted under the Act of Uniformity 1662 or were victims of the Five Mile Act. (5) These men were compelled to find some way of earning a living and found a congenial one in schoolmastering. It appears strange that no dissenting academy was founded in any of the four northern counties, the nearest one being at Settle, where Richard Frankland eventually sent some forty boys as undergraduates to Edinburgh university, for the English universities were closed to them. In Lancashire there were no academies north of the Ribble, but there were four in the south of the county. In Yorkshire there were two academies, in the East and five in the West Riding. (6) These benefitted to some extent by the Toleration Act 1689, but this did not extend to free admission to the universities, so dissenters had to continue to look elsewhere for their advanced education.

During the second half of the eighteenth century these academies attained a high standard. They were not subject to rigid control imposed by statutes, as

- (1) N. Carlisle, Endowed Grammar Schools in England and Wales (London, 1818), II, 892, 836, 894
- (2) V.C.H. Lancashire II, 577
- (3) L.P. Wenham, A History of Richmond School (Arbroath, 1958), p.62 ff
- (4) W.E. Tate & P. Wallis, "A Register of Old Yorkshire Grammar Schools," Researches & Studies Leeds University, No. XIII (January, 1956)  
 P. Wallis, "A Preliminary Register of Old Schools in Lancashire & Cheshire", H.S.L. & Co., CXX (1968)
- (5) 16 Charles II, c.4
- (6) T. Whitely, "Private Schools 1660-1689", Transactions Congregational Historical Society XII (1912) pp. ssim

were the grammar schools, and so had freedom to experiment. The curriculum in these academies was a liberal one designed to educate men for careers in commerce. English, modern languages, mathematics, and science were important subjects: anyone who desired to do so could attend and it was to these academies that many middle class families sent their sons to be educated. In 1756 an academy was opened at Tintwhistle in Mottram parish and another at Ringey in 1789, while John Pope opened one at Pilkington in Prestbury during the latter half of the century.

The most famous dissenting schoolmaster of the period was Joseph Priestly, who came to Nantwich in 1758 where he taught thirty boys and sixty adults in science. In 1761 he went to Warrington academy as a lecturer in modern languages and "belles lettres". He wrote of his aims at Nantwich school; "Being engaged in the business of a school<sup>m</sup>master, I made it my study to regulate it in the best manner, and I think that I might say with truth, that in no school was more business done, or with more satisfaction, either to the master or the scholars, than in this of mine". (1) During the period that Warrington academy flourished, for it was at its height between 1757 and 1786, there was a total of 393 pupils educated there. Of this number, only twenty came from Cheshire, but the majority from Lancashire and Yorkshire in that order. The remainder came from London and the South with a sprinkling from the Midlands, seventeen from Ireland, twelve from Edinburgh and eight from Jamaica and the Barbadoes. (2) The fame of this academy was based upon its commercial training, hence the support from the growing industrial centres. The course consisted of a three year study of French, book-keeping, writing, English, mathematics, natural philosophy, navigation and shorthand. A similar curriculum was followed in Frankland's academy at Rathmell. Unfortunately many of these dissenting academies were transitory due to the incompetence of their owners. The number in existence before 1782 is mere conjecture for few records survive. When William Cowdroy's Directory appeared in 1782 it gave details of such academies,

(1) Memoirs of Joseph Priestly, ed. J. Priestly, (London, 1833), p.28

(2) W. Turner, Warrington Academy 1757-1786 (Warrington, 1957), p.51-81



while from 1770 onwards advertisements appeared in the Adam's Weekly Courant and the Manchester Chronicle at frequent intervals.

A far more widespread provision for education came with the Charity School movement. The Declarations of Indulgence between 1672 and 1688 (1) which were designed to gain support of the dissenters for furtherance of royal policy in its relations with Louis XIV and the Roman Church; these Declarations gave an impetus to the opening of schools not only by dissenters but also by recusants. This increase in the provision of rival forms of education led to the creation of the Charity Schools which were intended to counter rival activities by providing an elementary education with a strong Anglican bias. (2)

Further legislation was introduced in the reign of Queen Anne to check the expansion in other forms of education. Hence the Occasional Conformity Act (3) was designed to prevent persons qualifying themselves to work within the law by making an occasional communion in the Anglican church, whilst at other times they were dissenters. The Schism Act (4) compelled schoolmasters to produce a sacrament certificate as proof of their conformity. (5) These Acts did succeed for a time in checking the growth of dissenting and catholic schools until the Act in Relief of the Protestant Interest released the former from the penalties incurred under the previous legislation. (6)

It was within this legislative framework that the Charity Schools developed. The foundation of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.) in 1698 led to the development of charity schools throughout the country. The aim of these schools was to train poor children of the parish in the principles of the Christian faith and to read the Bible. In many parishes, both in town and country, the wives and daughters of the leading families led the way and funds were raised by preaching special sermons and holding anniversary services.

(1) 1st Declaration, 15 March 1672: 2nd Declaration 4 April 1687; 3rd Declaration 27 April 1688

(2) W.E. Tate, "S.P.C.K. Archives", Archives, III (1957) Section 18, p.105-114

(3) 10 Anne c.6

(4) 13 Anne c.7

(5) B.I.H.R., Certificates of conformity of schoolmasters, Nominations R.IVN 1367

(6) 5 George I c.4

The spirit of the eighteenth century was one of benevolence towards the sick, the criminals, the slaves and poor children. It was also a period when the middle and upper classes showed concern over the plight of the poor in general. The factor which motivated the patrons of charity schools was the fear of rebellion hence it was believed that education would bring a sense of social discipline while sound instruction in the faith of the Anglican church would produce a sound moral society. Instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic would check idleness and ignorance. While the clergy on their part saw that there were advantages in the religious and moral teaching in the schools, the layman for his part saw that they would be useful in training boys to be God-fearing good apprentices - and girls to be dutiful domestic servants. All would fit into their appointed station in life.

The desire to lift the less fortunate from their misery sprang from puritanism. (1) Money spent would help to meet the problem of poverty, ignorance and vice. Hence the intellectual and social pressures led to the endowment of schools to teach religion and the basic elementary subjects. The suggestion that charity might take the form of provision of schools for poor children appealed to those who were alive to the traditional Christian practice of relieving necessitous people. It was intended that the education should be free and if possible that both food and clothing should be supplied to the children. The middle classes saw the scheme as a cheap way to reform social abuses. Any building would do for a schoolroom and fifteen to sixteen shillings would clothe a pupil for one year while £20 would pay the salary of a teacher. (2)

In the Cheshire deaneries the most important of the thirty-two charity schools were those at Chester, Darnhall, Holmes Chapel, Little Budworth, Nantwich, Northwich, Whitegate and Bunbury. In 1778, the Blue Coat school for girls in Chester, founded by the wife of Bishop Stratford, was returned as supported by voluntary contributions. (3) Considerable interest was shown in

(1) M.G. Jones, Charity School Movement (Cambridge, 1938), p.4-7

(2) Lambeth Palace Library, Annual Reports of the S.P.C.K. (London, 1812), passim

(3) Cheshire R.O., Articles preparatory to Visitation 1778, EDV7/1 Nos. 7,61,34,66,65,83,72

the need for poor children to enter some useful occupation and evidence of this is clear from the number of schools founded. The boys attending Chester Blue Coat school in 1778 were taught English, writing, arithmetic and navigation. When they were of age they were bound apprentice to the navy or farming or some trade; the usual age for this being fourteen. One half day each week was spent in working at some craft and the remainder in study. Girls were taught to sew, knit and spin. (1)

At Christleton school, the boys received their instruction in the art of mensuration, gauging and navigation, all useful subjects for boys who intended to go to sea from Chester or one of the packet stations on the Wirral, or enter commerce. (2) The wife of the schoolmaster at Cheadle was made responsible for teaching sewing and knitting to the girls, while at Nantwich school some boys were taught the craft of shoemaking which was an important local industry. Great emphasis was placed on the religious and moral training of pupils, but many benefactors of these schools were concerned with the practical value of education in reading, writing and arithmetic. Marple school was concerned with religious education and the teaching of eight poor children, "born and residing in Marple to read, write & say the Church Catechism, and be instructed in the Principles of the Christian Religion." (3) This school had once been a grammar school of James I foundation but by 1778 it had declined to the status of a charity school. The minister and overseers were to inspect the school and see that the children were adequately taught. Davenham schoolboys were taught under the belfrey of the church until a schoolhouse was erected in 1785. (4) The curate acted as the schoolmaster and the children were clothed by the charity. The school at Warmingham remained under the belfrey of the church until 1839 when a schoolhouse was built. (5) The patron at Ince built, at his own expense, a schoolhouse attached to the end of the parsonage so that

(1) ibid., Chester City

(2) D. Robson, op.cit., p.38

(3) ibid., p.41

(4) John Rylands Library, Hulme Mss.978

(5) ibid., 073

the children should not be taught in church and defile it. (1) Usually the bishop or the incumbent of the parish nominated the master and occasionally, jointly with the churchwardens. At Grappenhall, Neston, Great Barrow, Hyde and Bredbury the appointment was made by the leading parishioners. In 1780, towards the end of his life, Samuel Peploe, chancellor of the diocese, founded a school for eighteen boys in his parish of Tattenhall who were to be taught reading, writing and arithmetic. The master at Bullock Smithy, Hazel Grove, was not to be in Holy Orders in case he was tempted to take a curacy in addition and so neglect his school. This school was erected by public subscription, "duly considering the great want and necessity of a school and schoolhouse in Bullock Smithy, aforesaid, Do promise to give and subscribe the sums set to each of our respective names for *and* towards the building of the said school and school house." (2)

The charity school reports of the S.P.C.K. between 1787 and 1792 show how closely the schools in the parishes were connected with the church and the clergy. These reports (3) name ten of the Cheshire gentry as subscribers, together with the Bishop of Chester and the rectors of Tarporley, Malpas, Thornton, and the vicars of Prestbury and Macclesfield. Members of the laity also subscribed to the schools especially those who lived in Stockport, Wallasey, Adlington (Cheshire) and Macclesfield. Four clergy wives were annual subscribers namely Mrs. Arles and Mrs. Rawdon of Chester, Mrs. Crewe of Bolesworth Castle, and Mrs. Norton of Macclesfield. These schools provided the kind of education that was considered suitable for the poor, and essential for the well being of the nation. They were, until 1780, the most efficient means of providing elementary education and by 1771 there were twenty-four S.P.C.K. schools and twenty-one local charity schools in the county of Cheshire alone.

The pattern in Lancashire was much the same, with a total of seventy-six charity schools. Several of these had been founded in the middle years of the

(1) D. Robson, op.cit., p.42

(2) John Rylands' Library, Legh Letters Box X/B9

(3) Lambeth Palace Library, Reports of the S.P.C.K., passim

century especially in the expanding industrial areas. There was a school at Bury for twenty children. In 1777, Anne Bamford had founded a charity school at Heywood to which was attached a salary of £20 for the master and the girls were clothed at the expense of the school. The following year Peter Baron founded a charity school in Heywood for twenty boys. The charity school at Eccles was providing education for eighty boys and girls. The Manchester region could boast of several schools. Manchester Collegiate Church had a school in the churchyard which was supported by the offertory money. Hannah Dixon had endowed a school in the parish of St. Anne in 1744 for forty poor girls who were taught to become 'useful servants'. The parishioners of St. Paul's built a school, in 1777, for twenty boys and girls. Hindes's school in Manchester was built for twenty children who were clothed in a green uniform and had the task of reciting the catechism publicly in the churches of Stretford and Manchester. (1) Salford charity school was maintained by the money received at the offertory in church. Liverpool Blue Coat school educated and clothed 170 boys and 50 girls who were to be indentured apprentices or sent out as domestic servants. The children who attended the schools in Warrington, Winwick and Ormskirk were clothed by the charity, but in 1780 the Warrington school was rebuilt as a boys' school only. (2) In 1787 the corporation of Liverpool endowed the school at Hingley with £150 at 4½ per cent interest. (3) The education provided in these Lancashire schools was restricted to reading, writing and accounts only.

In the Archdeaconry of Richmond there were a number of charity schools. The Blue Coat schools at Newton cum Scales in Kirkham parish and the one at Preston for fifty children were supported by a collection taken at the annual charity school sermon. (4) Mrs. Mary Ingleby founded a charity school at Ripley in 1723 and endowed it with a salary of £25 per annum for the master. Three

(1) V.C.H. Lancashire, II, 620

(2) ibid., II, 619

(3) ibid., II, 616

(4) Cheshire R.O., Articles preparatory to Visitation 1778, EDV7/1

charity schools were in existence in Knaresborough parish in the townships of Scriven Rokendale and Bilton. (1) A detailed survey made of charitable endowments in Yorkshire in 1786 revealed the existence of charity schools in twenty-six parishes in the eastern deaneries of Richmond. Their endowments ranged from £3 to £45 per annum and the total yield in revenue for these schools amounted to £710 per annum. (2)

There is evidence that in some cases the endowments were grossly mismanaged. An endowment of £200 for a school in Pickhall in 1742 had been entirely lost by 1786. Fire had destroyed the school at Romalldkirk in 1785 and this had not been rebuilt a year later and no children taught. The Earl of Exeter reorganised the ancient Hospital of Well, which had contained a school founded by the Nevilles, by removing the school from the Hospital and making two new foundations, one at Well and the other at Snape. The obligation was laid upon the master that he must educate one boy from each household in the parish for seven years free of charge. (3) By this action the Earl anticipated the educational aims of the next century. Over in Clapham, George Ellis endowed two charity schools with £3. 6s. 8d. per annum, plus twenty shillings towards the cost of books and ten shillings towards the expenses of the trustees when they met to elect the charity scholars. (4) Existing alongside the charity schools were a varied collection of petty schools, dame schools and parish clerk's schools. Many of these were of uncertain duration and transitory in their nature, depending upon the patronage of parents and the availability of a good master. Often the master was required to undertake other tasks in the parish in addition to his teaching duties. In 1783, the new schoolmaster at Goosenargh, appointed by the select vestry, was required to undertake to maintain the church clock and officiate as parish clerk on Sundays and at the occasional offices, for which he would receive an additional four guineas per annum. (4p) When his successor was appointed in 1784 the above duties were imposed

- (1) Leeds C.A., Richmond Cause Papers, RD/AC/1/5 Nos. 24, 25, 26, 27
- (2) Leeds Central Library, Abstract of Charitable Donations Yorkshire 1786 (F.361/SE.48.Y) pp.1455, 1474, 1473, 1558. There is no indication as to date and place of publication of this volume which contains the pages dealing with the county of York only
- (3) G. Lawton, Collections Relative to Churches and Chapels within the Dioceses of York and Ripon (London, 1840), II, 573, 586
- (4) Lancashire R.O., Goosenargh Parish Records, PR/644

upon him but to compensate for the depreciation of the value of his salary, he could accept fee paying pupils who were to pay, for instruction, "in Writing, four pence per week; and for those he instructs in Accounts eightpence per week." The proximity of the commercial centres of Preston and Lancaster no doubt made the teaching of these subjects a viable one.

By the time Porteus was translated to London, the set pattern of education in the diocese was a widespread collection of grammar and charity schools under the control of the clergy. Both graduate and non-graduate masters were employed in the schools and many had to enter bond for good behaviour as a condition of their appointment.

In almost all the schools in the diocese, the eighteenth century was the one in which masters tended to remain in the same school for very many years. The average appears to be about twenty years, but there are examples of tenures of much longer periods. Thomas Malbon was master of Congleton grammar school for fifty years; William Jackson remained at Stockport for forty and Thomas Percival at Rostherne school for sixty-one years. Only two masters were appointed to Bartholmey school between 1683 and 1770. (1) The best period in the history of Manchester Grammar School was under Charles Lawson during the latter half of the eighteenth century. He came as master in 1749 and remained there until his death in 1807 at the age of 79. Between 1770 and 1786 the number of boys admitted each year to the school rose considerably and by 1776 the number in the school was 250 so that a new building had to be erected. (2) On the other hand this custom of protracted headships led to the ruin and decay of many smaller and weaker grammar schools.

Bishop Porteus exhibited a keen interest in education. He insisted that the resignations and appointments to grammar schools should be endorsed by him as visitor and several nomination papers contain his remarks on the appointment. At the same time he took an active part in the charity school movement. Preaching at the annual meeting on the charity scholars in London in 1782, he

(1) D. Robson, op.cit., pp.103-108

(2) V.C.H. Lancashire, II, 588

said that the ancient world took no notice of the poor so it was to the poor that Christ addressed his teaching. In course of time the gospel was embraced by the most civilised empire in the world, "as it now is of all the most (1) civilised and enlightened kingdoms of the earth." The poor have few opportunities of learning their duty alone, for the cares and labour of daily life leaves but little leisure time for acquiring knowledge without assistance. Only too often their spiritual and temporal needs were overlooked and disregarded by their superiors, although the poor formed the largest part of the community. He expressed his delight that there were now some 40,000 children attending such schools who were drawn from the, "most indigent and helpless class of people," who without schools would have had nothing to preserve them from, "idleness, beggary, profligacy, and misery". (2) The aim of the charity school was to foster the virtues of piety, industry, honesty and sobriety so taking them through from youth to manhood and on to old age.

The tracts published by the S.P.C.K. were to provide in some degree, "the want of that most useful branch of ministerial duty which has, I fear, of late years grown but too much into disuse, personal conference with our parishioners."

(3) These tracts were useful as a counter measure to those published by the papists which aimed at a corrupt religion. Bishop Chaloner during his lifetime had written no less than forty such pamphlets for his Roman flock. Eighteenth century philosophers believed that their work had resulted in an improvement of man, but Porteus said that their writings affected a small group of people. The great majority could not afford to buy much less be able to read, the works of Bolingbroke, Hume, and Raynal. On the whole the philosophers believed that the common man was, "utterly unworthy of a reasonable religion." (4) Indeed, no less a person than Voltaire had stated this principle in his Essai sur L'Histoire General (5) but the S.P.C.K. rejected this approach and took Christ as master and guide instead.

(1) B. Porteus, A Sermon preached at the Yearly Meeting of the Children educated in the Charity Schools in London and Westminster 1782 (London, 1782), p.10

(2) B. Porteus, op.cit., p.14

(3) ibid., p.19

(4) ibid., p.23

(5) Quoted by Porteus in his sermon, to which he added a footnote in the printed text. Ibid., p.23



William Vincent preaching the annual sermon to the charity children in 1784 believed that the correction of morals and reformation in standards of conduct would cure the ills of society. He pointed out that the things which made men wretched were idleness, vice, debauchery, profligacy and disregard of moral and religious obligations. No word seems to have been spoken about the living conditions of those who came to work in the factories of the towns and the incidence of poverty amongst the working classes. All that was <sup>said was</sup> a pious expression that the poor must endure their lot and be content with their station in life. "Their station is to be borne like every other station, because God has placed them in it; but that in this country every accident to which they are exposed by their condition, or the common lot of mortality, is provided against by the liberal spirit of the community ...." (1)

The Charity Schools, however organised, were inadequate in numbers to cope with the problem of educating the poor as were the parish and petty schools. Church leaders were always suspicious of any new movement and disliked Methodist enthusiasm, so they viewed with caution the rise of the Sunday School movement in 1780 under the guidance of Robert Raikes. He was disturbed by swarms of sinful children wandering the streets of Gloucester looking for trouble, so he organised Sunday classes to bring to their knowledge the meaning and observance of Sunday. (2)

Robert Raikes was not the only one to be concerned about the condition of children who roamed the streets of the towns. J. Hampson, preaching on Sunday Schools in Sunderland, was alarmed at what he had seen. "There is no place, I will venture to say .... where something of this kind was so much wanted as in Sunderland. In travelling through most parts of three kingdoms, and much of America, never have I beheld children so rude and uncultivated. Their behaviour in the streets; their fierce and brutal quarrels; their oaths and curses .... and the manner in which they spend the Sabbath, call loudly for a reformation ...." (3)

- (1) W. Vincent, A Sermon preached at the Yearly Meeting of the Children educated in the Charity Schools in London and Westminster 1784 (London, 1784) p.29
- (2) A. Gregory, Robert Raikes, A History of the Origin of Sunday Schools (London, 1877), p.48-51
- (3) J. Hampson, A Sermon upon Sunday Schools preached in Sunderland 7 September 1788 (NEWCASTLE 1788),, p.19

Three years before he resigned his living of Catterick, Theophilus Lindsey had led the way by opening a Sunday School in his parish, and Hannah More, a friend of Porteus, was to undertake similar work in Cheddar. The idea became popular when Raikes began to publish the results of his work in the Gentleman's Magazine. (1) Humanitarians and revivalists had for some time been giving out warnings that hundreds of thousands of children were growing up in ignorance, a potential threat to society and a danger to themselves. It was discovered that through the Sunday School a form of cheap education could be provided which would give sufficient instruction to make children aware of eternal damnation and at the same time learn to be content with their station in life.

These two points encouraged others to work in the same field. Jonas Hanway and William Fox founded the London Sunday School society in 1785 and which by 1797 was educating 69,000 children. (2) In the same year Raikes was claiming that 250,000 children were attending Sunday Schools throughout the country and quickly this movement became associated with the idea of a general education for the poor. (3) The ideas of Locke and Rousseau had no bearing on the movement. Rather it arose from the puritan tradition which had inspired the charity schools as the philanthropic expression of laymen who had inherited this tradition. Both the Charity and the Sunday School provided instruction based on the Bible and the catechism. Both types of school were supported by voluntary gifts and endowments from the middle classes. Their supporters expected that the principles of labour, thrift, contentment, and obedience would be driven home so that if they have been thoroughly grounded in these aims then the results would lead to a substantial reduction in the poor rates. (4) In fact Sunday School education was repressive in that it limited its function to the teaching of reading only. This probably arose from the murmurs of discontent that were beginning to be heard and the fear of the

(1) A. Gregory, op.cit., p.46,92,93

(2) M.G. Jones, Charity School Movement (Cambridge, 1964), p.152-153

(3) A. Gregory, op.cit., p.92

(4) M.G. Jones, op.cit., p.28-29

rising industrialists that a full blooded liberal education would reduce the supply of cheap labour and make the working class discontented with their lot in life. Hannah More found much the same objections raised by the Somerset farmers as were raised by the northern manufacturers. (1) Few bishops raised any objection to this new move in education, since the Church, by canon law and tradition, was charged with the education of the poor, but too many parochial clergy were content to ignore this duty and to follow the lead given by the laity.

Porteus, as one of the earliest advocates of Sunday Schools for the education of the lower classes, could sympathise with Hannah More and her problems. Like her, Porteus was aware of the reluctance and dislike of many of his clergy to taking an active part in supporting these schools, and to encourage support Porteus wrote a pastoral letter on the subject to his clergy in 1786. Already in 1784 the press was commenting upon the effect of these new schools. In June 1784 the Liverpool newspaper had a report about, "the good effects of the Sunday Schools established in Gloucester"; it claimed that, "from being idle, ungovernable, profligate and filthy in the extreme .... the boys and girls are become not only more cleanly and decent in their appearance, but are generally humanised in their manners, more orderly tractable and attentive to business; and of course more serviceable .... cursing and swearing are now very rarely heard among them .... Such are the happy consequences already exhibited by the establishment of Sunday Schools". (2) In the previous month the same paper had pointed out that the Sunday Schools are, "now established throughout Leeds and nearly two thousand scholars instructed." (3)

Six months later a meeting was called in Liverpool of the, "Clergy, Gentlemen, Merchants and others, who are desirous to contribute to the institution and support of SUNDAY SCHOOLS .... to meet the MAYOR in the Council-

(1) Letters of Hannah More, ed. B. Johnson (London, 1925), No.183

(2) Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser, 10 June 1784

(3) ibid., 27 May 1784

Chamber .... to consider the means of extending an undertaking of such public utility." (1) It was proposed at the meeting to establish thirty schools, "with one or more Masters or Mistresses to each school, as the number of scholars may require": the schools would be open to, "all whose parents are not able to pay for instruction; and particularly those poor children who are employed in rope walks, tobacco-warehouses etc." (2) Although the, "Worshipfull Mayor and Council" were "pleased to order 20 guineas per annum towards the support of Sunday Schools and expressed the warmest approbation of so excellent an institution," (3) there was little evidence of the enthusiasm shown in London, Stockport, Manchester, Halifax and Leeds in favour of Sunday Schools. Supporters of the calibre of Samuel Hall, vicar of St. John's, Manchester, and his fellow clergy in the town were sadly wanting in Liverpool. The press was now publicising reports of sermons advocating Sunday Schools and gave prominence to raising funds for their support. (4)

The decision to encourage Sunday Schools was finally agreed following the pastoral letter of Bishop Porteus in May 1786. He had followed their growth with interest, "and accordingly, as far as private correspondence went, I did so. But as they were then quite novel institutions, and some persons of worth and judgment had, I found, their doubts and apprehensions concerning them, I thought it prudent, before I went further to wait a little, till time and experience and more accurate enquiry had enabled me to form a more decided judgment .... the information I have of late received concerning them, from various quarters (but especially from the great manufacturing towns in my own diocese), has confirmed the favourable opinion I was originally inclined to entertain of them." (5)

The fears of those who were suspicious about this extension of the field of education, Porteus calmed by describing the movement as an extension of the charity school system. The latter had been endowed chiefly in the rural

- (1) J. Murphy, "Rise of Public Elementary Education in Liverpool 1780-1818", H.S.L. & C., CXVI (1965), 169
- (2) Liverpool General Advertiser, 25 November 1784
- (3) J. Murphy, op.cit., p.170
- (4) Leeds Mercury 1784-1787, passim
- (5) B. Porteus, A Letter addressed to the Clergy of the Diocese of Chester concerning Sunday Schools 1786 (sec.ed. London, 1786) p.4

areas but due to the expense of endowing and supporting them they could only provide a partial and local remedy. There was little provision for the education of the poor in the great manufacturing towns of Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Cheshire where, "there is the greatest number of children that want education, and who being in constant employment during the rest of the week, have scarce any leisure allowed them for instruction but on the Lord's Day." (1)

It was not entirely a concern for educating the poor that gave rise to the Sunday Schools but rather that they could be looked upon as a means of checking vice. Porteus raised a further point that the real concern was not the effect upon the poor of an elementary education but the ultimate result if they were left in ignorance. "Our houses cannot secure us from outrage, nor can we rest with safety in our beds. The number of criminals encreases so rapidly that our goals are unable to contain them and the magistrates are at a loss how to dispose of them .... Our penal code is already sufficiently sanguinary, and our executions sufficiently numerous, to strike terror .... into the populace; yet they have not hitherto produced any material alteration for the better, .... It is an observation which has become proverbial .... that laws without manners will avail nothing. It is equally certain, that manners can no otherwise be regulated than by a right education, by impressing on the minds of youth principles and habits of piety and virtue ...." (2)

Another advantage that would ensure the popularity of Sunday Schools was the low cost of running them. Not more than five pounds a year was required to teach children to read and buy the necessary books, and this sum would be easy to raise in a small village. Naturally the manufacturers showed alarm for they feared that this type of education would unsettle the minds of their employees, so they insisted that any education for the poor should be at the minimum level the situation demanded. Porteus assured them that; "The very small degree of learning which is or can be given in these Schools, though

(1) ibid., p.9

(2) ibid., p.5-6

highly useful to their minds, does not either indispose or disqualify them for undertaking with their hands, the most laborious employments in town or country. They are neither instructed in writing nor arithmetic. They are merely taught to read, and to make a proper use of their Prayer Books, their Bibles and a few pious tracts which inculcate the fear of God and the love of man; which enjoin, under pain of eternal punishment, and with the promise of eternal rewards, the great duties of sobriety, industry, veracity, honesty, humility, patience, content, resignation to the will of God, and submission to the authority of their superiors." (1)

So the aims behind the Sunday School movement were to unite manual labour with spiritual instruction and, in a co-operative manner, managing the interests of this life and the next. In this letter Porteus presents an argument often repeated in the nineteenth century as the demands for labour and education became more insistent and complex. Children could be trained in the habits of industry since pupils in the Sunday Schools were those who for six days each week were employed in industry or agriculture.

Porteus had some knowledge of the appalling conditions in which the working classes lived in the towns. He realised that spiritual destitution faced generations of children who were growing up in an affluent society. The criticism of the Methodists emphasised what Porteus and a very few others were slowly realising - that religion was losing its influence amongst the poor. So the Sunday School was intended to bring children to realise the love of God, the joy of the Christian religion, and love for the Church before other and contrary habits diverted their attention. Train the children in such a way that they will direct their energies towards religion and ignore the forces which put them against it.

Aware of the slender attachment of the poor to the Anglican Church, which many of his colleagues on the bench seemed to lack, Porteus had suggested a

(1) ibid., p.10-11

course of lectures on the catechism should be given on Sunday afternoons in the summer months. This approach would solve the problem of catechising by bringing it into the orbit of the Sunday School. In some places within the diocese of Chester there had been, by means of the Sunday School, a marked improvement in the manners, dress and appearance of the children. The clergy were to be responsible for the supervision of the teachers, as to their characters, and the type of books used in teaching. Pupils must be taught loyalty to the Established Church and warned against the dangers, (especially in the diocese of Chester) of perversion to popery. It was hoped that parents would be encouraged to attend church with their children.

Since Sunday was a relief and day of leisure for the working classes it must not be turned into a 'day of rigour', so that in the long run the children would turn against education and religion. The pupils must have, "sufficient time allowed them for cheerful conversation and free intercourse with each other and, above all, for enjoying the fresh and wholesome air and sunshine, in the fields or gardens, with their relations or friends." (1) To those who work on shifts in cotton mills and other places, relaxation is essential so five hours in school would be the maximum possible on Sunday. Porteus insisted that there should be no corporal punishment in the Sunday Schools. For the conduct of Sunday Schools in his diocese he laid down ten rules. In a large parish there should be a governing body of seven, but in a small one the minister could manage on his own. One master or mistress should teach a maximum of thirty to forty children but no more. The number of teachers would depend on the size of the parish. In Manchester there were 37 schools, 73 teachers and 2,520 scholars. The minimum age for admittance should be five and all who proved to be refractory pupils were to be expelled. The cost of employing one teacher would be met by a charge of one shilling per Sunday, based upon instruction for an average of twenty pupils per teacher. This would allow for forty shillings to be spent on books. Parents who sent their children to Sunday School should be expected to see their children were turned out clean, neat and decently

(1) B. Porteus, op.cit., p.21

dressed. In the towns, the schools should not be in session more than two hours before the service and each pupil must accompany his or her master or mistress to church both morning and afternoon. A register was to be kept and the names of all absentees to be reported to the committee. (1) Porteus made it quite clear that Sunday Schools should be connected with the Church of England. "The Sunday Schools .... will collect together, and bring before you, without any trouble on your part, a much larger number of catechumens, and much better prepared for examination and instruction, than could have been effected by any other means." (2)

Porteus found support from the vicar of St. Mary, Manchester, who was chairman of the Manchester Sunday School Committee. John Bennett preaching on the advantage of these schools said that, "through many parts of the Kingdom (but, particularly, the commercial and populous ones) groupes of little heathens are seen wandering about without any sense or knowledge of their duty .... loathsome with dirt - still more so with vice - rending the air with blasphemies and curses - profaning the Sabbath with every disorder ...." (3) all of which disturbed the senses of every Christian. Bennett foresaw that the Sunday School was likely to become universal throughout the land.

"The number of applications, which have been received by the Society at Manchester, for a specimen of our plan, from many parts of this kingdom, .... prove, that this 'grain of mustard seed', is growing into a tree ...." (4)

Bennett tends to follow the orthodox pattern when seeking the root of the trouble and arrives at the same conclusions that the blame must be placed upon neglect of Sunday observance, and the pursuit of pleasure, licence, unbelief, lethargy and stupefaction. The panacea is the Sunday School which will lead them to church, "which otherwise, perhaps they never would have entered, excepting to have witnessed the last interment of a friend, or when carried themselves thoughtless - speechless - motionless - to a grave ...." (5) One

(1) B. Porteus, op.cit., p.14

(2) J. Murphy, op.cit., p.171

(3) J. Bennett, The Advantages of Sunday Schools being a Sermon preached in St. Mary's Church, Manchester 1785 (Manchester, 1785), p.12. There is also an edition printed in London in the same year, a copy of which is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford

(4) J. Bennett, op.cit., p.13

(5) ibid., p.13



fact he did realise that if the new methods were successful and all came to church then the standard method of preaching would have to be radically changed. By 1785 there were 2,291 children in Manchester attending Sunday Schools. (1)

The Bishop's letter appeared in the press on 25 May 1786. (2) On 8 June the Liverpool press praised, "the present state of the Sunday Schools in Manchester." and announced that in Liverpool, "the collection for Sunday Schools is now upward of £500." (3) At the same time an advertisement appeared requesting those masters and mistresses who so desired, "to undertake the instruction of the poor children .... to inform any of the Clergy in the neighbourhood, or the Secretary, what number of scholars they can receive into their schools, and what will be their lowest terms of teaching them to read and attending church every SABBATH DAY." (4) A week later an advertisement appeared announcing the opening of eight additional schools which would commence, "at eight o'clock in the morning and continued every Sunday throughout the year, for the reception of the children (male and female) of such persons as cannot afford to pay for their education." (5) By the following week the number of schools had risen to eleven, four of which were run by married couples. (6)

The original plan for Sunday Schools, which was drawn up in 1784, proposed that: "The Children go to school at one o'clock, and to be kept till the evening comes on, according to the Season of the year. When they have learned to read, and are brought into order and decorum, to be conducted by their respective Masters and Mistresses to Church."

The Clergy, and all other persons who wish well to this laudable scheme, to visit the schools at their pleasure and give advice and encouragement." (7)

It is evident from a study of the plan that the committee wished to spend

(1) ibid., p.4

(2) Liverpool General Advertiser, 25 May 1786

(3) ibid., 8 June 1786

(4) J. Murphy, op.cit., p.172

(5) ibid., p.172

(6) R. Brooke, Liverpool during the last Quarter of the Eighteenth Century (Liverpool, 1853), p.379-382

(7) Liverpool General Advertiser 9 December 1784

money subscribed for Sunday Schools on the instruction of poor children of all denominations, which seems to have led to a co-operative effort by all the leading religious bodies concerned in the early days of Sunday Schools. In Stockport the schools were managed by a committee composed of Anglicans, Unitarians and Wesleyans. In Manchester the Anglicans, Dissenters and Roman Catholics served on the committee of 1784, for it was not until 1800 that sectarian disputes caused a breach in the relations between them. (1) Joseph Priestly reported that in Birmingham, the children went to the place of worship chosen by their parents and it was his remarks that led to doubts amongst the Unitarians in Liverpool concerning their arrangements for Sunday Schools. On 8 June 1786 the Unitarians published their declaration on education.

"At a numerous and respectable Meeting of Gentlemen held at the Golden Lion in Dale Street, on 29th of May 1786 to consult on the Propriety of establishing FREE SCHOOLS in the Town of Liverpool, the following Resolutions were proposed, discussed and assented to unanimously." (2)

In brief the resolutions were an attempt to set up day schools since neither the Blue Coat school nor other charity schools could cope with the number of children above the age of five who were to be admitted. The hours of instruction were to be from 10.0 am to noon and from 3.0 pm to 5.0 pm and from 7.0 pm to 9 pm, with instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic and sewing and knitting for girls.

By January 1788 the Dissenters found the original plan to be unsatisfactory so a new one was proposed by the subscribers to the Sunday Schools. This showed an astonishing degree of tolerance and was far ahead of its time. The plan proposed that weekday schools rather than Sunday Schools were more appropriate to the needs of Liverpool, a proposition which the committee chose to ignore. The Corporation of Liverpool were also having nothing to do with this plan for advanced reform in education, when on 12 May 1789 the Select Committee of the Common Council declared that, "the Sunday Schools, properly attended to by the Clergy and Laity, are amply sufficient for the Education of the Lower Class of

(1) S.E. Maltby, Manchester and the Movement for National Elementary Education (Manchester, 1918), p.36

(2) J. Murphy, op.cit., p.173-174

Children." (1) Like the manufacturers, local government was against any extension of more and better education for the working class in case it led to social and political unrest.

The Sunday School movement which had inspired such high hopes soon fell into difficulties in many places, due to shortage of funds to provide the small fees paid to professional teachers. "The idea of conducting Sunday-Schools by unpaid teachers is said to have originated in a meeting of zealous Wesleyan office-bearers .... Wesley records that as early as 1785 masters in the school at Bolton gave their services gratuitously, and a few years later the same practice became general in Stockport. Every succeeding year added to the number of unpaid teachers, the Nonconformist churches being especially ready to recognise the advantages of voluntary Sunday School labour. By degrees paid teachers were entirely superseded, and gratuitous instruction became the universal rule." (2)

The Leeds Mercury for 1787 contained in almost every issue a report on the Sunday School movement in the north. One short paragraph in the issue of 10 July reports that King George III was disposed to have Sunday Schools in Windsor where the children of the poor people showed depraved conduct and morals where Her Majesty took her walks. The same paper reported in its issue of 4 September that the Sunday School Society had established 235 schools, teaching 13,227 children and also supplied them with 15,189 spelling books and 4,798 copies of the New Testament in addition to 858 Bibles.

The Lancashire Justices of Peace meeting in Quarter Sessions passed a resolution commending Sunday Schools and expressing the hope that these institutions would reduce crime. "... That where Sunday Schools have been opened their good effects have been .... perceived in the orderly and decent comportment of the youth who are instructed therein .... and that if these institutions should become established throughout the kingdom there is good reason to hope they will produce a happy change in the general morals of the people and thereby render the severities of justice less frequently necessary ...."

(3)

(1) J. Murphy, op.cit., p.177

(2) A. Gregory, op.cit., pp.109-110

(3) Lancashire R.O., Quarter Sessions Orders 1786, QSO/1786

Charles Moore, Archdeacon of Rochester, based his visitation charge for 1785 on the subject of Sunday Schools. He believed that the prophanation of Sunday was due to the result of failing to teach people to read so that they were at a loss what to do with their leisure time. By educating children on Sunday it would not interfere with their manual employment but would enable them to learn the regular habit of worship, for if they were not brought up to attend church they would not do so later of their own accord. The clergy who tried to instruct the poor from the pulpit were wasting their time, for the poor were not often in church and the majority never at any time, so in the end little good was achieved. If the clergy would collect children in Sunday Schools then they could develop their understanding and improve their minds. Moore felt that the ignorance in poor children was entirely the fault of idle parents so it was necessary to root out the weeds of ignorance at an early stage. (1) Like so many others, Moore saw the solution to the problems affecting society was to train people to attend church regularly, but this was not to be the answer.

Porteus too was discouraged by what he saw of indifference and open resistance that he encountered in many parts of the country. In many areas but particularly in the more populous regions he saw, "many hundreds of ignorant wretched young creatures of both sexes .... totally destitute of all education, totally unacquainted with the very first elements of religion and who perhaps never once entered within the walls of a Church." (2)

There were a few bishops who supported Porteus. Lewis Bagot, Bishop of Norwich, wondered how the clergy could possibly oppose Sunday Schools, when the teaching of children was enjoined in the gospels. (3) Bishop Barrington of Salisbury hoped it would be possible to combine the Sunday Schools with the Charity schools both working as permanent institutions. Richard Watson on one

- (1) Charles Moore, A Sermon preached to the Clergy at the Visitation of the Archdeaconry of Rochester on the introduction of Sunday Schools 1785 (Canterbury, 1785), passim
- (2) B. Porteus, A Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of London at the Primary Visitation of the Diocese 1790 (London, 1790), p.14
- (3) L. Bagot, A Charge delivered to the Clergy at his Primary Visitation 1784 (Norwich, 1784), p.2

of his rare visits to the Archdeaconry of Ely in 1788 remarked that the agricultural labourers in Ely were, "remarkably perverse, stupid and illiterate; the mechanics in the towns are debauched and ill-mannered, and the children of both are brought up in rudeness, ignorance and irreligion, (1) drawing the conclusion that the current generation in 1788 was beyond redemption. From his Westmorland retreat, Watson saw that the Sunday Schools would not meet the needs of the growing town population and the only solution would be to create a system of weekly institutions which educated children on a full time basis for at least three years. Unfortunately the plan was never implemented for the outbreak of the French Revolution followed by a war that was to last for twenty years, put an end to any change for fear of social unrest and the weakening of the establishment.

There were those who regretted the education offered to the working class and looked back regretfully to the days when the lower orders could neither read nor write and as a result were less likely to organise resistance to oppression. One of these was Sir Alan Gardner who had to deal with the Naval Mutiny in 1797. He said the sailors were no longer the same sort of men as once they were. He thought that Sunday Schools had done a great deal of harm by giving them education disproportionate to their situation. Newspapers were read on board ship and did harm, for these were chiefly the opposition papers. Letters now sent post free to ships did much mischief by affording many opportunities to disseminate dangerous and seditious opinions. (2)

However most sensible people thought that better education for the working man was a good thing even though in the long term he would eventually expect to have more to say in the running of the country.

(1) R. Watson, A Discourse delivered to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Ely 1788 (Cambridge, 1788), p.11

(2) The Farrington Diary, ed. J. Grieg (London, 1922-1927), I, 224

## CHAPTER TEN

DISSENTERS AND CATHOLICS IN THE DIOCESE 1777-1787

Reference has already been made to the decline in the 'Old Dissent' in the diocese during Markham's episcopate. This decline continued under Porteus as Methodism began to attract the artisans in the towns. An anonymous writer commenting on the causes of the decline of the Presbyterians and Independents, whose congregations continued to decrease, stated that Wesley's principles were "quakerism veiled .... with no slender covering of jesuitical policy". (1) Indeed he felt that the attraction of the Methodist movement for the Independents was governed by feeling and not by scripture for their religion consisted of devout raptures, two sermons each Sunday, gossip about conversions and a general condemnation of others for their dullness. Methodism had thinned the congregations of the Independents and reduced attendance at their chapels to skeleton proportions.

Furthermore, many Independent preachers were noisy, using old fashioned methods of preaching and showing a lax attitude towards church discipline. The rich man who contributed generously to the funds was never approved, no matter how high his standards of conduct were. The numbers now attending church were declining for many now came only once each month to worship instead of weekly as formerly. Sunday was now given over to excursions, business, or entertainment. So the Independents were becoming a society of men who were governed by the rich and who supported their churches out of the donations of the dead. The congregation was bound together by family connections, meeting once each week to hear a man preach, and unable to hold up the Christian doctrine to the world any more efficiently than a corporation club. (2)

The visitation returns of 1778 bear out this charge for several parishes made returns to the effect that they had <sup>not more than</sup> two families of Presbyterians and at Ormskirk they were stated to be in a difficult situation. In all the diocese there were but 106 Presbyterian congregations and of these only four congregations

(1) Anon, Causes and Reasons of the present Declension among the Congregational Churches in a Letter addressed to Pastors, Deacons and members of those Churches (London, 1766), p.5?

(2) ibid., passim

these only four congregations had reasonable numbers in the Cheshire deaneries, and they were in the towns of Bowden, Prestbury, and Macclesfield. (1) Out of a total of thirty-two congregations in Cheshire there were twenty-eight with less than twenty members each. The strength of the Independents lay in the Lancashire deaneries with a total return of forty-nine separate congregations. Twenty-two of these were reasonably strong having a large number of members with their strength lying in the growing industrial towns of Liverpool, Manchester, Rochdale, Chorley, Bolton and Bury. (2) In the Archdeaconry of Richmond the proportion was much lower for there were only twenty-six congregations in the whole region and no single one having more than twenty members. These figures can only be an approximate estimate for the incumbent took no detailed census but relied upon oral information as to the religious loyalties of his parishioners. The return from Manchester is a good example.

"My Lord,

From the best Information I can get, the Inhabitants of Manchester and Salford are computed to be about 30000; out of which number there are 5000 Dissenters of all Denominations; namely 3000 Presbyterians, 1000 of the Scotch Kirk; and other Dissenters such as Quakers, Shakers and Moravians cum multis aliis, 1000 more ...

Your most dutiful  
Son and Servant  
Maurice Griffiths

Manchester  
Nov. the 9th 1779"

(3)

The fluctuations in the fortunes of the Independents can be observed in Liverpool. Here the centre was around Toxteth Park where the leading family was that of the Mercers. A letter from Samuel Mercer, dated 23 February 1775, revealed the attitude of the Liverpool Independents towards Calvinist theology. "Some of the peculiar doctrines of Calvinism are too hard for my digestion ..... a man of moderate sentiments like Mr. N. would suit them best, and be more likely to draw a congregation from Liverpool than a flaming bigotted Calvinist ...." (4)

(1) Cheshire R.O., Articles Preparatory to Visitation 1778, EDV7/1  
Nos. 112,91,96

(2) ibid., Nos. 194, 349, 174, 246, 133, 138

(3) ibid., No 148a

(4) B. Nightingale, Lancashire Nonconformity (Manchester, 1892), III, 98

Matters came to a head on 1 October 1777 when Hugh Anderson, a Scot, was ordained minister in Key Street Chapel at Toxteth Park. The result of the appointment of Anderson as minister was the departure of the Mercer family who went to live in the city. They built the first Independent chapel within the city of Liverpool itself. The congregation failed to maintain itself and by 1825 the numbers had fallen to twelve. (1) A second migration from Toxteth Park led to the opening of Newington Congregational Chapel, which was another breakaway movement arising from dissatisfaction with Anderson's preaching at Toxteth Park. (2) An attempt was made to provide liturgical worship for dissenters in Liverpool but it only had a short life. This movement had its origin in an influx of settlers from Scotland and northern Ireland in 1707 and Hope Street Chapel, Liverpool, was built for their use. The minister was John Breknell, who was involved in a controversy on the use of a public liturgy. The building of the Octagon Chapel was the direct result of this, a building designed to provide a suitable place for the use of the proposed liturgical form. In 1750 a society had been ~~formed~~<sup>formed</sup> at Warrington to devise such a liturgy and this was published in 1763. Nicholas Clayton acted as minister, but despite all his efforts the experiment failed. (3)

On 25 February 1776 the final sermon was preached in the chapel. It was pointed out that there were many things in the Thirty Nine Articles and the Prayer Book which grieved the clergy, were offensive to good men and a triumph to non-believers. This scheme was intended to provide liturgical worship for those who could not accept the Anglican Church. Therefore the Octagon Chapel had been built and supported by those who sought full liberty and happiness within the framework of liturgical worship.

It was never intended that converts should be sought from either the Dissenters or the Anglicans, but solely from those who wanted a liturgical form

(1) ibid., III, 103, 104

(2) ibid., III, 139

(3) ibid., (Manchester, 1891), II, 48



of worship which was agreeable to their sentiments. It had now been proved that there were insufficient numbers in Liverpool interested in the scheme to make it work. Since it was impossible to continue the congregation would unite with the one worshipping at the chapel in Benn's Gardens, Liverpool. (1) To prevent the Octagon Chapel being sold to another body of Dissenters, William Plumbe, vicar of Aughton near Liverpool, bought it to use as a chapel of ease for his large and populous parish; it was dedicated to St. Catherine. Porteus wrote to Plumbe congratulating him on his efforts to reduce the number of dissenting conventicles. Like so many of his fellow bishops, Porteus had little sympathy for the continued increase in dissent which he saw going on in his diocese, at the expense of the Anglican Church. (2)

The Quakers had expanded very rapidly in numbers, especially in the northern parts of the diocese, after the preaching of George Fox which followed his meeting with the Fells of Swarthmore. This expansion can easily be traced by a study of the Comperta Books between 1660 and 1680. (3) By 1778 the movement appears to have burned itself out and in the entire diocese there were but forty-nine meetings. Thirty-nine of these were in the Archdeaconry of Richmond, a further nine in Cheshire deaneries and only one in Lancashire; there were a few isolated families who were not identified as forming a meeting. (4) There is evidence that the Quakers were still persecuted for refusing to pay Easter dues to the incumbent, Church rates, and tithes. The Marsden Monthly Meeting in Rossendale forest recorded details of these persecutions. By and large, those who refused to pay were distrained upon and their stocks of wool sold. In 1778 there were nine cases of distraint which increased to sixteen by 1780. After this date the number fell to thirteen and by 1786 there were only five cases, a figure which seems to have maintained itself for some years. (5)

(1) A Sermon preached before the Society at the Octagon Chapel, in Liverpool (Liverpool, 1776), passim

(2) B. Nightingale, op.cit., III, 137-138

(3) Lancashire R.O., Comperta Books (Western) ARR/15  
Leeds City Archives, Comperta Books (Eastern) RD/C/1-47

(4) Cheshire R.O., Articles preparatory to Visitation EDV7/1

(5) Lancashire R.O., Marsden Monthly Meeting Sufferings Book 1764-1792, FRM/1/40

In Whitehaven there was a congregation of Glassites who were at variance with all other protestant sects for they maintained that they were the only ones who kept the word of God and that all others were anti-Christian. Porteus refers to this congregation of Glassites in his Diary for 1780 when on March 2nd he recorded that, "we are as much obliged by our Saviour's command to wash one another's feet as to receive the Lord's Supper. And it should seem that there are some Christians who maintain this whimsical opinion. There is at Whitehaven in my Diocese a sect of men who call themselves Sandimanians or Glassites who meet together in a private room once a week & wash each other's feet." (1)

Of the remaining groups of dissenters, only the Baptists are mentioned as having one large congregation at Newchurch in Pendle where there were 170 members. In the replies received in answer to the visitation articles, a total of twenty-two Baptist congregations were mentioned but each one had less than twenty members with that one exception. There was a Moravian congregation of ten families at Ashton under Lyne (2) but these played a minor part in the religious life of the diocese.

The one religious body which was increasing in membership was the Methodist and especially was this true in the industrial towns. The vicar of Bolton analysed the situation for Porteus in 1778. "Bolton hath for more than a century been noted for the great Number of Presbyterians settled in it - their Minister in Town (for there are many in the Neighbourhood) is a Man of a respectable Character, and has a much better Endowment than the Vicar of the Parish - the Trade was for many years principally in the hands of the Dissenters, but they are lately much sunk in Number, Credit & Fortune - Other Sectaries have sprung up; the Methodists are numerous, but all of the poorer sort - Whitfield was a frequent Preacher here. John Wesley still visits his Flock yearly, thro' his means they have been enabled to build a very large & handsome Meeting House - there is another Meeting in Town of a similar kind not under Wesley's Direction; the Minister who is a Druggist from York and keeps a Shop

(1) B. Porteus, Diary, I,120. Nothing is known of the origin of this sect in Whitehaven

(2) Cheshire R.O., Articles preparatory to Visitation EDV7/1 No.129

stiles himself and his Congregation Old Presbyterians he appears on Sundays in a Gown & Cassock, his Flock is composed of the meanest of the People."

"The Quakers who are but few in Number and of no account have lately rented a room to meet in, but it is seldom made use of." (1)

The Methodist movement seems to have recruited its greatest following in the towns. In the Cheshire deaneries, Methodists were numerous at Tarporly, "many Methodists", Bunbury, Congleton, Macclesfield, Prestbury, with "1,000 Methodists", and Stockport with, "lots of Methodists". (2) The great centres of Methodism in Lancashire centred around the new cotton towns of Bury, Dean, Eccles, Manchester, Liverpool, Prestwick and Rochdale, which counted their Methodists in hundreds. Out of the total of 266 parishes and chapelries in the Archdeaconry of Richmond only twenty-one Methodist groups were returned; the deanery of Copeland had but two such congregations. (3) The strength of the Methodists in Rochdale came from the moderate and tolerant attitude of the vicar, Dr. Wray, to the Methodists which was in complete contrast to his violent anti-papal attitude. (4)

John Wesley appears to have visited his congregations in these areas almost annually during March, April and May. In the March and April of 1779, he travelled from Congleton to Manchester via Macclesfield and Stockport to open a new chapel at Davyhulme and then on to Oldham, Bury, Warrington, Nantwich, Wigan, Bolton and Rochdale. (5) The following year he repeated this tour, preaching in Warrington Church on Easter Day (26 March) 1780. A fortnight later he preached to a new Methodist group at Delph, near Oldham, before continuing his journey to Whitehaven and Cockermouth. On 30 March 1781, Wesley visited his Cheshire congregations and opened Oldham Street Chapel, Manchester. (6) Continuing northwards, Wesley interrupted his journey to Apbleside and Whitehaven

(1) Cheshire R.O., Articles preparatory to Visitation, EDV7/1, Nq133

(2) ibid., Nos.22,61,70,91,104,324

(3) ibid., Whitehaven and Cockermouth

(4) J. Raine, Vicars of Rochdale (part ii) (Chetham Society, 1883) II (N.S.), 206-209

(5) N. Curnock, Journal of John Wesley (London, 1914), VI,226-228

(6) ibid., VI,269-271

by calling at Preston where there was a 'little society' which needed encouragement. (1) His visit in 1782 was extended to cover the opening of a new chapel at Ashton under Lyne followed by a visit to Wigan to preach a sermon in a town where the Methodists had had little success; "Perhaps God will cause fruit to spring up even in this desolate place." (2) During the years 1783 and 1784 Wesley repeated his visits to Cheshire and Lancashire but found no opportunity during 1785 to make any visit to these counties. In the April of 1786 Wesley began his visitation at Warrington and went to call on his congregations at Bolton, Burnley, Blackburn and Colne. He took the opportunity to make a visit to Richmond to see Archdeacon Francis Blackburne for whom he had preached some years previously in his parish church. "I went on to Richmond I alighted, according to his own desire, at Archdeacon Blackburne's house. How lively and active was he some years ago! I find he is two years younger than me; but he is now a mere old man, being both blind and deaf, and lame .... He durst not ask me to preach in his church, 'for fear somebody should be offended,' so I preached at the head of the street, to a numerous congregation; ...." (3)

The <sup>rural</sup> ~~total~~ parts of the diocese showed little, if any, Methodist influence in 1778. In fact it does not appear that the Methodists made any real move into the rural areas until the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

What was the attraction of Methodism for weavers, spinners and textile workers? The Methodist revival was a flowing of the Spirit in the Anglican church but that body discouraged it in much the same way as the papacy had discouraged the Franciscans. The nature of Methodism was at first a religion for poor and not of the poor, therefore it attracted artisans. It is a pattern which can be found amongst the weavers in Wiltshire (4) and the blanket weavers at Witney. (5) Methodism was an embarrassment and reproach to the Anglican

(1) ibid., VI, 310-12; 317-18

(2) N. Curnock, op.cit., VI, 347-348

(3) ibid., VII, 155-160

(4) V.C.H. Wiltshire, III, 121 et seq.

(5) V.C.H. Oxfordshire, II, 51

church for it bore witness to the inadequacies of that Church and the bishops did nothing to prevent a breach with the Methodists or their eventual expulsion from the Anglican Church.

On the other hand what was the character of Methodism as it appeared to contemporary writers and preachers in 1781? The Methodists were believed to claim a superior sanctity and to have a severe attitude towards life and manners. It, "requires of its votaries to commit themselves to the guidance of the Spirit, with an utter contempt of reason, and all human learning." (1) To attack Methodists by ridicule was a mistake since many were sincere in their belief while others were irritated beyond endurance of reclamation. The movement was regarded as a species of enthusiasm which drew attention to some particular doctrines of revealed religion and fixed it on ~~them~~ to the exclusion of the remainder. Their favourite topics were grace, assurance, predestination and original sin which were given to the illiterate without any explanation. Methodists appear to show, "an ill-placed, uncharitable severity and censoriousness in the former chiefly directed against the regular Clergy:". (2) They also were charged with exhibiting a coarse and slovenly manner, "chosen under the specious pretence of a 'Scriptural simplicity'." (3)

Thomas Ball, Archdeacon of Sudbury, believed that the prevailing moral standards in English society had given rise to the Methodist movement and its attack upon the Anglican clergy. In his visitation charge of 1783, he tried to show what lay behind the movement. At all levels in society there existed a taste for dissipation where everyone tried to compete with his neighbour in expensive and fashionable tastes. Pride was a characteristic vice where every individual wanted to command when he should obey. Young people, indulged by parents, were indolent, inattentive and followed expensive amusements, claiming the right to make a final judgement. This spirit was alleged to be prevalent in every department of the state, including the army, the navy and

(1) Anon, An Essay on the Character of Methodism (Cambridge, 1781), p.7

(2) ibid., p.16

(3) ibid., p.16

certain types of clergymen. This passion for modern adventures possessed many and these attracted the curious and inquisitive who eventually caused a schism in the church. The majority of men have two reasons for their actions - one for themselves - the other for the world. This applies to those who have left the Anglican church and instead of remaining silent begin to attack the establishment in general. (1)

The Methodists were believed to be mistaken in their approach to the problems of society. The rapid growth of Deism and the decay of piety in England had reached alarming proportions. The main purpose of Methodism was to attack reason and philosophy, to awaken devout affections. The author of the essay on Methodism believed the root cause of their popularity came from the writings of Barrow, Tillotson and Atterbury who used proof texts in a loose manner so giving, "a handle for those wild Applications of Scripture, on which the whole system of METHODISM is built and established." (2) The danger was that religious enthusiasm so often lead to wild licence, which was the more alarming when theologians stated that, "nor devotion be raised without inflaming the passions;". Therefore Methodism must be checked and confined. "Instead of extending that influence which Methodism has acquired where it never had any right or pretension to admittance, let us resolve to confine it for the future, within limits of its own province and proper jurisdiction - the District of Dullness and of Ignorance." (3) The proposition never succeeded and the number of Methodists continued to increase especially in the manufacturing regions and the towns.

Some clergy in the diocese had ideas of their own as to the real cause, or if not, at least an important contributory factor. The curate of Lango chapel, near Blackburn, wrote in his return of 1778. "The town and neighbourhood of Blackburn is very populous, and hath of late Years increased so much that the Parish Church is not able by any means to contain them .... Several Meeting Houses lately erected, to which our People have resorted when they could not be received into the Church." (4) At Mossley in Lancashire, the

- (1) T. Ball, A Sermon preached at Mildenhall at the Visitation of the Archdeacon of Sudbury (London, 1783), passim  
 (2) An Essay on the Character of Methodism (Cambridge, 1781), p.27  
 (3) ibid., p.78  
 (4) Cheshire R.O., Articles preparatory to Visitation 1778, EDV7/1 No.226

curate reported that there was no room in church for all the congregation. (1) It was not only the lack of church accommodation that led to the growth of dissenting Meeting houses. At Cockermouth the growth of dissent was reported to Porteus as the fault of Sir John Lowther who had appointed no minister for ten years. (2) Another factor was the existence of the private pew system which virtually excluded artisans and labourers from the church. A perusal of the faculty papers reveals the extent to which the old open common forms were gradually converted to private pews. The vicar of Easby wrote to Bishop Majendie on the subject in 1811, "Many of the labouring class absent themselves on Sundays, I believe from no determined motive. The great distance of the Villages from the church may be one reason, and a more prevalent one, the long impolitic practice of making pews in Churches private property, which grievance (sic) has nearly banished the lower orders from the Church for want of seats, and has driven many more persons to the Meeting Houses than seems to have been ever considered by either Churchmen or Statesmen." (3)

There was a further point which is not always taken into consideration and is that of the ability of the Methodist lay preacher to be able to put his message across through his intimate knowledge of, and contacts with, the members of the congregation to which he spoke. The vicar of Brignell reporting to the Bishop in 1811 wrote, "There are no Dissenters - except Methodists may have acquired that appellation, - & of persons going under that denomination there are many who attend the Meeting-Houses in the neighbourhood when a favourite preacher appears, but whether it is from curiosity or that the plain, earnest & homely diction of the exhorter makes a stronger impression on Vulgar minds, than the more correct compositions of their Pastor, I am not prepared to say." (4)

In all probability the language spoken by the Methodist lay preacher was closer to the dialect used by the community than was the case with many Anglican

(1) ibid., No.131

(2) Chester Cathedral Library, Bishop Gastrell's Visitation with notes added by Porteus in 1779

(3) Cheshire R.O., Articles Preparatory to Visitation 1811, EDV7/4 No.334

(4) ibid., No.318

clergy whose origins lay elsewhere in the country. This point is borne out in a later report made by Benjamin Newton, rector of Wath, who spent a holiday in Kendal in 1818. "We walked .... to Church .... and a sermon was preaching .... and a very good delivery making some allowance for a North Country dialect." (1)

The reason for the slow spread of Methodism in the rural areas is given by the vicar of Middleton Tyas in 1789. Where agriculture is practised, "a minister has little to struggle with save the sleepy spirit of indifference;"

(2) By 1778 the miners at Upholland, near Wigan, had ceased attending church, "In so populous a Neighbourhood as this, my Lord, where a Variety of manufactures are carried on, & a Number of coal mines worked by the lowest Class of Mankind, there will always be found many, who totally disregard the worship of God: nay I fear have not so much as God in all their thoughts."

At Silverdale in Warton parish the vicar noted that there were some of his parishioners who had never attended church during the last fourteen years, except at a funeral. (3)

The attitude of many clergy towards their poorer parishioners drove these people to dissent. The vicar of Ingleton wrote, "Some of the lowest Class, who do not constantly frequent the Church." (4) At Whittington, the poorest people were said to have no decent clothes in which to attend the church. The activities of the followers of the Countess of Huntingdon disturbed the vicar of Tatham: "there are some young Men, who frequently come into our Chapelry & into the Neighbourhood, pretending to be sent by Lady Huntingdon; causing Disputes & endeavouring to draw the Parishioners to Methodism." (5)

John Wesley never claimed to be a Dissenter, for the Dissenters as such were opposed to him. The majority of the Dissenters were really Calvinists while he was an Arminian. Wesley encouraged his followers to attend their parish churches for baptisms, weddings and burials as well as to make their communion. There is ample evidence in the Chester visitation returns between

(1) C.F. Fendal & E. Cruchley, Diary of Benjamin Newton Rector of Wath 1816-1818 (Cambridge, 1933), p167

(2) Cheshire R.O., Articles Preparatory to Visitation 1789, EDV7/2

(3) ibid., 1778, No.272,350

(4) Cheshire R.O., Articles Preparatory to Visitation, EDV7/1 No.295

(5) ibid., No.314



1789 and 1815. The break had to come in due course was evident when lay preachers began to administer the sacraments as early as 1760. (1)

The issue of Meeting House licences between 1777 and 1787 show the rate at which dissent was increasing in certain areas. Admittedly the larger proportion of licences were for rooms in private houses with other evidence to show that other places were used, such as a workshop at Macclesfield and the theatre at Whitehaven as Meeting places. (2) The following table shows the ratio of licences issued.

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Houses</u> | <u>New Chapels</u> |
|-------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1777        | 6             | 4                  |
| 1778        | 0             | 0                  |
| 1779        | 8             | 2                  |
| 1780/82     | 0             | 0                  |
| 1783        | 3             | 3                  |
| 1784        | 7             | 3                  |
| 1785        | 15            | 0                  |
| 1786        | 17            | 1                  |

A total of thirty-six houses and thirteen chapels were licenced under Porteus compared with eight houses and six chapels under Markham. A further twenty-nine chapels were licenced at Quarter Sessions in the same period. (3) By 1787 the chief centres of Methodist activity were Liverpool, Warrington, Delph (Oldham), Ashton under Lyne, Butterworth, Oldham and Mobberly. Where houses were licenced for worship these were usually found on the outlying portions of the new towns.

On the whole Methodism gained in popularity since it used people in a way the Anglican church never did at parochial level and so ministered to their self respect. Anglican services taken verbatim from the Prayer Book are remote to illiterate people and to sing hymns to rousing tunes was far better than the dreary metrical psalms of Sternhold and Hopkins. Thomas Chatterton said of Wesley's hymns, "You'd swear t'was bawdy songs made godly." (4)

Though John Wesley himself was devoted to the Anglican church and it was his

- (1) G. Nuttall & O. Chadwick, From Uniformity to Unity 1662-1962 (London, 1962), p.267
- (2) Cheshire R.O., Meeting House Licences, EDA/2
- (3) Lancashire R.O., Quarter Sessions Licences, QDV/4
- (4) A. Warne, Church and Society in Eighteenth Century Devon (Newton Abbot, 1969) p.128

intention to retain the Methodists within that Church but his plan failed in the long run. It has been stated that if the bishops of the period had been more co-operative, then they would have retained the Methodists within the Anglican communion. The real truth is that co-operation with the Methodists became impossible when they could regard such men as Walker, Grimshaw of Haworth and Venn of Huddersfield as half Christian. Hence the gap was bound to become wider as time passed.

By 1761 Wesley could speak about the rift already evident between the episcopally ordained clergy and the irregular lay ministry, which in the end divided the Methodists and the Evangelicals. Wesley wrote to Grimshaw on this subject (on this subject) on 27 March 1761. "Our preachers are mostly licensed, and so are Dissenting ministers. They took out licences as Protestant Dissenters. Three of our steadiest preachers give the sacrament at Norwich, with no other ordination or authority than a sixpenny licence. My brother approves of it. All the rest will probably follow their example. What then must be the consequence? Not only separation, but general confusion and destruction of the work ...." (1) The real beginning of the break came between the licencing of Lady Huntingdon's chapels in 1781 and Wesley's in 1787. Porteus referred to the former in 1784. "Lady Huntingdon & Her Ministers have just made a Secession from the Church of England. The Chapel near Islington is licenced as a Dissenting Meeting House & two Church of England Ministers in her Service have ordained six young Men." (2)

By 1785 the ideas of separation were becoming a major topic. The Anglican church was organised on the basis of the Prayer Book and the threefold orders of bishop, priest and deacon under the headship of the Crown. Many Methodist ministers had received their training in the Anglican church but they employed laymen called preachers to assist them in their work of conversion. So separation was not asked for on the grounds that the Anglican church was not

(1) J. Simon, Wesley the Master Builder (London, 1927), pp.75-76

(2) B. Porteus, Diary, II, 99-100

apostolical nor her services or doctrine defective. Methodists were welcome in the Anglican church because, "many Clergy find~~ing~~ a secret pleasure in having such a number of Communicants." The argument put forward for separation appears to have been; "The Clergy are not converted men, they are not experienced in the work of God upon the Soul; therefore they are not fit to minister in holy things ...." (1) Many Anglican clergy felt that separation would be desirable, "for then we would be no longer a reproof to them. Besides there is no danger of our members being corrupted by the Church: and there is some ground of hope that they, as many as have been, will be sanctified by us." (2)

The author of these remarks felt that on the whole separation from the Anglican church could serve no useful purpose to the cause of religion for many would be offended and withdraw. The subject of ordination would prove to be a source of discord amongst preachers and arouse jealousy because others were preferred before them. In the long term this could lead to a weakening of the union and to further divisions among Methodists, which did indeed take place, ~~after 1830~~. But on the whole before 1791 Methodism had made little impression upon the diocese outside the towns. Dissenting families tended, as they often do today, to marry within their own craft and occupation. (3) Their descendants are in many cases staunch supporters of their nonconformist place of worship, but of late years many of these families have been drawn towards Catholicism on the one hand and Anglicanism on the other so that dissent amongst the artisan groups is no longer the force it formerly was. The success of the Methodist movement is not entirely due to its attraction for this class of people. In Wales, where it became a popular movement, it was the direct result of the lack of services and the distance of houses from the parish church. (4)

- (1) A. Layman, Free Thoughts concerning A Separation of the People called Methodists from the Church of England (London, 1785), p.5
- (2) ibid., p.7
- (3) For details of this custom see the parish registers and the registers for dissenting chapels.
- (4) E.D. Jones, "History of the Church in North Cardiganshire", Journal of the Historical Society of the Church in Wales, III (No.8), 100-111

The subject of Methodism and its influence has been the origin of a vast amount of literature. Wearmouth regards it as having had a benign influence, while Plumb and Thompson both regard its influence as malignant, Hobsbawm regards Methodism from a somewhat exaggerated view that it saved England from Revolution in the last decade of the century. In reality Methodism was but one aspect of popular religion. (1)

The Dissenters, as a body, felt humiliated by the necessity to pass an annual indemnity act to protect them against the letter of the law. In 1779 the passing of the Nonconformist Relief Act was an attempt to win them over to support the government at a time when the pressure of the War of American Independence was strong.

The move towards a greater extension of toleration was commented upon by Archdeacon Law at his visitation of the Archdeaconry of Rochester in 1779. He believed that the war had made England examine her attitude towards toleration and the result had been an extension of privileges to both Dissenters and Catholics. The years since 1714 had seen the establishment of the Hanoverian dynasty firmly on the throne through the loyalty of their subjects and even the pretender to the throne in 1745 was forgotten. Papal power had been weakened by the <sup>suppression</sup> ~~denial~~ of the Jesuit Order which had been the chief supporter of papal privilege and authority. (2) The attitude in England to the Catholics must be one of compassion for the Church of Rome was no longer likely to be a danger to civil government. The Jews were far more stubborn with their non-Christian worship yet they were allowed full religious toleration so why not the Roman Catholics? This latter body were fully tolerated both in Holland and America without any evidence of political inconvenience.

If Roman Catholics were to be granted toleration to worship freely then in all fairness it should be extended to the Dissenters. Unfortunately for them, many of their teachings deviated widely from those of their predecessors and

(1) J.H. Plumb, England in the Eighteenth Century 1714-1815 (London, 1966), pp. 91-97. E.P. Thompson, Making of the English Working Class (London, ed. 1968), pp.385-411. R.F. Wearmouth, Methodism and People of the Eighteenth Century (London, 1945), passim. E.J. Hobsbawm, "Methodism and the Threat of Revolution" History Today, VII (1957), p.124

(2) R.W. Harris, Absolution and Enlightenment (London, 1964), p.271, 335-337

there was a danger that they would undermine the foundations of Christianity, if the full subscription requirement to the Articles were withdrawn. It would be sufficient, "to demand from them .... their firm, unfeigned belief of the divine authority of the sacred writings; and an open profession that they will make them the rule of their actions." (1) Opinions that are destructive of belief in God must be checked since these open the way to wickedness. To repeal the Test Act would be to invite danger, but it was realised that it was impossible to regulate the faith and worship of those excluded from a share in the civil government.

Archdeacon Francis Blackburne had other views on the toleration of Roman Catholics. A violent anti-papist himself he advised Archbishop Drummond on an investigation of the problem and suggested methods of dealing with it and so prevent any increase in numbers. (2) Blackburne expressed his concern at the charges made concerning the activities of Roman priests in the conversion of the protestant subjects of George III. In 1768 he had undertaken an enquiry into the state of Catholicism in his Archdeaconry of Cleveland but found, to his amazement, that the clergy paid scant attention to the activities of the Roman Catholics in their parishes, but far more to extracting their tithes and dues from Dissenters and Quakers, Blackburne expressed strong disapproval of the view held by so very many of his clergy that so long as their parishioners had a copy of the Bible in English all was well. In fact the activities of the Catholics could be a compliment to the indolence of the Anglicans - ".... a sort of civil way of getting rid of the pains and trouble of making those whose station and circumstances require it, more competent judges for themselves, than their own leisure and opportunities for examination will admit of, and who may expect this service from us through a persuasion that our designation to the ministry requires it at our hands." (3) Blackburne really

- (1) J. Law, A Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Rochester 1779 (Rochester, 1779), p.15
- (2) H. Aveling, Northern Catholics (London, 1966), pp.378-380  
B.I.H.R., Correspondence of Archbishop Drummond, R.Bp. vii
- (3) F. Blackburne, A Consideration of the Present State of the Controversy between Protestants and Papists (Dublin, 1768), p.6

believed that Catholicism was an anti-Christian system of superstition ignoring the truth and the benefits of the gospel. Like so many other supporters of the anti-subscription movement, he advocated a closer unity and friendship between Anglicans and Dissenters to combat the power of Rome, for Christian liberty depended upon full support for "our gracious King and his free and equal government ...." (1) Like so many others of his time, Blackburne complained constantly about the prevailing fashion in religion as in everything else. "The Word of God .... seems, in too many instances, to be despised and neglected, like other things, which lose their value, when they lose their novelty. Many seem .... to pride themselves in their ignorance, and think themselves happy in being able to excuse their ungodly, fraudulent, or immoral practices, on the pretence of wanting learning, or what they call Scholarship", (2) An attitude which if continued could only bring repercussions on the clergy in the long run.

Almost thirty years previously John Sterne, Archdeacon of Cleveland, had expressed fears concerning the safety of protestantism when under attack from popery. He reminded his hearers of, "those necessary Fences and Guards, which the Government hath provided for the support of our Religious and Civil Liberties against so restless a Faction, shall be very apt to forget them too; or at least, suffer them to lye unregarded and useless in our Statute Book and become as meer a dead Letter ...." (3) In 1771 Beilby Porteus had written a pamphlet for his parishioners at Lambeth on the errors of the Roman Church. Roman arguments were based on the infallibility of the Roman Church and its refusal to recognise the Anglican Church as a member of the Catholic Church of the Apostles' Creed. Stating that England had never severed herself from Rome, but had simply purified the faith and sacraments from errors which had crept in, he implied that Anglicans were ready and willing to join with Rome on the

(1) ibid., p.123

(2) F. Blackburne, op.cit., p.125

(3) J. Sterne, A Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Cleveland held at Thirsk, Stokesley and Malton 1746 (York, 1747), p.10

terms of the gospel and nothing else. Although Henry VIII was to be commended in destroying papal power in England but not in other matters, for many reformers had acted from evil motives though some acted from good ones. The basis of the Anglican Church is to administer the sacraments as our Lord gave them, to worship in a language which all can understand and to accept the Bible as the foundation of faith.

Porteus laid down certain rules of conduct or principles that were to be followed in relationships with Catholics. In the first place Protestants must not be tempted by the Catholics' bad doctrines or practices, nor to show uncivility or ill-will towards them. People must remember that the penal laws existed not to enforce conformity, but because Catholics refused to obey the government under which they lived. As Christians they must show patience and tenderness towards Catholics but must not be drawn into arguments about matters which laymen have little qualification or skill to handle. People must accept that persons holding different opinions can live amongst them but it must always be remembered that while Protestants are disunited and careless, the Romans are united and active. However, if persons will not learn the principles of Anglicanism then they must not be surprised when they find themselves attracted to Rome. (1)

When Porteus held his primary visitation of Chester diocese in 1778, of the questions he asked, one was concerning the number of papists in each parish. The pattern revealed by the visitation returns was almost identical with that shown by the returns of 1767, except for a few parishes which had returned one papist family in the earlier year now made a nil return. The total numbers of papists in 1767 were 25,139 and for 1780 only 27,228, a very small increase in numbers. (2) The vicar of Lytham had some strong remarks to make about the Catholics in his parish, and their attitudes towards the Protestants.

(1) B. Porteus, A Confutation of the Errors of the Church of Rome (London, 1771)

(2) Cheshire R.O., Papists' Returns, EDA1/6

"The Protestants in this Parish, begin to be apprehensive, as the Papists have met with such favour from Parliament, that they will, in a little time be wormed out of the Parish, as every step was taken before the Act passed to distress them-Few that live not in the neighbourhood of Papists, can scarsely (sic) imagine the methods made use of by these incendiaries to distress the Protestants when they have it in their power, so as they have in this detached corner of the Country-Any Papist, come from where he will, findes an asylum here; provided he can but make the Papists believe him an Enemy to his Country-We have two that were in the last Rebellion, as much taken notice of as if they had been some great men, who had deserved well of the Public - One lived at bed and Board with Mr Clifton. The Other was relieved by the Papists in the Town - Several have gone in Rebellions out of the Neighbourhood, who when they came back, were looked on as men of great Merit. However Gentlemen may behave one towards another, this here we are sure of, that there is nothing wanting but opportunities to do mischief, if we may believe what the lower class of People both say and Act, for we imagine them, in this place, generally to speak the sentiments of their superiors - All I shall hint is that at present the Protestants are in great apprehensions for themselves and Families - I for my part should be glad to be removed if your Lordship think it convenient, not that I am afraid of them in the least, for I shall always endeavour to do my duty and hope to be supported in it." (1)

A typical comment from a parish in which the protestants were the minority and this is true of many in the deanery of Amounderness. To reinforce his fears the vicar of Lytham referred Porteus to his friend the vicar of Kirkham<sup>2</sup> "Mr Shuttleworth of Kirkham knows me tolerably well, and if your Lordship have an inclination, you may enquire my Character of him, and the Papists behaviour in both his and my Parish." (2) An entirely different picture may be drawn from the return of the curate of Clitheroe. "The Number of Papists in this Chapelry is only seven, all of the lower class. We have consequently no popish chapel, or popish School - Nor do I know of any attempts being made to pervert to Popery any persons amongst us." (3)

Contemporary Catholic observers considered that their numbers were declining, especially in the eastern deaneries of the Archdeaconry of Richmond. Both Lord Fairfax of Gilling and Sir Edward Gascoigne were expressing opinions in public that Catholics were slowly declining in numbers. The explanation lies in the fact that the population was increasing faster during the latter part of the

(1) Cheshire R.O., Articles Preparatory to Visitation, EDV7/1, 283

(2) ibid., EDV7/1, No.283

(3) ibid., EDV7/1, No.233



eighteenth century than the ecclesiastical authorities imagined, although, as we shall see later, Bishop Porteus tended to agree with the opinion of Lord Fairfax. Hence the numbers of Catholics in the diocese were in a reduced proportion to population figures than they were in 1717; the expansion of dissent also dwarfed their numbers. The eighteenth century was a period of decline in Catholic landed gentry. In the deanery of Boroughbridge, only the Trappes of Nidd survived the century. Sir Thomss Tankred had conformed<sup>d</sup> in 1772 and sold his estates in 1776. The Swales of Stainley went bankrupt as the result of a rash mining experiment and they left the district. The Messengers of Fountains sold their estates to relieve their financial burdens and retired to Cayton Grange in 1768. The Wyvills of Richmond had either conformed or died out by 1780 and the male line of the Ingelby's of Raventoft was extinct by 1778. (1) As the numbers of Catholics tended to decrease in the country they appear to have increased in the town. In Richmond for example there were but fifteen Catholics in 1717 but by 1780 their numbers had increased to ninety. (2)

Many of the Lancashire Catholic families were extremely wealthy. Amongst them may be noted Viscount Molyneux of Croxteth (£3,500) per annum, Richard Sherburn of Stonyhurst (£3,000) per annum, Sir Thomas Clifton of Lytham<sup>£.</sup>/(2,000) per annum, all of whom were able to maintain and support a mission. The real centres of Catholic strength were the parishes of Preston, Cloughton, Hornby, Kirkham, Lytham and Croston. (3) Two important missions were based on Towneley Hall, Burnley, and Trafford Hall at Barton on Mersey. To cater for the spiritual needs of Catholics in Bolton, Rochdale, Stockport, Glossop and Macclesfield a chapel was built in the Roman Entry, Church Street, Manchester, in 1776. The Blackburn area was provided with a Catholic chapel in 1781 and by 1784 Nathaniel Booth had furnished a chapel in Anderton House, Wensley Fold, Rawtenstall at his own expense. (4) In Cheshire the only Catholic family of

(1) H. Aveling, "Catholic Recusants of the West Riding of Yorkshire. 1558-1790", Leeds Literary and Philosophical Society X (1963), p.259

(2) H. Aveling, Northern Catholics (London, 1966), pp.393

(3) E. Simpson, "Records of Roman Catholics in Lancashire", North West Catholic History I (No. 1, 1969), p.11 et seq.

(4) C.A. Bolton, Salford Diocese and Its Catholic Past (Manchester, 1950) pp.87-88, 107-108

note was that of Sir William Stanley at Hooton Hall, who maintained a mission, but there were few Catholics in that county. (1) There was a resident Bishop in Lancashire namely Bishop Petre who resided at Sholey Hall, Ribchester, and when Bishop William Walton came to visit him in 1774 he confirmed for Bishop Petre in thirty-seven places. The numbers of candidates varied from ten at Leighton to 280 at Ince near Wigan, (2) which indicates the strength of the Catholics in that county.

One result of the Catholic Relief Act of 1778 was the formation of a committee to negotiate for full emancipation for Catholics by removing from English Catholicism those things which were offensive to Protestants. Thomas Stapleton of Carlton and Lord Stourton of Knaresborough were the leading figures in the committee but it failed to achieve its objective. (3) Following protests about the Relief Act and the Gordon Riots which followed, parliament undertook a survey of Catholics throughout the country, in 1780. This led Porteus to comment upon the situation as he saw it in a letter to his Chester clergy, in 1781. From the returns it appeared that the increase in their numbers since the census of 1767 was well below the level many people thought it was and very much less in the diocese of Chester.

According to the survey of 1780 the number of Catholics in Chester diocese was 27,228 where they were important and showed great energy in making converts. It was essential to keep a watchful eye on them and guard against their activities. Anglicans who claimed that they held the pure faith should be as eager to win converts as the Catholics were for their doctrines. No opportunity must be lost to convert a papist from the error of his ways when this could be done fairly and honestly. So a defensive stand must be taken in this matter to protect those under the care of the incumbent from the influence of popery. Porteus claimed that the number of converts, even in the deanery of Amounderness where they were strong, was only small. In the majority of cases

(1) E. Simpson, *loc.cit.* No.2, p.43

(2) C.A. Bolton, *op.cit.*, p.72-73

(3) H. Aveling, *loc.cit.*, p.263

the converts came from the lowest class, had the lowest understanding, so they were unable to reason.

The methods which Porteus discovered were used by Catholics to win converts he outlined to his clergy under the following heads.

(1) A bribe was offered to countrymen of money, or who had a small farm on a Catholic estate, or by offering entry to a profitable trade. The minds of the uneducated found this irresistible so the labourer renounced his Anglican faith.

(2) Inter-marriage between Catholics and Protestants was another method. When this took place amongst the higher classes in society they were not always bad, for stipulations were usually made for each party to enjoy their respective religions and the children the same. In the lower ranks this precaution was seldom used and their religion was ruined. Porteus found that this was a two way process for the Anglican church often gained at the expense of Rome. However the Catholic party to a marriage was often keen for conversion and seldom failed to succeed.

(3) The Catholic gentry often employed as servants or labourers the children of Protestants to reconcile them to Rome. There were many Catholic gentry who were disdainful of such practices and insisted on all their protestant servants attending their own parish church. Indeed they restrained their priests from converting servants and distributed their charity to catholic and protestant alike. These types were to be congratulated for the tradesmen usually did the opposite by working on the minds of their apprentices who lived with them, and seven years was a long time to resist influences.

The steps, Porteus asked should be taken, were in the first place for the clergy to warn their people by public and private exhortation not to form such connections as were dangerous to their religion. Secondly the poor must be warned of the follies of selling their religion for money and should bear their poverty and difficulties with Christian fortitude and trust in the providence of God. They must persevere in the Anglican faith and not forfeit their chance

of salvation in the next world by conversion to Rome in this. These remarks are typical of the idea of the period in the rigid structure of society in which the poor were taught that this is their station in life and that they must endure it.

All parents, guardians and friends of young persons who were under their care were to restrict their entry to apprenticeships or as servants in Catholic households. They should realise that the choice of career was as great under protestant families as catholic ones. (1) Parish officers were only too often to blame for this practice of apprenticing children to Catholic families in order to save the parish rates, a few pounds. Warnings ought to be given to the poor against entering into a marriage contract with the Catholics for they do these for worldly and interested motives with the result that peace and happiness are destroyed in the long term. There was the added danger of sending protestant children to popish schools for their education. Porteus realised that the Catholics must have freedom to educate their own children, for to restrain them would be an unsound policy since it would compel them to send their children abroad where they could imbibe, "much grosser superstitions, and political sentiments much more hostile to the English constitution, than they could possibly learn in this country." (2) This was a direct reference to the ideas then current in France and which were spreading through Europe. While Porteus had no complaints about popish schools in his diocese and he did not know of a single conversion brought about by a popish school, there was no necessity to send protestant children to popish schools. The diocese of Chester, "abounds more in excellent Protestant Schools, adapted to all classes of people from the highest to the lowest, than any other district of the kingdom that I am acquainted with." (3) The only reason for sending protestant children to popish schools is that either tuition is very cheap or free so the lowest class should be made ashamed of such practices.

(1) B. Porteus, A Letter to the Clergy of the Diocese of Chester concerning precautions against Roman Catholics 1781 (Chester, 1781), p.10 (second edition London, 1782)

(2) ibid., p.15

(3) ibid., p.17

If the clergy begin to instil into the minds of the young at an early age the delusion of popery and ground them in the rudiments of the protestant faith and if adults are properly instructed to deal with this problem then there would be no danger of conversion to Rome.

Porteus gave details of all the pamphlets he intended to have printed for use in his diocese where the Catholics were most numerous. Cruelty, oppression and persecution of them was not necessary to safeguard protestants - merely the use of reasoned argument, persuasion and the Word of God. (1) In his dealings with the Catholics, Porteus was far more tolerant than many of his contemporaries on the bench were prepared to be. Attempts to give them further relief failed entirely but the situation was changed in 1791 by the influx of refugee clergy from France, who were under persecution, as a result of the outbreak of Revolution in 1789. A Catholic revival however lay far ahead in the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

(1) B. Porteus, op.cit., pp.21-23

CHAPTER ELEVEN

BEILBY PORTEUS AND HIS EXTRA-DIOCESAN ACTIVITIES

Although Porteus's interest in his diocese occupied the most important place in his life, yet he was not negligent in those other spheres in which as a bishop he had to play his part. He never neglected his duties as rector of Hunton and warden of St. Cross Hospital, Winchester, but always found time to be present in the House of Lords when any matters concerning church life were being debated. Markham on the other hand was always present for as many debates as possible and sat on several committees dealing with a medley of matters far removed from the ecclesiastical field. (1) Whereas Markham took little part in a debate unless he felt compelled to do so, Porteus on the other hand used his position to support and further the cause of the Church.

Porteus was admitted to the House of Lords on 27 February 1777, when he took the oaths and was allocated a seat on the episcopal bench. It was a delight to Porteus to meet on the bench his old friend Dr. Butler and he recorded his joy at the reunion with Butler in his diary. Following the death of Bishop Terrick of London on 31 March 1777, Bishop Louth was translated from Oxford to become Bishop of London and the new Bishop of Oxford was Dr. Butler. 'My old colleague at St. James' where we waited together for five or six years; and are now again united on the bench.' (2)

The first debate in which Porteus took part was in connection with the bill to promote the residence of the clergy upon their benefices by enabling them to rebuild and repair their parsonage houses. The bill had passed the Commons and was being debated in the Lords. The bishops objected to the inclusion of a clause which would give an incumbent the power, with the consent of the bishop of the diocese and the patron, to raise money for such building projects by leasing the glebe and tithes for twenty-one years. Porteus knew from experience that such an action would be open to abuse of all kinds and

(1) House of Lords Journals, 1777-1787

(2) B. Porteus, Diary, I, 6

raised strong objection to the clause. It was replaced by one which allowed the incumbent to raise a mortgage to improve and rebuild their parsonages and with this amendment the bill was passed. (1)

In May 1778, Edmund Burke wrote to the Earl of Surrey about relief and extended toleration for Roman Catholics, a matter always in the mind of Burke. He informed the Earl that it was only a limited toleration and not complete emancipation that he had in mind. "I only speak of the Act of K[ing] William which, when it is repeal'd, will leave the Rom[an] Catholicks no more liberty of conscience than they have now; but it takes the power out of the hands of the interested informer; and the interested relation ...." (2) For Burke this was the only logical step to take following the admission of Irishmen as recruits to the army in 1775 when reinforcements were required in the War of American Independence. To circumvent the restrictions of the penal laws, a new oath had been drafted which required the recruit to swear allegiance to George III and renounce the temporal power of the pope; two years later a similar oath was drafted to allow Catholic Highlanders to join the army. So by 1778 it was felt that the time was now ripe for some easing of the penal laws. William Sheldon, an able catholic lawyer, got a group of Catholic landowners together to petition the king for relief and negotiate directly with the government. Bishop Challoner feared that alteration of the law would arouse anti-popery riots and upset the peace enjoyed by Catholics for worship. (3) A petition was already in existence, drawn up by Burke in 1764 for his strong belief in justice led him to desire freedom for not only the Catholics but also the Americans and any other minority group under persecution. (4) Nine peers and 163 other gentlemen signed the petition.

It was well received and a bill was drafted to obtain the repeal of those sections of the Act of 1699 with its rewards of money to those who informed against Catholics and deprived them of their rights of inheritance and

- (1) ibid., I.7. The parish papers at Cheshire, Leeds, Carlisle and Lancashire Record Offices provide ample evidence of the working of this Act.
- (2) T.W. Copeland et alia, Correspondence of Edmund Burke (Cambridge, 1963), IX, 422
- (3) E.H. Burton, Life of Bishop Challoner (London, 1909), II, 202
- (4) M.D.R. Leys, Catholics in England 1559-1829 (London, 1961), p.132

inflicted life imprisonment for priests and schoolmasters brought before the court under the Act. Burke, writing to Edmund Sexton Pery on 18 July 1778, mentioned that he had discussed a bill with the Lord Chancellor, but was anxious that any relief for Catholics should not be automatically combined with relief for Dissenters but that each group should be dealt with separately. Both parties should be obliged to the government for relief and not to each other. (1)

On 14 May 1778 a motion was put in the Commons, "That leave be given to bring in a bill for relieving His Majesty's Roman Catholic Subjects from certain Penalties & Disabilities imposed on them by the said Act ...." (2) John Dunning, a very skilled lawyer, was asked to introduce the bill but he declined on the grounds that it gave little relief to the clergy. Sir George Savile agreed to introduce it and he was supported by Lord Beauchamp, Lord John Cavendish and others. (3) Edmund Burke and Charles James Fox both spoke in favour of the bill which progressed through the Commons so quickly that the third reading was taken and approved by 21 May. (4)

In the Lords, the bill was supported by Lord Shelburne who said that as Secretary of State he had to free an Irish priest who had been sentenced under the Act of 1699 because there was no other way out. Unfortunately for Porteus, the bill was read towards the close of the session when few bishops were present. Of those present only Bishop Hinchliffe of Peterborough spoke on the bill; Porteus had agreed to assist the Bishop of London in a visitation of the Essex deaneries so all Porteus was able to do was to write to Archbishop Cornwallis and ask him to support the bill. (5) The measure became law but did not abolish the penal legislation as such but exempted from its penalties those who took an oath of loyalty to the Crown. Prayers were now recited for the king in Catholic chapels and priests and laymen were willing to swear the new oath.

(1) T.W. Copeland, op.cit., (Cambridge, 1963), IV, 5-10

(2) Commons Journals, 14 May 1778

(3) D.R.M. Leys, op.cit., p.132

(4) Annual Register (London, 1800), XXI, 189-191

(5) B. Porteus, Diary, I, 130-131



Having granted some measure of toleration to the Catholics it was only natural that a further attempt should be made to relieve the Dissenters by granting them freedom from subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles. After the abortive attempt by Sir Henry Hoghton to obtain relief for protestant dissenters in 1772 and 1773, no further action was taken in this matter until 1779 when Porteus noted that Dr. Price had commented upon the state of dissent in London and elsewhere. "The places of Worship are almost deserted", (1) for in London the congregations were reduced to very small numbers and few chapels were in a flourishing state. Enthusiasm, luxury and fashion were believed to be grinding religion to death. Similar complaints, according to Porteus, could be found in the writings of Dr. Priestly and other authors. On 16 March 1779, Sir Henry Hoghton introduced another bill, for the Relief of Protestant Dissenters, into the Commons. Only two members, Sir William Bagot and Sir Roger Newdigate opposed its introduction. The purpose of the bill was to exempt protestant dissenting ministers and schoolmasters from compulsory subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles, granting them the full benefits of the Act of Toleration 1689, on taking the oaths of allegiance, supremacy and a declaration against popery. (2) The bishops as a body, were disposed to concur in granting relief desired by the Dissenters, but in a Christian country they felt that no one should be allowed to teach and preach without a declaration that they were Christians and that they accepted the scriptures as the basis of faith.

The bishops decided that they would draw up an amendment to the bill in the form of a declaration to be made by the dissenter. The following declaration was proposed in the Lords on 29 March 1779. "I A.B. do solemnly declare in the presence of Almighty God that I am a Christian and a Protestant; that I believe that the Scriptures of the Old & New Testament as commonly received among Protestant Churches, contain the whole revealed will of God, & that I do receive

(1) B. Porteus, Diary, I.84

(2) ibid., I,69

the same as the Rule of my Doctrine & Practice." (1) Porteus records that this amendment was the same as the one proposed in the abortive Relief Act of 1773, "except for the section underlined", where the word doctrine is substituted for faith. It was in keeping with Porteus's character that he would support such a move providing the English clergy and laity were duly safeguarded. He felt that the clergy and laity would be dissatisfied if the bishops consented to an unlimited indulgence of religious opinions without any declaration. The state also had a right to know what the leading principles of religious preachers and teachers were in order to protect civil society and the established order. If there was no declaration attached to the bill then Mahomedans, Atheists, and Pagans would be entitled to preach and teach their opinions without any opposition. Any one of these groups could pretend to be, quite properly under the bill, a protestant dissenter and could take the oaths and qualify as a preacher and teacher. So long as they behaved inoffensively such a practice could be connived at, but some of their opinions would be a danger to the state. There must be some tenet in order to distinguish between those who were and those who were not protestant dissenters. (2)

On 20 April 1779, Lord North proposed that this form of declaration should be included as a clause in the bill. There was some opposition to this from several members as being adverse to religious liberty on which there should be no restraint of any kind. Magistrates had no right to interfere in matters of conscience as this was the mark of dissent which made it impossible for them to subscribe to the declaration and it would be cruel to punish them for non-subscription. John Wilkes raised strong objections to the declaration, pleading for universal toleration without any restraint. John Locke, "was too confined in his notions, when he asserted that Atheists ought not to be tolerated. He should wish to see Pagodas, Mosques, & Temples of the Sun rising up in the neighbourhood of Gothic Cathedrals." (3) The clause was finally agreed. The

(1) ibid., I, 87

(2) B. Porteus, Diary, I, 88-89

(3) ibid., I, 91

bill passed the Lords on 3 May 1779,,without a division, only the Duke of Chandos having spoken against it. A meeting of dissenting ministers held in London agreed, by a vote of 57 to 7, to accept the Act, "... as both wise and just & no less consonant to the principles of sound Policy than to the genuine Spirit of the Gospel." (1) Dissenters were still under the restrictions of the Test and Corporation Acts which were to remain in force for almost another fifty years. Unfortunately trouble was about to break out over the Catholic Relief Act of 1778. On 29 May 1779, a Protestant Association was formed to oppose the progress of popery and to counteract, as far as possible, the effects of the Act of 1778. "Who these persons are," wrote Porteus, "who begun or compose this association I know not, being absent from London. They sent me however their papers & a letter in which they desire the concurrence of the Bishops. I understand they have waited on the Archbishop & the Bishop of London & some other Bishops in town; but what reception they met with I have not heard. (2) A rumour reached Porteus that the meeting had been held in Coachmakers Hall and a Mr. Fisher had been appointed secretary. Allegations were made that since popish schools and places for celebration of mass were now public, new ones had been ~~opened~~ and the numbers attending were increasing rapidly. It was also said that vendors of popish books now wrote over their doors, "Roman Catholic books sold here." (3) The Protestant Association were, as they claimed, not aiming at persecution, but rather to put forward protestant propaganda through the publication and distribution of pamphlets.

Amongst those who doubted that the fears of the Association were based on a secure foundation was Porteus, for he discovered they were unable to bring forward convincing evidence to prove that the increases in the number of Catholics were accurate. If Catholics had taken the oath and made no attempt to seduce the Protestants then it was impossible to take proceedings against them but rather, "by redoubling our diligence in our own Schools and Places of Worship to guard those entrusted to our care against the Errors & Superstitions of Popery." (4) In any case the Act of 1778 only repealed that of 1699 and not

(1) B. Porteus, Diary, I,88

(2) ibid., I,94

(3) ibid., I,95

(4) ibid., I,97

the penal laws of Elizabeth I, James I and Charles II.

It was firmly believed that popery in general was adverse to all civil and religious liberty and that it had done a great deal of mischief in England. Memories of the Gunpowder Plot, kept alive by an annual observance in the Anglican church, and the pro-papal policy of James II and the Jacobite risings all helped to maintain this attitude. Claims having been made of a rapid increase in popery, led to a motion in the Lords by Lord Radnor in 1767 that an official enquiry should be made into the numbers of papists in the country. It was estimated that there were 100,000 Catholics in London alone, but when the official returns were analysed they revealed a mere 68,000 for the whole country. The returns did prove that on the whole the Catholics were a declining group and that papal power was falling into contempt. (1) Porteus's reaction to these statements was to emphasise that the Church should combat those who taught popery by means of sermons and articles in the press. He thought that some consideration should be given to the publication of tracts showing the excellence of the protestant religion. Children especially those of the lower classes, should be firmly instructed in protestant principles. He himself wanted to print Secker's sermons against popery for use in his diocese of Chester. (2) Porteus felt that all these reports on the activities of the Catholics were grossly exaggerated. "When I visited it (my Diocese) last year I made particular enquiry into the conduct of the Papists, but could not find either that they increased or attempted to make converts. I desired my clergy to watch their motions & to give me notice if anything occurred which deserved notice. One Popish Priest in my Diocese has already been converted & admitted into the Church of England." (3)

In November 1779 the Protestant Association elected Lord George Gordon as its president. He was a younger son of the Duke of Gordon, who desired to

(1) B. Porteus, Diary I, 101

(2) ibid., I, 103

(3) ibid., I, 103-4

play a part in politics and was a fierce anti-papal agitator. Failing to obtain a seat in Inverness he was elected to represent the pocket borough of Ludgershall in Wiltshire in 1774. So strong was the belief that any concessions to Catholics would lead to strife that a man of the reputation of John Wesley could write in a pamphlet he published in 1780, of, "the purple power of Rome advancing by hasty strides to overspread this once more happy land." (1) The clergy and the bishops would have nothing to do with the Association. It was planned to present a monster petition to parliament asking for repeal of the Relief Act of 1778. According to Porteus, women, boys and illiterate persons were all pressed either to sign it or mark their mark, often under compulsion. On 2 June 1780 a crowd of 60,000 responded to the call of the Protestant Association and assembled at St. George's Fields, Southwark; the members to wear blue cockades. The crowd passed the time by parading with flags and singing hymns until Lord George Gordon arrived. Following his speech the procession was formed to march to Westminster and present the petition to parliament. The crowd was divided into three parts; the first was to go via London Bridge, the second via Blackfriars and the third via Westminster. The petition was in the form of a huge roll of parchment carried upon a man's head at the front of the procession.

While Lord George Gordon was presenting his petition to the Commons the mob were active outside; as members of both Houses began to appear the crowd became abusive. Several of the Lords were insulted, and roughly handled especially Lords Hillsborough, Townshend, Willoughby and Mansfield, as well as the Archbishop of York. According to Porteus, the coach of the Bishop of Lincoln (Thurlow) was broken to pieces and the bishop forced to seek refuge in a neighbouring house. The Bishop of Lichfield had his gown torn from him. Bishop Thurlow was pursued by the mob but having disguised himself he found a more secure refuge with the Bishop of Rochester in Dean's Yard. Thurlow incidentally had played no part in the debate on the Act in 1778, for he was

(1) E.H. Burton, Life of Bishop Challoner (London, 1909), II, 224

not then a member of the bench of bishops.

The business before the House for that day was a debate on a motion put forward by the Duke of Richmond when the activities of the mob caused an interruption. The House was in great agitation. The magistrates were summoned and ordered to disperse the crowd. Lord Shelburne who had been one of the promoters of the Relief Bill in the Lords and had spoken warmly in support of it, chose to say

"that though indeed he had voted for the Bill, yet he hated and abhorred Popery, and if there was anything in the Bill that gave too much encouragement, it ought to be altered or repealed. Every one who had been present when the late Bill passed, was astonished at this Language and still more so, when he added, that these tumults did not arise from the dislike of the people to the late act, but to their abhorrence of the Quebec Bill and their suspicions that the government was inclined to favour the Papists; although not one word was ever said of the Quebec Bill in any of the publications of the Protestant Association, nor was it ever mentioned by any of the mob; who probably never heard the name of it, or knew the purpose of it. In conclusion the House adjourned until next Day." (1)

Porteus and many others made their way home from the House by water without any untoward incident or insult. During the night the chapel of the Sardinian ambassador in Duke Street, Lincolns Inn Fields and that of the Bavarian ambassador in Warwick Street, St. James's were burned to the ground. On Saturday (3 June) fourteen rioters were arrested and five sent to Newgate, the mob being strangely quiet all that day. This inactivity was later commented upon by Lord Loughborough in his charge to the grand jury of Surrey at the trial of some of the rioters. On Sunday (4 June) some chapels and houses of Catholics were destroyed in the Moorfields area. A school was destroyed at Hoxton and two chapels in the Wapping and East Smithfield district. "Sir [George] Savile's House attacked and some of the furniture destroyed and two other Houses of Papists destroyed." (2)

Parliament reassembled on 6 June and again several members were illtreated on their way to the House. Lord Sandwich who travelled by coach very narrowly escaped from being murdered by the mob. In the evening the rioters turned

(1) B. Porteus, Diary, I, 138-141

(2) ibid., I, 142

their attention to Newgate gaol where they set fire to the house of the keeper Mr. Akerman, opened the gates released the prisoners and fired the buildings. Clerkenwell, Bridewell and New Prison were all attacked and destroyed. Attention was turned to the house of Lord Mansfield who was hated as the Lord Chief Justice and as a supporter of the Catholic Relief Act. "They burned down Lord Mansfield's House with all his Books, Pictures & Manuscripts, many of which were of inestimable value." (1) Archbishop Markham's house next door was also attacked by the mob but the Archbishop and his family escaped in disguise. Attacks were made, but repulsed, on the house of the magistrate Sir John Fielding and also on Lambeth Palace.

Conditions in the city by Wednesday 7 June, horrified Porteus. "This day exhibited such a scene of Havoc and Devastation as was scarce ever known in this or almost any other country ... The Cities of London and Westminster were entirely in the Hands of the Rabble who ran about like so many Furies with the word Popery in their mouths and lighted Torches in their hands preaching terror & destruction wherever they came." (2) Destruction was everywhere, the King's Bench, the Fleet Prison, the New Bridewell and the toll gates on Blackfriars bridge as well as many private houses were burned. Thomas Langdale, a wealthy Catholic distiller, who owned a large warehouse between Holborn and Field Lane, was suspected of having a Catholic chapel inside the building. The mob, believing this rumour to be true, attacked the warehouse and set the building on fire. There was an added attraction for this act of destruction in so far that it might be possible to loot some of the 12,000 gallons of gin stored there. (3) Porteus wrote in his Diary, "The whole City had the appearance of a town taken by storm and given up to the fury of the Soldiers. .... Men, women & children were running about the streets with various pieces of furniture & such things as they wished most to preserve. The Magistrates were most of them fled and the rest afraid to act." (4)

(1) B. Porteus, Diary, I, 142

(2) ibid., I, 143

(3) G. Rude, Paris and London in the Eighteenth Century (London, 1970), p. 273-4

(4) B. Porteus, Diary, I, 144-145

Many offered as much as five guineas for a post chaise to escape from town. Flushed with success the mob announced its intention to destroy the Bank, Gray's Inn, the Temple, Lincoln's Inn, the Arsenal at Woolwich, the royal palaces and set the city on fire in twenty-five different places at once.

The government took action and issued Orders in Council for the use of troops. The rioters were attacked and many were killed or wounded.

"Such Numbers of the Military arrived that the people recovered from their consternation and looked back with astonishment on the Panic they had been struck with and the mischief that had been perpetrated by an uncontrollable Banditti within so short a time. From this day tranquility was gradually restored, business returned into its proper channel & no further outrages

were committed." (1) Soldiers were placed on guard at the Bank, St. Paul's Churchyard and Lambeth Palace. Camps were set up at St. James's, and Hyde Park with patrols on the streets both by day and night. Lord George Gordon was arrested and committed to the Tower. He was acquitted of the charge of high treason much to the disgust of Porteus and several of his legal friends.

The original cause of the riots was the extravagant attitude of the Protestant Association towards the Catholic Relief Act. Both by articles in the press and the publication of pamphlets the Association aimed to sow discontent and inflame the passions of the mob. The destruction, burning and looting of buildings was the work of irreligious ruffians and felons released from Newgate when the prison was destroyed. The Association was also to blame for collecting a mob of 60,000 in an attempt to overawe parliament. (2) Porteus commented upon the trials that, "The author of a pamphlet called, 'Considerations on the late disturbances by a consistent Whig' (supposed to be Burke) has in a note p.10-12 proved beyond a doubt that the Association were the first authors and promoters of the Insurrection although that Madman Lord George Gordon bore deservedly a large share of the blame." (3) When the House met on

(1) B. Porteus, Diary, I, 146

(2) G. Rude, op.cit., p.275 et seq

(3) B. Porteus, Diary, I, 149



20 June to consider the repeal of the Relief Act, Lord North, Edmund Burke, and Lord Beauchamp all made excellent speeches confirming their support for the Act. Finally a resolution was moved and carried not to repeal the Act but to make a public explanation of the terms it contained.

On 3 July 1789, the Lords dealt in committee with a bill designed to restrict Catholics from educating the children of Protestants. Archbishop Cornwallis expressed sentiments in favour of toleration consistent with the safety of the established religion and the state. He fully approved the repeal of the Act of 1699, considering the repeal to be an honour to Christianity and the Protestant religion. He believed that the number of Catholics in the country had not increased since 1778 and only one new school had been opened and that was at Hammersmith. He would vote for the bill if the House thought it necessary.

Lord Ferrars wanted a detailed account of the number of Catholics in the country to be available for the next session of Parliament. A resolution was moved that, "Instructions be given by the bishops to the clergy of their several dioceses in consequence of a motion in the House of Lords to take account of the number of Catholics in their respective parishes." "The Archbishops of Canterbury and York were to circulate<sup>rise</sup> the clergy within their respective provinces and obtain lists of papists, their age, sex and occupation to be laid before the House next session. (1) Bishop M<sup>o</sup>ss, of Bath and Wells, said he was convinced that in his diocese the numbers were considerably reduced and he believed this was also true of the diocese of Chester. Bishop Thomas of Rochester thought that the word government should be replaced by the word tuition and felt that this should only apply where both government and tuition were involved, to which the Lord Chancellor agreed. If Catholics taught writing, accounts, foreign languages, geography, dancing, fencing, music and the sciences there would be no time left, during the day, to use for the perversion of protestant children. No evidence had been produced to confirm

(1) House of Lords Journals 1779-1780, p.109

that protestant children were being seduced to the Roman church, so why introduce new penalties? He approved the principle of the Act of 1778 which removed unjust penalties but this did not imply that new ones ought to be added. The Catholics ought to have day schools and teach protestant children if any were sent to them.

Bishop Moss opposed the amendment and moved that any further consideration of the bill should be postponed. In reply Bishop Thomas pointed out that the penal laws against Catholic teachers were still in force. A proposition was put forward by Bishop Keene of Ely that consideration of the bill should be postponed to the next session and meanwhile a select committee should be appointed to look into the penal statutes. The Marquis of Rockingham believed that such action would renew the persecution of Catholics and that previously there had been no restrictions placed on protestant parents to prevent them from sending their children to Catholic schools. Lord Chandos was convinced the action of the mob had thoroughly frightened them. Lord Bathurst moved that the title of the bill be changed from an Act to secure the Protestant Religion from any encroachment of the Pacy to a Bill for the more effective restraining of Papists from educating the children of Protestants. He did not agree that the protestant religion was in danger. His proposal was accepted and the bill passed the committee stage.

During the debate on the report, Archbishop Cornwallis showed strong disapproval of the amendment to allow the children of protestant parents to be educated by catholics. He considered that the dangers to the Church of England and the protestant cause were too great and affirmed that this was the opinion of the entire bench of bishops. Bishop Warren of St. David's was quite convinced that the Catholics aimed to get proselytes by all and every means and should be restrained, for their tenets threatened the safety and security of the constitution. Catholic schools were far more dangerous for protestant children, especially day schools, for boarding schools were expensive and day schools cheap or even free. Young persons who went to foreign nunneries were perverted. In the London day schools he believed there

were more protestants than catholics, but the penal statutes needed revision to deal with the changed situation.

In his reply the Lord Chancellor stated that popery was not on the increase and there was no threat to the protestants. Since Catholics were more zealous in making converts than the Anglican church, or in fact, any other church, it was only natural they would win people over to their opinions. Catholics did not hold doctrines contrary to free government, for the oath removed such ideas. Since 70,000 Catholics had taken the oath, he could not believe that so many people had wilfully committed perjury and made themselves criminals. Neither was there any evidence to show why the penal laws should be made more punitive. Bishop Keene objected strongly to the amendment and said he should vote against the bill if the clause became part of it. The Marquis of Rockingham pointed out that it was a highly criminal offence under the law to convert protestant children to the Roman faith. The report was accepted by fourteen votes to ten. When the bill returned from the Commons, Lord Chandos moved the rejection of the bill as there was no necessity for it. The bishops had agreed that popery was not on the increase but he thought that the House had been influenced by the tumultuous rabble but it must learn to stand on its own feet and not be swayed by such demonstrations. (1) On being put to the vote the bill was lost by seventeen votes to nine.

On 19 March 1781, Lord Ferrars moved that an enquiry into the number of Catholics in England and Wales be ordered. He affirmed that the increase in their number had been very great and based his arguments on the returns from the diocese of Chester. In 1717 there were 19,308 catholics which by 1767 had increased to 25,139 and between 1767 and 1782 and 1781 some 2,089. There were in the diocese about fifteen Catholic chapels and schools. He now wondered if the increase throughout the country was as great as in Chester. He was no friend of persecution, but thought popery had not changed and unless checked would spread. (2)

(1) B. Porteus, Diary, I, 166

(2) B. Porteus, Diary, II, 4-7

Porteus realised that under the circumstances he would have to reply to Lord Ferrars to prove that his statements concerning Chester diocese were incorrect. Porteus pointed out that the returns for 1717 were taken from Bishop Gastrell's visitation enquiries and these were known to be inaccurate, and not from a parliamentary survey. Only two such surveys were made, one in 1767 and another in 1780. The number of papists returned in 1767 were 67,916 and in 1780 a total of 69,376 therefore the increase throughout the entire kingdom was only 1,460 in thirteen years. The increase was not due to popish activities but to a growth in the population, "which has been very great for several years past, as has been fully proved by friend Mr. Howlett in his Pamphlet entitled An Examination of Dr. Prices Essay on the population of England and Wales. Besides I have in my own possession (in consequence of enquiries made upon the subject) very convincing proofs that in the Diocese of Chester alone there has been within the last 50 years an increase of more than 250,000 souls. This will much more than account for the increase of Roman Catholics in that Diocese." (1)

On the whole it appeared that the numbers of Catholics was on the decline and the returns confirmed that there was no just ground for alarm which some, according to Porteus, badly informed people have taken on the subject.

RETURNS OF PAPISTS

| <u>Diocese</u> | <u>1767</u> | <u>1780</u> |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| St. Asaph      | 362         | 272         |
| Bangor         | 16          | 9           |
| Bath & Wells   | 383         | 548         |
| Bristol        | 1,018       | 767         |
| Canterbury     | 271         | 458         |
| Carlisle       | 173         | 128         |
| Chester        | 25,139      | 27,228      |
| Chichester     | 848         | 457         |
| St. David's    | 114         | 28          |
| Durham         | 4,916       | 4,677       |
| Ely            | 7           | 5           |
| Exeter         | 291         | 300         |
| Gloucester     | 316         | 291         |
| Hereford       | 565         | 568         |
| Llandaff       | 434         | 382         |
| Lichfield      | 4,949       | 5,026       |
| Lincoln        | 1,642       | 1,648       |
| London         | 12,320      | 13,379      |
| Norwich        | 1,274       | 1,165       |

(1) B. Porteus, Diary, II, 8-9

|                    |               |               |     |
|--------------------|---------------|---------------|-----|
| Oxford             | 803           | 575           |     |
| Peterborough       | 125           | 117           |     |
| Rochester          | 212           | 74            |     |
| Salisbury          | 1,197         | 1,006         |     |
| Winchester         | 1,760         | 1,209         |     |
| Worcester          | 2,187         | 2,078         |     |
| York (Sodor & Man) | 6,589         | 6,708         |     |
|                    | <u>67,916</u> | <u>69,376</u> | (1) |

Father Berrington, chaplain to the Stapletons of Carlton in Snaith, Yorkshire, had published a book entitled, An Enquiry into the State of the Roman Catholics of England since the Reformation, a book of which his superiors and brethren expressed disapproval, Porteus read it and pointed out in the Lords that while the book gave a detailed account of the principal catholics amongst the nobility, the gentry with details of their property, education and talents as well as the number of priests, schools and chapels, but contained much curious detail and mixed assertions. Berrington estimated the total number of English Catholics to be 60,000 which was less than the actual number in the returns. (2) At this point the debate on the Catholic situation terminated and was not reopened until 1790.

In 1787 the subject of the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts was raised in the Commons on 28 March by Mr. Beaufoy and Sir Henry Hoghton the member for Preston. Both were convinced that the time was ripe for releasing Dissenters from the restrictions of these acts. The speakers for the motion were to be Lord Beauchamp, William Smith, a dissenter, and Charles James Fox. Against the motion the speakers were Lord North, William Pitt, and Sir William Dolben. Porteus attended the debate in the Commons and reported upon it at some length. Lord North, "though in a very weak state of health, & almost Blind, made a very able speech, & was heard with great attention by the Whole House. Among other things he alluded to projects that had been sometimes talked of, & if these acts were repealed, might be attempted, of excluding the Bishops from any share in the Legislature & taking away the Tithes of the Clergy. (3) Lord North used Bishop Sherlock's argument in defence of the

(1) B. Porteus, Diary, II, 8-9

(2) ibid., II, 9-10

(3) ibid., II, 150

Corporation and Test Acts.

Porteus considered that Pitt made an excellent speech, for he put the question in a new light. It was not a question of conscience, for Pitt was the friend of religious toleration and this was enjoyed by the Dissenters to the utmost. The motion before the House was to admit Dissenters to civil offices, by repealing these acts. This action, Pitt felt, to be dangerous for if they had the power, "their own religion at the expense of the Established Church & the more conscientious they were the more zealous they must be against the Established Church. They might think it hard to pay Tithes - At all events the increase of their Power would encrease, & contention & animosity disturb the Peace of the State .... Some of them [the Dissenters] maintained political Opinions adverse to the Constitution & to all Religious Establishments whatever." (1) He went on to affirm that the hardship caused by these acts only fell upon those Dissenters who had not forty shillings freehold per annum and were excluded from voting on account of poverty.

Fox attacked the bishops for rejecting the Relief Bills for Dissenters in 1772 and 1773, but Porteus felt that Fox ought to have added that the bishops assented to the bill of 1779 when they could, so easily have thrown it out. (2) It was stated by Fox that the Dissenters could not and would not refuse to pay towards the support of the clergy of the Established Church without violating every principle of justice and honesty. He would not say that the Church and State could not subsist without each other, but he confessed that the Church of England was the favourite of the nation, that it ought to be the Established Church and that it was the duty of every man to protect it. Porteus was impressed with the debate; "Upon the whole the Debate (at which I was present) was conducted with great temper & Moderation. Many Members seemed to think that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was an improper Test for Secular Offices & wished it could be changed, I sincerely wished so too." (3) The motion was defeated by 98 to 176 votes and that

(1) B. Porteus, Diary, II, 152

(2) ibid., II, 153

(3) ibid., II, 154

concluded attempts to obtain further toleration for Dissenters until the next decade.

Another field in which Porteus was concerned was the observance of Sunday, for at this time there was a growing tendency to secularise Sunday. On 18 April 1777 his attention was drawn to an advertisement by Mrs. Connely, the owner of Carlisle House, that on Thursday evenings there would be a Theosophical lecture and on Sunday evenings a Concerto Spirituale. According to Porteus, Mrs. Connely had been driven from Italy as being too profligate even for the Italians. His attitude towards the first was that it was little more than a piece of harmless nonsense but the second he saw as the gradual opening of Sunday to profanation. "I showed the Advertisement to the Archbishop who wrote to Sir John Fielding, desiring him to stop this piece of folly which he accordingly did." (1) Fielding had already received a number of anonymous letters asking that the Sunday masquerades should be suppressed, but he found that the law gave no powers to magistrates to take action in this field. No further action appears to have been made towards regulating Sunday observance until 20 April 1781 when fresh attempts were made to profane Sunday and as Porteus remarked, "The beginning of the Winter of 1780 was distinguished by the the rise of a New source of Dissipation and Profaneness - A set of needy and profligate adventurers finding every day & almost every hour of the week occupied by some amusement or other bethought themselves of trying what could be done on a Sunday. It was a novel and a bold attempt, but not the less likely to succeed in this country, and in these times." (2) It was now becoming the custom to advertise two different kinds of entertainment on Sunday evenings. One was held at Carlisle House and called a promenade while the other was a meeting in the Public Assembly Rooms in the name of Christian societies, religious societies, and theological societies. At the former it was proposed that the company should walk about, converse, drink tea,

(1) B. Porteus, Diary, I, 81

(2) ibid., II, 17

coffee, lemonade and other refreshments, which were provided and sold there, a charge of three shillings for admission being made. The business of the Sunday Debating Society was to discuss texts of scripture when everyone could propose doubts and receive an explanation. The meeting was to be a school for the study of ethics, metaphysics, pulpit oratory, canon law and school divinity. (1) Porteus believed that these could do great harm to the principles of young people, especially apprentices, school boys, attorneys, clerks, students at the Inns of Court, who would flock to the events of this type every Sunday and become, in time, sceptics. Feeling that it was essential that an end should be put to this type of event, Porteus approached several of his friends but none would take up the matter, so he resolved to devise his own plan of action. "I first consulted several eminent Lawyers as well as the principal acting Magistrates in Westminster in order to know whether either the Statute or the Common Law as they now stood were sufficient to check this evil. They all assured me that they were not, and that nothing but an act of Parliament framed on purpose could effectively suppress it." Mr. Cay drew up a bill for which he showed to Lord Bathurst and Sir John Skinner baron of the Exchequer and then to the Lord Chancellor and Lord Mansfield. Mansfield said the Solicitor General would move it in the Commons with Sir William Dolben supporting it". (2)

On 5 May 1781, a bill for Preventing certain abuses and Profanation of the Lord's Day commonly called Sunday, was introduced into the Commons. It was violently opposed in the Commons by Mr. Sawbridge, Charles Turner and John Wilkes but passed without a division. On the second reading of the bill in the Lords it was opposed by Lord Abingdon, "in a speech so wild and indecent that I did not think it proper to give any answer to it." (3) The Duke of Manchester also opposed the bill on the grounds that; "the subjects of this kingdom ought to be at perfect liberty to confer upon Religious Subjects

(1) B. Porteus, Diary, II, 19-20

(2) ibid., II, 21

(3) ibid., II, 22



without control. He did not believe there was anything improper either in the Promenade or the Religious Societies; if there was there were sufficient Laws already in force sufficient to restrain & correct them, and there was no necessity to add to the number of our Penal Statutes already sufficiently numerous." (1) This approach did not satisfy Porteus who clearly stated that the bill was designed to prevent irreligion. "But the Protestant Religion, founded on the Protestant constitution and our clearest rights, did not permit that profanation, and therefore every law to serve that purpose must be truly constitutional." (2) Lord Abingdon came into the attack and concluded his speech by emphasising the point that people could, if they wished, use Saturday evening for such meetings and then on Sunday, "they could not only lie in bed all the day, and rest themselves, but by so doing, spite the bench of bishops by not going to church." (3)

This was too much for Porteus who defended his bill on the grounds that the pernicious tendency for Sunday Amusement was much greater than those stated in the preamble to the bill. They were highly dangerous to morals and to the growth of religion in youth. These promenades were, "a place of resort for the most worthless, the most profligate & most abandoned of both Sexes, especially of the Female Sex who go there with no other view but to make their Assignations." (4) The theological assemblies were no more than schools of infidelity and popery under the guise of religion. The main object was to out money into the pockets of the promoters. Their speakers were papists, deists, or atheists. These places of public amusement were open on Sundays, publicly advertised and money taken at the door, Such public diversion on Sundays had never been permitted by law since the Reformation. In popish countries such things were allowed but even the Archbishop of Mechlin complained of the liberties in which people indulged and commended the conduct of the protestants on Sundays. Indeed such societies were contrary to the spirit of

(1) B. Porteus, Diary, II, 23  
Parliamentary Debates 1781-1782 (London, 1814), 262-289

(2) ibid., p.283

(3) ibid., p.283-4

(4) B. Porteus, Diary, II, 24

constitution, laws and religion and were the invasion of the Lord's Day. If the innovation of the continental popish Sunday was not crushed at the outset it was impossible to say how far they might go and it would be dangerous to ignore the trend. At present they were experiments designed to discover if the government would take action and if not then the day would be filled with amusement, even during the time of Divine Service. If the Lords were not prepared to allow this then they must say so. After all the bill was only intended to restrain people from paying or being paid for talking, profaning and blaspheming in public rooms on Sundays and the aim was to prevent religion being turned into a public amusement. The penalties proposed were a fine of £200 on the keeper of the house where these events took place, a fine of £100 on the manager and a fine of £50 each on the receivers of tickets and the advertisers. The bill passed the Lords and became the Sunday Observance Act of 1787 which was later used as the base for the Sedition Acts of 1797 and 1799.

Alongside this movement there went others for the reformation of manners, designed to check the moral decline. In the summer of 1787 Porteus was approached by some of his friends who wanted to form a Society for the Reformation of Manners (1) to check the deluge of immorality and vice which they believed was widespread throughout the country. On 4 August he was asked to take steps to see that the laws against drunkenness, lewdness, indecent prints, indecent publications and disorderly public houses were put in force. A request was also made that he would see that such support, vigour and activity be given to the magistrates in the prosecution and punishment of offenders against good manners and public decency. The plan appeared to be a laudable one and of importance and necessity but Porteus foresaw great difficulties unless wise judgement and discretion was exercised. He advised the members to proceed cautiously, meanwhile he would mention the plan to the leading members in both church and state in order to obtain support and then follow it up by obtaining the assistance of the most respectable characters.

(1) B. Porteus, Diary, II, 160. Porteus indicates this Society was to be a revival of the Society for the Reformation of Manners in Anne's reign.

Many, including William Pitt, promised support and also a subscription. Regulations were drawn up for the Society and its leading members were, the Dukes of Montague, Marlborough, Buckingham, North, Guildford, Dartmouth, Effingham, Radnor and Harcourt. The Church was represented by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Bishops of Winchester, Ely, Bristol, Bangor, Chester, St. Asaph, Llandaff, Peterborough, Lincoln, Norwich and Salisbury. Two laymen were invited to serve and Wilberforce and Mainwaring became members of the committee. The new society was to be called the Society for enforcing the King's Proclamation against immorality and profaness. (1) The efforts of the society were limited in its scope and its results.

Porteus was always interested in matters which concerned morality. In 1779 he expressed his disgust at the number and the frequency of the divorce bills before the Lords and acted as leader of a movement to revive an earlier bill introduced by the Duke of Atholl to amend the divorce laws. (2) For a long time the bishops had desired to take some action against this evil but always found difficulties in the way. Bishop Harrington "who is always active and zealous in doing good," tried to revive the previous bill, which had passed the Lords but been rejected by the Commons, in a modified form. It was thought advisable to degrade the adulteress from her rank in society, if she had one, to limit the amount of money paid to her as an allowance, and prohibit her re-marriage for a specified period of time. Porteus had long conversations with the Lord Chancellor, Sir W. Blackstone and others on this subject and intended to introduce a bill to tidy up the divorce procedure, but without the encouragement and support of the great lawyers in both Houses it could never succeed. (3)

The bill was well received on the whole but there was opposition from Lord Effingham, the Duke of Manchester, and the Duke of Richmond, who said that the penal laws did not make moral persons. The punishment always fell

(1) B. Porteus, Diary, II, 162-164

(2) ibid., I, 81

(3) ibid., I, 82

on the woman and the man was free although he was always to blame. Though the bill obtained a second reading it was eventually lost. Two years later, Charles James Fox introduced a bill to amend the marriage act and get rid of every clause except the one concerning registration. If the parties had lived together for the period of twelve months then their marriage could not be called in question. The bill was supported by Fox, Lord Beauchamp, Lord Nugent and Mr. Dunning. Opposition came from Lord North, Sir William Dolben Sheridan and Courtenay, the latter making, "an ironical and ingenious speech in favour of the Bill." (1) which passed the Commons.

In the Lords it was supported by Lord Abingdon who, "spoke for it in his usual style." (2) The opposition's case was put by the Lord Chancellor who said that the existing Marriage Act was designed to put an end to scandalous marriages, so the bill was thrown out.

Matters which affected the well-being of the clergy did not escape the attention of Porteus. Enclosure bills were always a source of dispute when commutation of tithe was involved. On 30 March 1781, the Bishop of St. David's moved the return of the Hunnington Enclosure Bill to the committee for reconsideration. In the bill was a clause for the commutation of the rectorial tithes as had been the customary practice in connection with enclosure. The bishop stated that this was injurious to the clergy who were always the losers and gave up their constitutional right to tithe in exchange for land. The objections were that it turned the clergy into farmers, exposed them to the hazards of bad tenants on their glebe farms, bad farming leading to dilapidation of houses, barns, fences and hedges. Support for the motion came from the Lord Chancellor, who was concerned to prevent large amounts of land passing into mortmain.

The motion was opposed by Bishop Hinchliffe of Peterborough, Lord Dudley, Lord Sandwich, Lord Temple and the Duke of Richmond who all confirmed that

(1) B. Porteus, Diary, II,31

(2) ibid., II,31

enclosures were valuable for they increased the value of the living by one third, or a half and sometimes even more as corn prices rose. Further a quickset hedge needed no repair and in the long run there would be an end to lawsuits involving tithes. Good tenants could always be obtained providing that the leases were based on a minimum of twenty-one years. The Bishops of Llandaff and Chester wanted the bill sent back not because they objected to the principle of commutation but to certain other clauses in the bill. The motion was carried by a majority of twelve and the bill sent back.

A proposal to introduce a bill into the Lords to commute tithes in return for an adequate corn rent was withdrawn. (1)

Porteus was active in supporting the Bishop of London in his dispute over resignation bonds. By canon law and a statute of 1588 (2) simon<sup>i</sup>ical<sup>^</sup> contracts for benefices were illegal, but the temporal courts decided that resignation bonds, of the type designed to keep livings warm for the sons of patrons not yet of age to be ordained were legal. In 1783 the law on resignation bonds was greatly changed when precedents of the two previous centuries were reversed. The case of the Bishop of London v Ffytche is important for it was the last time in legal and constitutional history that the bishops spoke and voted as judges in the Lords. The case began on 19 December 1781 when Bishop Lowth learned that Disney Ffytche, patron of an Essex living, had demanded from the nominated incumbent a resignation bond for £3,000. Lowth immediately refused to institute the new incumbent to the living or to issue a mandate to the Archdeacon for his induction to the living. The patron promptly brought a writ of quare impedit against Lowth in the court of Common Pleas, little doubting that, following all precedents, the bishop would be made to knuckle under. (3) Lowth intended to take the case as far as the Lords if necessary, for he considered this point vital to religion and good government in the church. Bishop Lowth, despite his ill-health had drawn

(1) B. Porteus, Diary, II, 10-16

(2) 31 Elizabeth I.c,6

(3) G.F.A. Best, Temporal Pillars (Cambridge, 1964), pp.53-59

up the case himself and said that the Act of 31. Elizabeth I, c.6 prohibited such bonds and indeed the leading judges disapproved of them. (1) Lowth contended that the decisions of the court are not law but if they are valid then in this case they would put the entire system of canon and civil law in jeopardy. The bonds enabled a patron to evade the law which forbade the sale of a living, while it is vacant, by putting in a temporary incumbent under a general resignation bond. The patron had then complete control over him and could compel him to surrender his rights of freehold, to preach as the patron desired and so yield to the will of a possible tyrant.

On 30 January 1782 the case between the Bishop of London and Disney Ffytche, patron of Woodham Walton in Essex, came up for hearing. John Eyres the incumbent designate appeared and was told that the Bishop of London refused to institute him to the living on hearing that a resignation bond was required for £3,000 and that he was to resign the living when requested to do so by the patron. Eyre admitted that the allegation was correct. Ffytche then cancelled the original bond and attempted to obtain Eyre's signature to a revised one but the Bishop withstood the demand.

The Lord Chancellor ruled that the bond was simoniacal and while the clerk was not an unfit person for the living, he was subject to the will of the patron so the Bishop was justified in his refusal to institute Eyre to the living. Lord Loughborough, giving a ruling from the Common Pleas, found for Ffytche against the Bishop, so Lowth made his preparations to take the case forward to the King's Bench and the House of Lords. By this time Lowth was too old and too ill to appear so he invited Porteus to present the case on his behalf. Asking for some assistance, Porteus was given the aid of Bishops Moss and Barrington to take joint action on the measures thought advisable in the case. (2)

On 31 May 1783, Porteus recorded in his diary the details of the case

(1) B. Porteus, Diary, II,38

(2) ibid., II,40 et seq

brought against Disney Ffytche and hoped that the result would be the introduction of a bill to render general resignation bonds illegal, for this would be better than a general decree from the House of Lords against them. Thurlow spoke against such bonds and the appeal concluded with a decree that such bonds were illegal, void, corrupt and simoniacal; fourteen bishops and five temporal peers voting with the majority. (1) This was not the end for resignation bonds were permitted in favour of specified persons. An Act of 1829 legalised such bonds in certain cases and the patron of Birch chapel, Manchester, enforced resignation bonds of £3,000 on two incumbents between 1840 and 1846. (2) Not until the present century was the system made entirely illegal.

Porteus's colonial ancestry and connections led him to take a keen interest in the welfare of the slaves in the West Indies. On 11 February 1783 Porteus preached a sermon on the conversion of the Negroes for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. In the course of his sermon, he pointed out that there were very many in the world who needed assistance but none more so than the African slaves in the West Indian Colonies. He considered that the Negro slaves were poor, broken-hearted, blind, captive, bruised and considered to be no more than mere machines without minds to be cultivated or souls to be saved. The majority had scarcely any leisure time so they spent Sunday either working on their allotments or trading with each other. He estimated that there were some 400,000 slaves in the British West Indies.

The Negroes were a depressed, degraded, uncivilised, unbefriended and immoral community. The only attempts made to civilise them were by the efforts of the S.P.G. for the government paid no attention to the slaves and they had but few laws to protect them. Time was now ripe to pay some attention to the West Indies and make a serious attempt to influence the government to enact, as the French had done, a code of law for their protection and their conversion. (3) Several West Indian planters had changed their attitude towards

(1) B. Porteus, Diary, II, 70-71

(2) Lancashire R.O., Birch Parish Papers, DRCH/37

(3) B. Porteus, A Sermon preached before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel 1783 (London, 1783), p.15

their slaves, for one blessing that came from the War of American Independence was that it had, "very greatly impeded and diminished that opprobrious traffic, in which this country has for a long time taken the lead, the slave trade on the coast of Africa." (1)

The Society did show interest in the welfare of slaves on its own plantations by ordering them to be well treated. A catechist was appointed to teach them; they were called to worship on Sunday and allowed rest on that day. Saturday afternoon was given over to the slaves for their own activities. If ever the Negroes were to make progress then they must be given some of the benefits and blessings of society and civil government, before religion could take root. It was also essential that they should be given some interest in the soil, have legal rights and privileges, the care of a family and a secure domestic life.

By its statutes, the Society was empowered to appoint missionaries to the plantations so that by their efforts they could, in the long term, make, "our plantations become (what I trust it will one day be) a model for all West Indian Islands to imitate;" (2) so ending in the abolition of slavery. The English nation could no longer allow 500,000 fellow men to continue in irreligion and vice. It would be glorious if this country could take the lead in such an enterprise since for so many years she had been more actively engaged in the slave trade than any other nation. Britain must hasten to obliterate the reproach of having given so many of our fellow creatures over to a cruel bondage of ignorance and sin. So Porteus made his appeal.

His interest in the condition of the slaves had been aroused after reading the work of Leo Carsas in defending the Indians against the treatment they received at the hands of the Conquistadores. "Yet to show the strange inconsistency of the Human Mind, especially when engaged with ardour in the pursuit of a favourite object, this good and great man in order to save his

(1) ibid., pp.16-17

(2) B. Porteus, op.cit., p,27



beloved Indians from Slavery proposed the importation of Negroes in traffic which has been continued ever since by almost every nation of Europe to the disgrace of Religion, Justice and Humanity. (1) Few people realise today that horror of the slave trade and slave life upon which Liverpool and other cities grew wealthy. Until ~~it~~<sup>slavery</sup> was declared illegal in 1772 there were over 14,000 slaves in England brought back by the colonial planters to act as domestic servants. By 1772, John Wesley had entered the fight against the slave trade and denounced it in stern language. By 1770, British dealers were transporting some 50,000 Negro slaves each year from Africa to the colonies, under dreadful conditions. As early as 1671, George Fox the Quaker had condemned the trade and Daniel Defoe, Adam Smith and Dr. Johnson were all opposed to it. Negroes were commonly bought and sold in England such sales being advertised in the press. (2)

Slavery was made illegal in England when young Granville Sharp won the Somerset cases in 1772 and led Lord Mansfield to make his judgement against slavery in England. This meant freedom for 10,000 slaves in England. The Clapham sect under the leadership of Wilberforce were now dedicated to the abolition of slavery and Porteus gave them his support. In an undated letter to Granville Sharp, Porteus hoped that the attention of the public would be drawn to the subject of slavery: "I return you many thanks for the copy of the letter you was so obliging as to send me. Your observations are so just, and so full to the purpose, that I can add nothing to them but my entire approbation."

"The letter in the newspapers I had seen before; and I had heard the shocking fact alluded to in it, from a friend of mine, who happened to be present at the trial. Your generous zeal on behalf of the oppressed and injured Negroes is highly commendable; and I hope the attention of the public will be excited by your humane endeavours towards this important object. I

(1) B. Porteus, Diary, I, 37-38

(2) Liverpool Chronicle, 15 December 1768

expect soon, that a very excellent book on this subject will be published by a friend of mine in Kent, which I alluded to in my sermon, and shall take farther notice of it in a note." (1) Porteus had given a great deal of thought to the problem and the methods by which it ought to be solved. "I had for some years past thought much on the Subject & had corresponded & conversed upon it with several Persons in this Country and with one Gentleman in the West Indies - The Result of these Enquiries was that the Negro Slaves in our Islands to the Number of 500,000 were in a most deplorable Situation both Temporal and Spiritual. (2)

"It was thought also not merely by me, but by many other persons that this great object had not been sufficiently attended to by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel who had themselves a trust Estate in Barbados with 270 Negroes upon it, who were as absolute Heathens & as totally destitute of every Principle of Morality & Religion as any other in the Island.

It seemed therefore highly necessary to Excite the Attention of the Public, & of the Society to this important Subject; by proposing that something more effectual should be attempted than had been hitherto done; that a regular system of civilization & Religious Instruction should be adopted; that a beginning should be first made in the Society's Estate as an Example & an Encouragement to the other Planters & that a small part of their Fund should be appropriated to this purpose." (3)

The scheme as proposed met with approval at the meeting which followed the sermon on 11 February 1783, On 19 March the following year Porteus attended a meeting of the S.P.G. where he put forward his plan for the conversion and <sup>civilising</sup> ~~enlightening~~ of the Negroes in the Barbadoes. Before presenting this to the meeting Porteus had discussed it with an official from the West Indies and had given a preview of the plan to Archbishops Moore and Markham as well as to Bishops Moss, Barrington, Hurd, and Dr. Lord. All agreed that the matter was important and that something should be done about the Negroes. (4)

(1) Memoirs of Granville Sharp, ed. Prince Hoare, 2nd edition (London, 1828), II, 368. The later diaries of Porteus contain a great deal of information upon Granville Sharp and his work for the abolition of the Slave Trade.

(2) B. Porteus, Diary, II, 57

(3) ibid., II, 58-59

(4) ibid., II, 82 -83

But the implementing of the proposition was a very different matter from accepting it in principle. Porteus was not left in doubt for long as to the possible outcome. "I very soon saw however that nothing would be done." (1) Bishop Butler of Oxford considered that the conversion of the Negroes was no part of the work of the S.P.G. and was outside the terms of its charter. In any case the funds of the Society would not stand the additional expense involved. The Bishop of Bangor supported Butler on this point. All those members of the Society who were connected with the West Indies and America were adverse to any improvement in the Negro situation since they felt that it would weaken the mission in America. However after a great deal of discussion it was agreed to accept the plan provisionally and pass it over for consideration to the Barbados committee on which it could report. The members of the committee were Archbishop Markham, Bishops Moss, Barrington, Hurd, Hinchliffe, Douglas, Butler, Warren and Porteus with three lay members Mr. Braithwaite, Mr. Langton and Mr. Bouchier and other co-opted members.

The committee met on 23 March when Porteus explained the details of the plan to Bishop Hurd. Porteus considered that £500 per annum would finance two able Negro missionaries and the Society could provide a catechist at £40 or £50 per annum leaving the mission to raise £500. (2) After due consideration a report was issued by the committee and signed by Archbishop Markham that it was thought inadvisable to add to what had been begun by Mr. Braithwaite without incurring additional expense for the Society. Porteus expressed his disgust that one single meeting could dispose of the plan when the Society itself owned slaves. "Thus was a final period put at once to this most important Business, & the Spiritual Condition of near Half a Million of Negroe Slaves decided in the space of four hours." (3) He realised that

(1) B. Porteus, Diary, II, 83

(2) ibid., II, 86

(3) ibid., II, 89

the matter deserved serious consideration for if the Society did not undertake the task who would? "If this Example is not set, if this attempt is not made by a religious Society possessing a Fund of £3,000 a year, & whose professed Business & purpose it is, to propagate the Gospel in Foreign Parts among Infidels & Heathens' by whom is there the least probability that it can or will be undertaken? it is not small Difficulties, it is not great Difficulties that should have deterred us from an undertaking in which our Credit, our Reputation, our Interest, and the Interest of Religion are so essentially concerned - Nothing less than the absolute demonstrable Impossibility should have discouraged us from the attempt. (1) The Moravians had not found the conversion of Negroes an impractical task, for they had converted thousands in Antigua and had done the same with the Eskimos in Greenland whose people, "are still more Stupid than the Negroes." (2) Since the Society had an income of £3,000 per annum and £28,000 invested, it could easily afford to spend £500 on Negro missions. At the time, Porteus estimated that the vacant mission posts were worth £1,400 per annum to the Society.

"We have lost 13 American Provinces," he wrote, "& will it be thought right to expend the Same Sum on the remaining two which used to be expended on the whole.?" (3) The plea of inability was no excuse since all that was required was an assistant to a catechist at £100 per annum. The principle of the Society seemed to Porteus to be to spend nothing on the Negroes, although to do so came within the spirit if not the letter of the charter. On 5 May 1784, Porteus received a letter from Mr. Williams in Madeira informing him that the Queen of Portugal had forbidden any further importation of slaves to Madeira. Henceforth the work was to be done by the 'free Blacks' working with the hoe as on the sugar plantations. (4)

(1) B. Porteus, Diary, II,91

(2) ibid., II,92

(3) ibid., II,93

(4) ibid., II,98

The following day a book was published written by a Mr. Ramsay upon the Treatment & Conversion of the Negroes. Captain Locker, Captain Smith, Mr. Stewart and Lord Barham who were all experienced in the West Indian condition, confirmed to Porteus, when he consulted them, that all the allegations in the book were correct. The book aroused a great deal of criticism and led to the publication of pamphlets, both in England and the West Indies attacking the statements put forward by the author. Porteus thought he ought to try and discover more for himself about the problems so he asked Stuart, the minister of St. Kitts, whether he thought that the conditions of the Negro slaves in general was better and more comfortable than those of the English day labourers and peasants. Stuart replied that nothing could be further from the truth for the lowest English labourer was a far happier person than the Negro slave in the West Indies. (1) At this point Porteus had to suspend his activities on behalf of the abolition of the slave trade, for the time being, since in the November of 1787 he was involved in his translation to the important diocese of London which at that time included oversight of the Anglican church overseas.

By 1779 Porteus was organising collections in Chester diocese for the work of the S.P.G. On 19 September in that year John Barlow, vicar of Leigh, wrote to Porteus on the matter. "You may remember, that, in my Answer to your late Letter, to me, concerning the Money collected in our parish, for the propagation of the Gospel, in foreign parts, I informed you, after what manner, I thought proper to convey it to London .... After you have received the Money, & sent it to the Treasurer, a Receipt from him, for the several Sums hereafter specified, will greatly oblige all those who have been employed in this Business, ....

|                            | £ | s  | d |     |
|----------------------------|---|----|---|-----|
| From Atherton chapel       | 2 | 12 | 1 |     |
| --- Astley chapel          | 1 | 10 | 0 |     |
| --- Parish church of Leigh | 3 | 19 | 0 |     |
|                            | 8 | 1  | 1 | (2) |

At the end of the previous February Porteus received a bequest of

(1) B. Porteus, Diary, II, 155-158

(2) Lancashire R.O., Leigh Parish Papers, DRCh/37

£82. 11s. Od. for the purpose of civilising and converting Negroes, a sum which was intended for the work of the S.P.G. who refused it. Without any hesitation Porteus handed over the money to the Associates of Dr. Bray who had founded several Negro schools and distributed religious tracts, (1) for he considered that the money would then be used for the intention of the donor; a policy which Porteus pursued in his career as Bishop of London.

Closely connected with his concern in the work of the S.P.G. and the provision for meeting the spiritual need of the Negroes, was his concern in the supply of clergy for the American colonies. In order that there might be proper leadership and continuity in the church, attempts were made to persuade the English government to appoint bishops. Public opinion in England was not really interested in the well-being of the American colonies and the majority of the bishops were unsuited by temperament and their position to be enthusiastic. Convocation was almost a dead organisation so there was no provision for bishops to meet together to thrash out points of this nature. The colonies were regarded, by and large, as places which provided markets for English manufactured goods. Consequently neither colonists nor converted natives could be confirmed or ordained unless they were prepared to make the long, arduous and expensive journey to England. Porteus understood that applications had been made on several occasions to the Crown for permission to consecrate bishops for America. Both George Grenville and Lord Halifax encouraged a move to consecrate bishops when they were in office, but other ministers were afraid that such a move might lead to dissenting riots in England and America. In 1750 Thomas Secker had openly stated such fears were groundless for which remark he was the recipient of, "much unmerited invective and Calumny both at home and in America." (2)

After the loss of the American colonies in 1783 further attempts were made to give the American church the leadership it required. On 29 August 1784,

(1) B. Porteus, Diary, II, 118

(2) ibid., II, 110

Porteus ordained Benjamin Lovell of Havard as deacon in Hunton church on Letters Dimissory from the Bishop of London. (1) On 5 September 1784 in Duke Street chapel, Westminster, Porteus ordained Mason Weems and Edward Gant of Maryland, and Needler Robinson of Virginia to the diaconate, "By Vertue of an Appointment under the hand and seal of the Lord Bishop of London they being Subjects or Citizens of Countries out of his Majesty's Dominions - Statute 24 George 3rd." (2) Porteus recorded in his diary that he had ordained for the Bishop of London, in Duke Street chapel, subjects of Maryland and Virginia; "These were the first Subjects of the American States, ordained under the New Act of Parliament passed in the last Session by which they are excused taking the oath to the King. There was a particular form of Letters Dimissory from the Bishop of London for that purpose." The colonial clergy so ordained were restricted from acting as clergy in England by the Act. (3) On 21 May 1786 and again on 25 April 1787 Porteus ordained deacons for Nova Scotia and New York. (4)

Following the Peace of Paris 1783, steps were taken to revive the plan for consecrating bishops for America but the general election brought a change in the administration which ended further moves in that direction. Pitt was inclined to put a bishop in Nova Scotia and many of the cabinet were in favour, but Archbishop Cornwallis said there could be no consecration without the consent of the government. According to Porteus this would have been granted if the Archbishop had made any request which he never did. (5)

On 5 February 1785 Porteus received a visit from Samuel Seabury the minister and missionary of the S.P.G. who came with a recommendation from the English clergy in Connecticut to be consecrated bishop. Meanwhile Archbishop Cornwallis had died and was followed by John Moore, a cautious man who played for safety. Moore made no move towards consecrating Seabury as bishop so he

(1) Cheshire R.O., Bishop's Act Book, EDA1/8, f.114

(2) ibid., f.114

(3) B. Porteus, Diary, II, 103

(4) Cheshire R.O., Bishop's Act Book, EDA1/8 f.157, 134

(5) B. Porteus, Diary, II, 108-112

went to the non-juring bishops in Scotland where he was consecrated by three bishops according to the English ordinal. Seabury expected no opposition in America, for the state of Connecticut approved, but Porteus was more hesitant. "It is not easy to foresee what Effects it may have on the Church of England in America." (1) Seabury wrote to Porteus on 18 March to inform him he had been consecrated bishop in Scotland and that he wished to continue his work for the S.P.G. Two years later it was generally agreed that a bishop should be consecrated by the Anglican church to work in America. On 12 August 1787, Dr. John Inglis was consecrated as the first Bishop of Nova Scotia by Archbishop Moore assisted by the Bishops of Rochester and Chester. The new bishop was to exercise the same powers and functions as any English bishop could within his diocese. (2) When Porteus was translated to London, his activities in this field of making provision of bishops and clergy for America increased. (3)

When Archbishop Cornwallis died, Porteus entered a comment in his diary on 19 March 1783. "During the time I was Rector of Lambeth, he always behaved to me in a very kind & friendly manner & I have reason to believe that He & his Brother in Law, Mr Cha[rle]s Townsend now Lord Bayning did without my knowledge recommend me to Lord North for the See of Chester." (4) Further preferment was to come his way for on 3 November 1787 he noted the death of Bishop Lowth at Fulham palace. "A Great & Good Man, I was then at Hunton where I had spent a Delightful Summer & meant to remain a great part of the Winter. The next day at 8 in the evening a King's Messenger brought me a Letter from Mr Pitt of which the following is a copy

Downing Street  
4 November 1787

My Lord,

In consequence of the Death of the Bishop of London which took place yesterday, I lost no time in making it my humble Recommendation

(1) B. Porteus, Diary, II, 113

(2) ibid., II, 165

(3) W.W. Mancross, Fulham Papers (Colonies and America), (Oxford, 1965) passim

(4) B. Porteus, Diary, II, 64



to his Majesty, that your Lordship might be appointed to succeed him. I have this moment received his Majesty's answer, expressing his entire approbation of the proposal, & authorizing me to acquaint your Lordship with his gracious intentions. I have peculiar satisfaction in executing this Commission, & in the opportunity of expressing the Sentiments of high respect & Esteem with which I have the honor to be,

My Lord,  
Your Lordship's most obdt, &  
most h[um]ble servt.

W. Pitt"

"Intimation had been given to me early in the Spring that both the King & Mr Pitt had destined me for the See of London. [ I had therefore nothing to do but to wait quietly till the Event took place which it did (without any application to them on my Part) in the manner I have related .] The Bishop of Lincoln took a very friendly & active part in this Business & in this & in many other Instances, I feel myself highly obliged to him." (1)

Two days later Porteus came up to London to see Pitt and on Friday 8 November kissed the King's hand for the see of London. (2) On 7 December Porteus was elected and confirmed as Bishop of London at Bow Church and afterwards did homage to the King, was sworn as a member of the Privy Council and took, "my place at the Board." (3)

Porteus terminated his office as Bishop of Chester and took over the difficult task of administering the diocese of London. In his primary visitation charge of 1790, he contrasted his new diocese with that he had recently vacated. There were far too many clergy in London who were non-resident due to plurality and bad housing situations, but he must now enforce

- (1) B. Porteus, Diary, II, 166-167  
B. Porteus, Original Diary 1787-1789, p. 14 (Ms 2103). The sentence in parentheses was omitted by R. Hodgson when he transcribed the original diaries of Porteus in 1811. Incidentally several folios have been deliberately cut out from the diaries at some date in all probability to avoid embarrassment to people then living. Porteus was most frank and outspoken in his comments. A detailed examination of the transcripts from 1787-1808 and the originals covering the same dates, <sup>reveals</sup> there have been several considerable omissions of important material concerning leading figures in Church and State during his episcopate at London.
- (2) B. Porteus, Diary, II, 168
- (3) ibid., II, 169

residence for part of the year at least, two months being the minimum he would accept. Those who had no dispensation for non-residence must reside on their livings and not abandon the charge given at their institution by leaving the duty to someone else while the incumbent took up another job elsewhere.

He was shocked to find that in Essex the custom was for one service each Sunday and insisted upon an improvement. In Chester diocese things were very different, for in a large part, even in the smallest parishes, both prayers and sermon twice each Sunday was the custom. Even where single duty was usual one sermon with prayers twice was the normal practice, and on this he would insist. Each parish must be called to worship twice every Sunday, "the whole of which .... is hardly sufficient to counteract the bad impression of the other six days of the week." (1) Sunday worship would counteract this or so he hoped.

Communicants were few and catechising almost non-existent. Porteus having seen the success of Sunday Schools in Chester diocese resolved that such would be the solution to the problem in London. There were a few schools of this type in scattered areas but none in the city of London nor in Westminster, and such objections as he had received to opening Sunday Schools seemed frivolous and groundless. "... from what I already know of the state of this Diocese, from your own reports to me they are peculiarly and indispensably necessary to restore and invigorate the spirit of religion amongst the lower classes of the community." (2) There were Charity schools in London but these only made contact with a fraction of the children. "... Many hundreds of ignorant, wretched young creatures of both sexes totally destitute of all education, totally unacquainted with the very first elements of religion, and who perhaps never once entered within the walls of a Church." (3) Sunday Schools would reduce the number of miscreants as they had done in the populous provincial towns in Cheshire and the north.

(1) B. Porteus, A Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of London at the Primary Visitation of the Diocese 1790 (London, 1790), p.10

(2) ibid., p. 14

(3) ibid., p.14-15

The most effective way was to train up youngsters from infancy in the Christian faith with the habit of regular church attendance. Once this is done the congregation will be happier, the church full of worshippers, altars crowded with communicants. He intended to reprint copies of his letter on this subject to the Chester clergy and distribute them to those in his London diocese.

He referred to the rebuilding of parsonage houses and the improvement of others so that they, "have thrown temptations to residence in the way of their successors which it will be impossible for them to resist." (1) He found that on the whole stipends for curates to be better in London than in the north. The average was £50 for serving one church, £60 for serving two with the use of a house. In the bad parts of the diocese it was £70 and £80 for two churches plus a house but in future there must be a general rule for all titles to orders and appointments of curates such as he had enforced in Chester.

The threat of Revolution meant to Porteus a general raising of standards of morality and purity of manners to avoid such an event taking place in England. "... we shall secure to our country, and to ourselves, the favour and protection of that Almighty Being who can alone ensure to us the prosperity and tranquility we now enjoy, whilst a large part of Europe is convulsed to its very centre; and who amidst the dissolution of kingdoms and the wreck of empires can alone preserve our admirable constitution both civil and ecclesiastical uninjured and unimpaired." (2)

(1) B. Porteus, ibid., p.22

(2) B. Porteus, op.vit., p.27-28

CHAPTER TWELVETHE SITUATION <sup>OF</sup> FOR THE DIOCESE AND THE CHURCH IN 1787

When William Markham was consecrated Bishop of Chester in 1771, the Anglican church was a solid, unyielding pillar of the establishment and with the constitution formed the two joint pillars upholding the State. Eleven years later when his successor, B<sup>il</sup>by Porteus, was translated to the diocese of London, the Church had been drawn into a whirlpool of fear and recrimination, combined with a hurried search for stability. The Church was under criticism from the Methodists, who were attempting to revive the spiritual life of the parishes, and make the gospel relevant for the poor, and also from her political opponents whose voices were heard in the Commons. The bishops were disturbed by the scathing attacks on their princely lives, their alleged indifference to the sufferings of the poor and the poverty of the assistant curates in some of the ill-endowed parishes. It was a source of great annoyance to the bench to listen to the sharp attacks made upon them by Fox, in the Commons, and Lord Abingdon in the Lords, but their fears were increased when they realised that the works of Tom Paine were being read to, and his ideas absorbed by, the working class in England. There is in the parish records of the chapelry of Padiham, in the conservative parish of Whalley, a curious reference to Tom Paine. There is an entry in the chapel-wardens accounts for October 1793 to the purchase of seven pounds of candles to, "illuminate the Church at the burning of Tom Pain." (1) This was, no doubt, the response to the orders issued by the Magistrates for the suppression of seditious writings. Not until the majority of the churchwardens accounts for Lancashire have been recovered can a valid assessment be made on this point.

Fox was annoyed by the opposition of the bench to any further extension of relief for Catholics. He angered the bishops by reminding them that the Church and the State was not founded, "on the purity of their Christian doctrines but on a promise of mutual support." (2) He contrasted the appeals of earlier bishops to scripture as far preferable to the shameful appeal by the bishops of

(1) Lancashire R.O., Padiham Parish Records, PR.2683/1/5

(2) Parliamentary History, XXVIII, 397-399

the eighteenth century to the secular authority for support. Church leaders did not stress the comparative merits of their religion. They were less concerned about convincing the lower classes of the spiritual truths of the Anglican faith than they were in reconciling them to accept the social inequalities in the community as both necessary and part of the natural order. The principle of natural religion had so permeated the thinking of the bench that such men as William Harkham, Deliby Porteus and Lewis Hagot never dwelt on any particular spiritual support for the poor. Instead all of them, to judge from their sermons and letters, worried over the growth of dissent and the spread of the Methodist movement, but not one could offer any alternative to the appeal of revivalist preaching for the artisans. So in the expanding industrial towns of Lancashire and Cheshire, both Methodism and the Dissenters continued to increase.

Preaching before the governors of the Asylum for Female Orphans in London in 1773, Porteus had nothing to offer but the stability of eighteenth century society. As a Christian and a parish priest he recognized the duty of Christians was to relieve extreme poverty and to provide for those who lacked the necessaries to keep them alive. To him, as to other clergy, it was right and proper that those who were aged, those who suffered unemployment, those who could not buy food because of high prices and those with large families should be assisted. But over and above this, poverty in general meant idle people who did not deserve assistance. "This excludes from our notice much the greater part of those idle vagrants who infest our streets and houses .... and who have taken up the profession of BEGGING only because they are unwilling .... to support the toil of DIGGING." (1) On the other hand the wealthy were the "stewards and vice-gerents of heaven appointed to rectify, in some measure the present inequality in the distribution of worldly blessings." (2) This was

(1) B. Porteus, A Sermon preached before the Governors in the Chapel of the Asylum for Female Orphans 1773 (London, 1773), p.6

(2) ibid., p.7, 13 et seq.

the way which Porteus believed people could be brought to the practice of the Christian religion and to happiness. The virtues of hard work, frugality, temperance, obedience and piety led to the true faith.

The Asylum existed to prevent orphan girls from begging, stealing and prostitution. They were clothed and, "given so much knowledge as will make them useful to society and wise unto salvation." (1) In other words, to train them to be useful, obedient and industrious servants.

Much the same line of thought was followed in his sermon before the House of Lords to commemorate the execution of Charles I. He firmly believed and asserted that the War of American Independence was a disaster and a judgement of this country for neglecting to reform the hearts and lives of the people. Philosophers would smile at such an assertion, but the Christian could comfort himself in the gloom of the perilous situation that faced him, arising from the irreligious attitude of the population in general. In this sermon, as in others, Porteus often gives the impression that God is a white man who is firmly on the side of Great Britain as the chosen land and people. "It is here that civil liberty has fixed her throne; it is here that protestantism finds its firmest support; it is here that a provision is made by government for the poor; it is here that they are with a boundless munificence relieved both by private charity and public institutions; it is here, that the laws are equal, wise, and good; and that they are administered by men of acknowledged ability, and unimpeached integrity; and that through their hands the stream of justice flows with a purity unknown in any other age or nation." (2) According to Porteus, the salvation of the nation would only be achieved by frugality, temperance, fortitude, piety, unanimity and the puritanical virtues so appropriate for regulating society as he and others of the bench, saw it. Difficulties called for the practice of self-denial and the creation

(1) B. Porteus, op.cit., p.9

(2) B. Porteus, "A Sermon preached before the Lords Spiritual and Temporal on 30 January 1778", Sermons (London, 1794), II, 228-229

of a public spirit, otherwise we could be cut off from other nations and lose our overseas dominions.

Preaching in Westminster Abbey on the occasion of the public fast day (10 February 1779), for a mitigation in the disasters of the American War of Independence, Porteus pointed out that the deluded colonists were now allies of a 'foreign power', namely France. The evil influence of France and things French seems to be the thread running through his sermons. According to Porteus, the modern novel, philosophy and history have been pernicious branches of our trade with France which always worked to the disadvantage of Britain. The now familiar theme is repeated - banish these new ideas from the hands of youth and replace it by revealed religion - as the only way to breed honest men and good Christians. The present officers of State and the ministers the the Crown are equally to blame for they consider that the rules of morality can now be dispensed with if necessary. (1) These methods unfortunately, would not of themselves make any impression on the problems being raised by the rapid industrialisation of the country.

Information on the state of the working class, on their conditions of life under the new order was slow to impress the bench. Few bishops had any experience with the realities of poverty, unemployment and deleterious labour. One of the very few was Beilby Porteus who, by 1786, when he was about to leave the diocese of Chester, recognised the harmful effects of uncontrolled factory working conditions upon the employees in his diocese. Markham had very little opportunity to observe this for the changes were just beginning when he was translated to York. Although Porteus was a keen advocate of Sunday Schools and equally so of Sunday observance he asked his clergy to leave ample time on Sunday for the poor to enjoy some rest and relaxation. "This relaxation," he wrote, "is necessary for all, but especially for those who are confined at work in trades or manufactures during the whole week; and still more where they

(1) B. Porteus, A Sermon preached in Westminster Abbey on the Occasion of the General Fast 10 February 1779 (London, 1783)

are employed in a constant course of labour (different sets succeeding each other) day and night, which I am told is the case in some of the cotton manufactories." (1)

Porteus appears to have been moved to raise the matter of the provision of leisure time after making a study of the report of the Manchester doctors on a virulent fever which had swept through the town of Radcliffe in 1784. The fever had been particularly prevalent amongst children and the doctors pointed out that the causes lay in the excessively long hours the children had to work in the ill-ventilated, closed and confined spaces of the mills with a very limited amount of relaxation. Now that the reasons were fully understood Porteus closed the matter by expressing his confidence that the owners of the cotton mills and other manufacturing works would rectify the matter; "there can be no doubt the proprietors of the cotton mills and other manufactories where children are accustomed to work will on every principle of charity, compassion and sound policy, conceive themselves bound to observe most punctually and religiously those excellent regulations." (2) But Porteus was deceiving himself if he thought that the mill owners would carry out his propositions. The Justices of the Peace for Lancashire were under no delusions as to what went on in the cotton mills and were of the opinion that mill owners would take no action upon the matter unless compelled to do so. Meeting in Quarter Sessions in the spring of 1784 at Lancaster, the bench passed a resolution stating that from that date onwards no Justice would sign any apprenticeship papers for any parish apprentices since it had been discovered that these apprentices were employed on night work. "That it is the Opinion of this Court, that it is highly expedient, for the Magistrates in this County, to Refuse their Allowance to all Indentures of parish Apprentices, who shall be Bound to Owners of Cotton Mills or other Manufactories, in which Children are obliged to Work in the Night or more than Ten hours in a Day.

(1) B. Porteus, op.cit., p.22

(2) Lancashire R.O., Quarter Sessions Orders 1784, QSO/1784



And it is Ordered that this Resolution shall be Communicated to the Clerks of the Peace for the Counties of Chester, Stafford, Flint, Denbigh, Derby, York and Westmorland and that the same shall be published in the Manchester and Liverpool Newspapers." (1) If Porteus was disappointed by the neglect of the manufacturers to respond to his appeal, he made no further comment but turned his attention to the slave trade and its abolition. During the French Revolution he became more concerned with social reliability than improving the lot of the working man.

Other bishops viewed the poor in a different light. Bishop Hinchliffe of Peterborough, preaching the annual sermon at the meeting of the Charity Schools in 1786, was convinced that the poor did not understand the necessity for the existence of such a class in society. It was part of the divine social order. The poor, he went on to emphasise, were not easily convinced of the necessity or the use of unequal distributions of wealth and poverty. The wealthy were always elated when fortune came their way but the poor always murmured at their lot and charged God's providence with a great measure of partiality and injustice. (2)

Lewis Bagot, Bishop of Norwich, was another who was convinced that hard work was the best thing for the poor. Preaching in 1788 he affirmed that it was essential to train the poor in the habits of industry to keep them true to moral and religious duties. Any relaxation of their working hours would open the door to indolence and that led to seduction and political unrest. (3) A study of the sermons preached by many of the bishops serve to show how far removed they were from the realities of the situation.

On the other hand some of the parish clergy were very concerned at the conditions under which the poor lived and worked. William Jones, vicar of

- (1) Lancashire R.O., Newton Heath, Didsbury, Salford and Ardwick Parish Papers, DRCh/37
- (2) J. Hinchliffe, A Sermon preached at the Yearly Meeting of the Children educated in the Charity Schools in London and Westminster 1786 (London, 1788,, pp.5-16
- (3) L. Bagot, A Sermon preached at the Annual Meeting of the Children educated in the Charity Schools in London and Westminster 1788 (London, 1788), passim

Broxbourne, Hertford, saw the poor, "crowded together", "in dark courts and narrow alleys, in cellars or in garrets; where damp, stagnated air and accumulated filthiness, injure their health, and facilitate the progress of contagious diseases." He also noted how epidemics swept away large numbers of poor people and believed that, "the disorder .... has been generated from poverty and filth. The poor, notwithstanding the assistance of parishes, and the charity of benevolent individuals, were so reduced by the severe pressure of the times, that they had not anything like strength remaining, which might resist, or throw off, distemper in any form." (1) Like it or not, if the Anglican church was to capture the future generations of labouring children for the national faith, its guardians had to take a more active interest in the lives led by these children and their parents. Already in the rapidly expanding towns of Lancashire and Cheshire, the Church had lost its contact with the mass of the poor in the slum areas. Assistant curates in the town churches of Manchester, especially those at Newton Heath, Salford, Ardwick and Didsbury, came and went with amazing rapidity, for the perpetual curates of these churches were still chaplains and fellows of Manchester Collegiate Church, who left the running of the parish to an assistant curate. (2)

It needed the impact of the French Revolution to arouse some churchmen to a recognition of the state of the large numbers of the poor who were, by 1790, separated from the Anglican church, and many began to realise, for the first time, that the clergy had lost a great part of their former hold upon the, 'lower orders of the poor'. Many, probably the majority of the churchmen, placed the blame for this state of affairs on the schismatic Methodists and other wandering preachers who invaded stable parishes and disturbed the community. It was becoming very difficult indeed to ignore the serious effects of persistent non-residence, especially in the large towns such as Manchester and Liverpool, (3) the lack of parsonage houses to enforce residence

- (1) Diary of the Revd. William Jones 1771-1821, ed. O.F. Christie, (London, 1929), pp.138-139
- (2) Lancashire R.O., Newton Heath, Didsbury, Salford and Ardwick Parish Papers, DRCh/37
- (3) Lancashire R.O., Manchester and Liverpool Parish Papers, including the chapelries within these two cities. DRCh/37  
Leeds City A., Parish Papers CD/PB/1-9

the continued practice of pluralism and above all a spiritual dullness among the clergy.

One bishop who realised this and administered a sharp rebuke to his clergy upon the subject, was Lewis Bagot who had been translated from Bristol to Norwich in 1783. In the course of his primary visitation charge he outlined what he considered to be the cause of the decline in religious values, the steady influence of the Church being slowly reduced, the increase in depravity of manners, the ever increasing tendency to regard Sunday as an ordinary day for secular work, the breaking of domestic ties as the apprenticeship system broke down, and an ever increasing amount of idleness and vice. The root of this decay was the increased wealth now available in the country among the higher ranks of society, from trading profits, the new methods in education, improved roads which made contact with London easier and the fashion of the Grand Tour of Europe with its dangers to the morals of English travellers. (1)

Bagot indicted the clergy for failing to perform their duties with some zeal and to preach the gospel. "We must rigidly censure and correct ourselves .... after recognising that we have been neither diligent nor zealous in the performance of our parochial duties" (2) An examination of the clergy would show that some were guilty of immorality, many were careless, indifferent and neglected their duties. They could not live in a town and look after a country parish at the same time. This was also true of the diocese of Chester for abundant evidence survives to show that the clergy found excuses for non-residence and churchwardens complained about neglect of duties in their presentments. (3) Bagot commented very strongly about this; "... the stated and occasional duty. Godd God, is this their care, their anxious concern for

(1) L. Bagot, A Charge delivered to the Clergy at his Primary Visitation 1784 (Norwich, 1784) passim

(2) ibid., p.9

(3) Cheshire R.O., Parish Papers EDP/1 . Lancashire R.O., Parish Papers, DRCh/37 Leeds C.A., Churchwardens Presentments RD/CB/8/10-11  
A perusal of the letters from incumbents to the bishop reveals the flimsiest excuses for non-residence; eg. illness of the incumbent's wife; unhealthy to reside in Manchester. John Sunderland, vicar of Ulverstone, wrote to say the climate and society of Lausanne suited him much better than Ulverston. So he resigned the living of the <sup>latter</sup> former.

those, of whom they are to give an account to their Redeemer?" (1)

This was strong language for a bishop and a rare event in the long neglected diocese of Norwich and indeed in the Church at large. Bagot threatened to carry out a number of reforms. He wanted to unite a number of small livings and reduce plurality. A determined attempt must be made to build parsonage houses and those in decay made habitable. Proper provision must be made to pay assistant curates a decent stipend so that they had not to live in poverty. Bagot also warned his clergy against accepting college testimonials on their face value when selecting an assistant curate and he forbade any to take resignation bonds on their appointment to a living. Ever conscious of tradition and the sacred rights of property, he declared that the proposed changes would not affect present arrangements but only in the case of future vacancies. (2) This meant a long delay in executing what were vital reforms if the Church was not to lose more ground. The impression conveyed by reading Bagot's visitation charge, is that of a worried diocesan bishop who was conscious of decay in the Church. Although Bagot criticised the clergy for their failure to attend to parochial duties, he never attacked the bishops on this count. On the other hand Richard Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, suggested that there were serious failings in the hierarchy of the Church and this too needed reform. Bagot understood what the rest, even including Beilby Porteus, had to learn that if the Church was to survive as a national institution with a meaning relevant to all classes it had to meet the revolutionary challenge from political, religious and economic fields by reviving spiritual life in the parishes.

Archdeacon Paley, preaching the ordination sermon in Carlisle cathedral on Trinity Sunday 1782, warned the clergy that it was their duty to set an example by avoiding affected manners, hunting, and cultivating the acquaintance of the great. The clergy must learn to practise the virtues of temperance,

(1) L. Bagot, op.cit., p.11-12

(2) ibid., pp.15-18

frugality, and sobriety, "for you will soon have occasion to observe, that those who are slowest in taking any part of a sermon to themselves, are surprisingly acute in applying it to the preacher." (1) What, according to Paley, needed to be dealt with were the dissolute, licentious and debauched section of society and the only way he could think of solving the problem was to preach more useful sermons. There was no advice given to those ordinands, who listened to this sermon, on the methods by which they ~~may~~<sup>might</sup> meet the real challenge to the Church that was coming from society.

As the Church became conscious of its growing inability to communicate its social and religious message to the huge labouring multitudes in the towns and cities, some leaders began to understand that every effort made to contact the lower orders of society in a spiritual as well as a practical way, was slowly being compromised by the reality that in 1787 the Anglican Church was too socially exclusive. Although it claimed to be the national church charged with a legal and divine duty and responsibility to preach the truth to all men irrespective of their station in life, the Anglican church had been captured by the deeply ingrained upper class inclinations that interfered with its credibility among the poor. If churchmen were unable or unwilling to integrate the working class into the class-ridden proprietary churches of their parishes then the prospects of integrating them into society were not at all bright. Not all the clergy appear to have been worried about the absence of the lower orders from the church. Nicholas Gibson, vicar of Ardwick, Manchester, writing to Bishop Sumner in 1831 stated that there were no poor attending his church. Ardwick was a residential area and the congregation was composed of respectable Manchester businessmen. If there were any poor then they could attend Travis Street church when it was built. (2) Others realised how useless

(1) W. Paley, Advice addressed to the Young Clergy of the Diocese of Carlisle in a Sermon at the General Ordination in Rose Castle 29 July 1781 (London, 1782), p.13

(2) Lancashire R.O., Ardwick Parish Papers DRCh/37

it was to preach the equality of all men before God when the congregations was very clearly unequal. The later visitation returns for the diocese of Chester after 1789, contain many references to the absence of the poor from church and the attitude of the wealthy congregation towards the poor. In 1822, the curate of Woodland, reported to the Bishop that the wealthy members of his parish refused to pay for the expense of a burial ground, though in his opinion they could well afford it, but preferred to make the poor continue to walk fourteen miles to bury at Kirby Ireleth, (1) The vicar of Arlecdon complained that there were 'a number who only come to church at funerals.' (2) Many country clergy complained of the attitude of indifference shown towards the church by labouring classes, others about the lack of decent clothes in which to attend church. For the poor, they also had complaints which were justified, such as the uncertain times of service, which could vary enormously, (3) and the non-resident incumbent. In the towns the poor were ever increasingly absent from church, for to an illiterate person nothing could be more dull than the traditional choir offices of the church recited in a meaningless fashion.

Another factor relating to the matter of non-attendance at church was that of the number of appropriated pews. An examination of the faculty papers and books reveals that in the latter half of the eighteenth century very few faculties were granted for the building or enlargement of churches and the construction of parsonage houses, but numerous petitions, which were nearly always granted because those who were affected by the move were too poor to raise an objection, to convert common and open forms into private pews. Only in a few isolated instances such as Kendal, where by tradition the whole of the church was free in the centre nave, (4) were successful objections raised. Pew rents both in Chester and elsewhere did form part of the incumbent's

(1) Lancashire R.O., Woodland Parish Papers, DRCh/37

(2) Cheshire R.O., Articles Preparatory to Visitation, EDV7/2

(3) Leeds C.A., Churchwardens Presentments RD/CB/8/10-11. The returns for the parish of Cleasby 1803, contain a lengthy complaint about the irregular times of service which varied from 9.0 am to 11.0 am, often without notification

(4) Lancashire R.O., Faculty Papers ARR13/5

stipend and particularly so in the case of churches erected in the towns. (1) By the time Porteus was translated to London, pew rents were part of the system of proprietary rights and implied a certain social status in the parish. By the end of the century, private pews far outnumbered free seats and in many churches there were none. At Askrigg for example out of 500 seats only one was free. Where pews were open and free in the majority of cases these were at the back of the church or in galleries, or along the sides of the aisles cut off from sight and often sound of the service. When Charles James Longley, the first Bishop of Ripon, made his primary visitation he commented unfavourably on the excessive number of private pews he found in the churches of his diocese. Only at Bedale did he find more free pews than private ones. (2) The proprietary chapels and pew rents most effectively excluded the poor who by 1800 could not have cared less about the matter. (3) They found a refuge in the Methodist chapels which were not as yet respectable and exclusive. Others merely drifted away from any form of religious worship.

The subordinate clergy were fighting a losing battle for want of guidance, as dissent became more vocal and active. The distinction between the urban and country livings began to work to the great advantage of the latter by 1770. As corn prices rose, as tithes increased due to better farming methods and as land values increased through enclosures so the stipend improved. A country living such as Winwick (£3,000 per annum) contrasted<sup>un</sup>favourably with the annual stipend of £200 for the perpetual curate of All Saints, Chorlton Row, Manchester. Town livings often remained poor, contained large numbers of people living in slums, were centres of Methodist activity and bred an anti-clericalism that became vocal and rampant in the early decades of the next century. It is therefore no surprise to discover the eagerness with which the town incumbent sought a rural living where he could be regarded as a country gentleman. (4)

- (1) ibid., Ardwick, Newton Heath, Chorlton Row, Chorlton cum Hardy, Salford, Blackley Parish Papers, DRCh/37. These were parochial chapelries in Manchester
- (2) Leeds University, Brotherton Library. Notebooks of C.T. Longley, first Bishop of Ripon compiled from the parochial returns of the visitation queries 1837-1856, Vol. I (the parishes are arranged in alphabetical order)
- (3) Lancashire R.O., Hunter Street, Liverpool, Proprietary Chapel Records 1799, DRCh/37
- (4) A. Tindal Hart, Clergy and Society 1600-1800 (London, 1968), p.71-77

In the field of education the church was more a passive recipient than an active legislator and initiator of education for the lower classes in society. Bishops during the eighteenth century supported voluntary charity schools and paid homage to the S.P.C.K. in its efforts to provide education for the poor. John Hinchliffe, the old Whig Bishop of Peterborough, believed that a sober and religious education was the best preservative for youth. He saw education as the qualification by which honest industry would be most secure to bring success. Those with wealth he encouraged to contribute to charity schools. to extend the accommodation for increasing numbers. (1)

Earlier in the eighteenth century, bishops of the calibre of Gibson, Burnet, Wake and Symon Patrick actively supported schools in their dioceses. (2) On the whole the majority of the later bishops appeared content to make an annual subscription to the S.P.C.K. and preach an occasional sermon at the anniversary meeting of the charity schools. Parochial education was very low on the list of episcopal priorities and in the course of the century the bishops were content to leave it entirely in the hands of lay subscribers, with the support of the incumbent provided he was resident or had an interest in education.

There was no direct opposition to lower class education from the bishops. Their response ranged from neutral indifference to cautious support. The impetus of the Evangelical revival which encouraged education was difficult for conservative churchmen to swallow. Henry Venn, the famous evangelical vicar of Huddersfield, preaching the visitation sermon for the Archdeaconry of York in 1760 at Wakefield, stressed the need for the clergy to improve the the state of knowledge of their parishioners. (3) Only very gradually did a few more bishops consent to associate themselves with Hannah More, William Wilberforce and Henry Thornton in the direct encouragement of education and

- (1) J. Hinchliffe, A Sermon preached at the Yearly Meeting of the Children educated in the Charity Schools in London and Westminster 1786 (London, 1788), pp.13-14
- (2) M.G. Jones, Charity School Movement (Cambridge, 1964), pp.64-65
- (3) H. Venn, Sermon preached at a Visitation of the Clergy 1760 (Leeds, 1760), pp.11-12



amongst their number was Beilby Porteus.

In 1788 Lewis Bagot, Bishop of Norwich, came out in full support of Sunday Schools because he had found a scriptural basis for education. He stated that it was false to argue that education lifted children above their station in life, but that it was designed for the purpose of fitting them for such a station. If children did not acquire the habits of virtue, religion and industry, early in life, then they would acquire habits which made them the bane of society.

Instruction could be given by distributing bibles, prayer books, and tracts which would enable a revival in religion to take place alongside the cultivation of good manners. The demand must be satisfied for the press was full of publications of all types that were directed against religion. "It is not confined to the gross ribaldry of profane and licentious songs, to the insinuating arts of modern novel-writing; it assumes the more specious form of philosophy, of history and even the sacred name of religion itself." (1) According to Lewis Bagot, newspapers and magazines were the ideal channels for the dissemination of the ideas that militated against religion. James Chelsum who had preached the annual sermon to the charity schools in the previous year stressed the same theme. (2) Hence the Sunday School was believed to be an essential factor in the fight for moral reform and John Hampson preaching in Sunderland in 1788 pointed out the urgent need for such institutions in every parish. (3) Shute Barrington, Bishop of Salisbury, encouraged the growth of Sunday Schools to complement the efforts at moral reform made by the Wilberforce Proclamation Society. Any doubts he may have entertained were dispelled by 1790 when he saw that both the Charity Schools and the Sunday Schools were the agencies of social stability in a period of

(1) L. Bagot, op.cit., p.16

(2) J. Chelsum, A Sermon preached at the Yearly Meeting of the Children educated in the Charity Schools in London and Westminster 1787 (London, 1787), passim

(3) J. Hampson, A Sermon preached on the establishment of Sunday Schools in Sunderland 1788 (Newcastle on Tyne, 1788), p.19

revolution. In both these institutions, the limited curriculum would in no way discourage manual labour, for that would have aroused the opposition of the manufacturers who relied on cheap labour, but ensured instead an acceptance by the poor of their laborious station in life. These schools were to serve the purpose of inducing order, regularity and contentment into the lives of the poor. (1)

Barrington, like Porteus and Bagot, was amongst the earliest of the episcopal critics of slack parochial standards and he frankly hoped that the type of education received in the Sunday School would go a long way towards ameliorating the bad effects of non-residence and spiritual apathy. He saw Sunday Schools as permanent institutions, connected to the Charity Schools and supported by individual counties and so provide a national system of education for the poor. (2) Barrington was influenced in his thinking on the subject of Sunday Schools by the proposals of William Morton Pitt who had proposed a county wide plan for education. (3) He was supported by John Douglas, Bishop of Carlisle, who saw some limitation if the system remained on an entirely voluntary basis. Preaching the commemoration sermon before the House of Lords on 30 January 1790, Bishop Douglas stated that the schools, ".... are too intimately connected with public welfare, to be left to the casual contribution of private benevolence; and worthy of the most effectual interference of the legislature, to give them a permanent establishment, and due extent." Douglas, who had been a chaplain at the battle of Fontenoy, was not greatly interested in the spiritual advantages to be gained from educating the poor. He did see that a permanent school system would be the means, "to strike at the root of that ignorant and brutal ferocity, which daily prompts so many unhappy wretches, the pests of society, to acts of horrid outrage, reproachful to good government, and disgraceful to humanity itself." (4)

- (1) S. Barrington, A Letter to the Clergy of the Diocese of Sarum to which are added Directions relating to Orders, Licences etc. (Salisbury, 1789), pp.9-10
- (2) S. Barrington, op.cit., pp.12-13
- (3) W.M. Pitt, A Plan for the Extension and Regulation of Sunday Schools (London, 1785), passim
- (4) J. Douglas, A Sermon preached before the Lords Spiritual and Temporal 30 January 1790 (London, 1790), p.17

The majority of the bishops were neither interested in nor were they in the mood for any further innovation or extension of the new system of education. They recalled that the last time the state had supported a system of education for the lower classes was during the Commonwealth and that precedent did not enhance its palatability. Neither did the ideas of the French Revolution encourage authority to provide a better system of education in case revolutionary ideas spread too rapidly and dangerously in England. So until the progress of the Industrial Revolution created a demand for a supply of literate employees, the Sunday School was as far as anyone in authority was prepared to go by 1795.

The combined effect of developments in various ways during the last three decades of the eighteenth century such as the development of the newspaper, the Sunday promenades and religious debating societies which had alarmed Beilby Porteus all posed a major problem of social control for the governing classes. Not since the Commonwealth had there been such a flood of new and unsettling ideas produced by John Locke, Tom Paine, Voltaire and Rousseau. There was no precedent for the new doctrine, freely made in France and known about in England that there was no God, and judging from the steps taken to counter this challenge that it was a new one. The Sunday School movement which was later followed by the common elementary school was one method. Another was found in Thomas Gilbert's poor law reform in 1776 and 1782. Bishop Lowth's successful attack on resignation bonds, in 1780 and 1783 and the revival of legislation for Sunday observance to prosecute those who disturbed Sunday by organising entertainments to which must be added a revival of interest in the reformation of manners through the Society for the Suppression of Vice and Profaness in 1787. In all of these Bishop Porteus played an active part. The Evangelicals and Methodists were approaching the matter by other ways and means but in the end it was the same objective - a more orderly, productive and religious society through better laws, more education and a reformed church.

The movement of population brought a new stress into the Church. The rapid expansion of the older towns and the appearance of new ones increased the difficulties of administering to the spiritual and material needs of the

people. The majority of the clergy had livings either in the rural or semi-rural parishes and here they were supported by the local gentry, though not always, for there are instances where friction existed between squire and parson. The bishop and the incumbent were an integral part of the traditionally landed social and political establishment which governed the country in the eighteenth and well into the nineteenth centuries. The incumbent worked with those who shared his education, his attitudes and his politics and whose patronage he needed for his preferment. To offend his parishioners meant that they ceased to attend church while the lower classes came to church on rare occasions. In 1789, following a tithe dispute between the rector of Tattenhall and his farmers some fifty per cent of his flock ceased to attend church. At Marbury the farmers attended church but did not insist upon their servants doing so, but while women servants usually attended the young men thought it unmanly to go to church. (1) The incumbents from the new manufacturing and mining areas complained that those who worked in the various industries rarely attended church except at funerals. (2) A small group of evangelical clergy such as Samuel Hall, William Grimshaw and Henry Venn might endure the discomforts of a poorly endowed and over populated town parish but the majority of the Anglican clergy lacked a sense of missionary zeal, preferring the leisurely pace, status and cohesion of a rural cure. The clerical ideal of a well paid, simple, pastoral living could hardly be fulfilled in the unhealthy slums and dingy housing estates of Liverpool, Manchester, Salford, Bolton, Burnley and Macclesfield, which were plagued by disease, dissenters and a variety of wandering enthusiasts. The recurring cycles of unemployment created conditions of instability in these manufacturing areas.

Unfortunately the Church had to cope with a rapidly expanding population in areas where there was a shortage of both clergy and church buildings and where the mobility amongst the existing parochial congregation was rapid.

- (1) R.B. Walker, "Religious Changes in Cheshire 1750-1850" Journal of Ecclesiastical History, XVII (1966), pp.77-94
- (2) Cheshire R.O., Articles Preparatory to Visitation EDV7/2 (1789), EDV7/3 (1804), EDV7/4 (1811)

There was a steady emigration of people from small rural parishes where the incumbent, if resident, was not only important to the administration and the cohesiveness of society but also the parish church itself, a visible symbol of a natural establishment. In those ever increasing urban conglomerations of society, where the clergy were resident they were increasingly unable to follow the expanding maze of parochial boundaries which wound their way through a variety of crowded, stinking alleys. It is therefore no surprise to discover that very few of the immigrant population ever resumed any contact with the parish church of their own accord, except for baptisms, weddings and burials. Earlier associations, if not already broken, did not inspire them into overcoming clerical deficiencies that rendered the church both meaningless and invisible.

The number and composition of the dioceses in England had remained unchanged since 1541. In spite of the huge increase in population in the northern manufacturing and mining regions, the province of York, until 1836, included four of the twenty-six dioceses and 2,000 of the 12,000 parishes in England and Wales. When William Markham came to Chester in 1771, and even before, the church had become static and unable to provide additional facilities for religious worship in expanding areas without difficulty, arising from a cumbersome legal process. The result of this failure to make adequate provision by the Church for dealing with the problems arising from urbanisation, the Church became unpopular in the industrialised areas where large numbers of people in time became openly hostile towards Christianity as taught by the Church. Demonstrators, early in the following century, often carried banners bearing the slogan, "more pigs, less parsons", (1)

Not until 1821, when the population of Sheffield had reached a total of 65,000 souls was an additional church built to provide a total accommodation of 6,280 seats for those who needed provision for worship. (2) By 1792 the

- (1) When Archbishop Vernon-Harcourt of York went to Stanningley, Leeds to consecrate the new church in 1842, he was the central recipient of the abuse of the crowd.
- (2) J. Addy, A Coal and Iron Community in the Industrial Revolution, (London, 1969), pp.88-89

population of Liverpool had reached 60,000 with three churches to cater for the increase. The population of Manchester was estimated to be 30,000 in 1778 and had grown to 80,000 by 1816. Although fifty-nine new places of worship had been opened in the town between 1741 and 1830, of these forty-one were dissenting meeting houses of some kind, but only 11,000 seats were available for those who wished to attend divine service. In London and other large cities it was the same story. (1)

The problem of extending churches or building new ones was not the simple fact of obtaining a faculty from the chancellor of the diocese to do so. In many cases there were objections to overcome, there was the problem of purchasing a site and the prime factor was the mundane one of raising money. Church rates were unpopular since so many objected to their assessments towards repairs and alterations to the fabric as the cause papers testify. (2) Recourse to a Brief meant that little was raised for it frequently took a full three years for the Brief to run its course and then at least one third of the money was deducted to pay for the costs of organisation. On the other hand to open a dissenting chapel was far easier for it meant only a licence from the bishop or the justices of peace but to build an additional Anglican church in a large parish required an expensive Act of Parliament to make provision not only for the fabric, but for the incumbent's stipend, and the division of part of an overlarge parish into a district chapel. (3) Hence little was done in the way of building new churches, except when the patron took a hand and found a substantial part of the costs, either in Chester diocese or elsewhere in the country, between 1771 and 1787.

Episcopal interest in the gap between population and facilities for worship was limited. Beilby Porteus was the only bishop of his generation to be interested in demographic problems and who seemed to appreciate their possible relevance to his diocese. He not only read literature about the subject but

- (1) H.M. Port, Six Hundred New Churches, (London, 1961), p.5
- (2) Lancashire R.O., Faculty Papers ARR13/5. ibid., Assessments ARR13/1 Leeds C.A., Cause Papers RD/AC/1-7. The Cause Papers in the Cheshire R.O. are not yet sorted and classified. Dr. N. Pevsner has described those churches and parsonages which were extensively modified or rebuilt after 1771 in his series of work on county buildings.
- (3) G.F.A. Best, Temporal Pillars, p.194-196

circulated it amongst his friends and acquaintances. "The Bishop of Chester presents his Compliments to Mr Jenkinson & desires his acceptance of a Pamphlet written by a friend of the Bishop's on the Subject of Population." (1)

When Porteus went to Chester as bishop in 1777, he was aware of the rapid increase in the population of that diocese and understood how the construction of factories had encouraged it. The only part he saw for the Church to play in these conditions was that of combating the moral and religious laxity that was accompanying the expanding wealth and luxury of the age. He saw the earthquake of 1777 as a sign of divine judgement upon the immorality of the age. (2) Porteus encouraged the publication of tracts to counter the trend towards greater laxity. Writing in 1786 he commented upon Hannah More's tract upon The Manners of the Great. "It is a delicious morsel. It will be an excellent precursor to our Society, and will do half its business beforehand." (3) And writing later to Hannah More he said, "For where can we find anyone but yourself that can make the fashionable world read books of morality and religion." (4)

In 1781, Porteus calculated that the population of his diocese had grown by 250,000 since 1717, but he did not indicate any particular problem following on from that development. The population of Liverpool in 1717 was a mere 5,000 but by 1777 had increased to 35,000. Parts of the suburbs of Manchester which in 1723 numbered a few hundred souls now had over 11,000. Overall the population of the Archdeaconry of Chester alone had increased by 95,000 since 1717. (5) Porteus made no reference to the virtual absence of any major church extension programme or of parochial reorganisation during his episcopate at Chester, in order that some adjustment could be made to the demographic realities he described. Relieved to find that the numbers of the Roman Catholics in his diocese had not increased, Porteus drew no other

- (1) B.M. Add. Mss.38216, f.172. (Porteus to first Lord Liverpool)
- (2) B. Porteus, A Letter addressed to the Inhabitants of Manchester, Macclesfield and Adjacent places on the Occasion of the late Earthquake, 1777 (Chester, 1777), p.22
- (3) M.G. Jones, Hannah More (Cambridge, 1952), p.104
- (4) ibid., p.107
- (5) W. Cobbett, Parliamentary History, XXI, (1781), 1376-1379

conclusions from his statistics. Only some years after his translation to the diocese of London did he suggest that extensive urban parishes created a problem for the clergy. In his visitation charge he informed them that it was his experience that the most devoted ministerial efforts might be useless "unless the laws, and magistrates will, in certain cases, come in to our aid, especially in large and populous towns, our utmost efforts will too often prove ineffectual." (1) What Porteus meant by aid was not more parishes, more and better trained clergy, more church buildings, but an enforcement of the anti-vice legislation to control corruption in urban areas.

Occasionally some bishop saw the need to reform church organisation. It was believed that more dioceses and fewer translations would enable bishops to keep a closer eye on their clergy. The real problem was the parish. Many were too large to work properly and needed a drastic subdividing on a large scale - and here one may instance Manchester, Blackburn, Whalley and Rochdale. Some, especially in the Lake District, were too small and poor and needed to be united or held in plurality with a neighbouring one. The existence of spiritual republics or peculiars outside the control of the diocesan except at visitation needed to be abolished. Control in the parish was by no means uniform. In some it was by the corrupt select vestry and in others an open and disorderly one. (2) Churchwardens regularly gave false information when reporting on the condition of their church fabric their churchyard and congregation and the clergy were detested by the tithe payers. (3) Many industrial parishes were becoming centres of dissent and one-class parishes as the professional and gentry moved to more pleasant surroundings in which to reside. (4) In the course of delivering their charges, many diocesan bishops usually appealed for better residence of the clergy and better execution of their parochial duties. Unfortunately this only too often fell

- (1) B. Porteus, Letter to the Clergy of the Diocese of London 1789, (London, 1789), pp.15-16
- (2) Lancashire R.O., Goosenargh Parish Records PR/644; Torver Parish Records PR2848
- (3) Leeds C.A., Churchwardens Presentments RD/CB/8/1-10  
Lancashire R.O., Churchwardens Presentments ARR/7
- (4) Cheshire R.O., Articles preparatory to Visitation, EDV7/1(1778), EDV7/2 (1789), EDV7/3 (1804), EDV7/4 (1811)



on deaf ears and to the parochial clergy as well as to some bishops, it was the challenge of the Methodists and the slowly increasing body of Evangelicals that was seen as a greater problem than worker mobility and the growth of town populations. In 1787, religious revival in Chester diocese, as elsewhere, was concerned with the behaviour of the individual, to the exclusion of other matters, and the salvation of his soul which was a challenge to the zeal and energy of Anglican clergy, rather than a reform of the physical and organisational structure of the Church. The leaders of the Church, reflecting the views of contemporary society, proposed that what the growing multitudes in the towns really needed was more preaching and exhortation, so that they may realise their sinfulness and redeem their souls by patient resignation to the situation as it was. The law stood behind the clergy and was prepared to deal quickly and harshly with those who were unregenerate. Wilberforce and the Evangelicals made efforts to obtain more severe punishments for immoral and blasphemous behaviour. Porteus, Barrington and a few other bishops welcomed this move. Only later was it realised that preaching to the poor was one thing but to get them within earshot of a clergyman was quite another matter. William Cleavey master of Brasenose, Oxford, who succeeded Porteus as bishop of Chester soon realised, even from his Oxford retreat, that the growing populations of the towns were unaffected by the preaching of sermons and the only real solution was the physical one of building more churches. By 1800, the manufacturing areas of Chester diocese were fast becoming regions in which the Church was losing the support of the working class, due entirely to physical deficiencies and obsolete organisation.

It is unfortunate that the diocese of Chester had a series of bishops whose tenure of the see at a critical time, was short. Between the end of the thirty years tenure of Samuel Peploe in 1753 and the arrival of John Bird Sumner in 1828, the average length of an episcopate was less than ten years. Neither Markham nor Porteus were able to establish a policy which had lasting effects, except in certain fields. William Markham, a courtly bishop of the

traditional type was not the negligent absentee as was Richard Watson, Bishop of Llandaff. Taking into consideration that Markham had many other duties, besides his attendance in the House of Lords, which hindered his efficiency as a diocesan. Acting as tutor to the Prince of Wales and his duties as Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, meant that at the most a summer visit was all that was possible. Markham, under difficult conditions, undertook the task of travelling round his diocese to confirm, even in the remote parishes of the northern archdeaconry. It was a surprise to some of his clergy that he could take an interest in the affairs of a small lakeland chapel. (1) He could not, however willing, with the limited means of transport at his disposal, the shocking conditions of roads, give the attention to his diocese that it needed on the eve of a great industrial expansion. In any case his tenure of the see was a mere six years, too short for any new or consistent policy to be introduced or carried to completion. His all too brief visits to the chief towns in his diocese to ordain or preach an occasional sermon, meant he could never see the problem as first hand, and so measures were never introduced to combat the problem of a growing proletariat which tended to become divorced from the Church. Markham had never been a parish priest but headmaster of a public school and later head of an Oxford college. This was a disadvantage for he never, until later as Archbishop of York, realised this in his dealings with both clergy and laity. He is typical of the public school headmaster-bishop which has survived in a modified form to our own day.

Porteus had had a wide experience of parochial life both in a town and country parish in addition to experience as chaplain to Archbishop Secker. When Porteus arrived at Chester the industrial expansion was already under way and it is clear from his detailed visitation returns and his diaries that he was concerned about the state of spiritual life in the diocese. He showed his concern about the lack of parsonage houses, the poor stipends prevailing

(1) Lancashire R.O., Dendron Parish Papers, DRCh/37

in many rural parts of his diocese and the extensive plurality in the northern deaneries. He did make a real effort to provide some improvement for many clergy in difficult circumstances. To improve the standards of his ordinands in a diocese where the majority were non-graduates, usually schoolmaster\$from the local grammar schools, Porteus instituted or rather developed, a system of instruction and examination. Thomas Zouch, rector of Wycliffe, preaching the visitation sermon in 1792, referred to this system of instruction devised by Porteus. "Another instance of tender regard to the improvement of the younger Clergy commands our approbation and applause. It will easily occur to you that I allude to that method of study which has been kindly recommended to them in a tract, printed at Chester, wherein is given a copious list, .... of those books that may prove useful to the theological student .... No confined, no narrow system is pointed out. The doctrines of our church claim a much higher, a much nobler origin, than the assertions of a Calvin or a Luther, even the AUTHORITY OF THE WORD OF GOD." (1)

Porteus was very concerned about the increase in the number of Catholics but to his great relief he found this to be a natural result of an increase in population. At the same time he was worried about the growth in dissent at the expense of the Anglican church. In the field of education for the poor, Porteus was a keen and active supporter but again his efforts were restricted in their results through his desire not to antagonise the manufacturing interests, upon whom rested the supply of funds for education. In some ways he showed his affiliation to the ideas of his time in those instances where he encourages the poor to be content with their station in life and in his efforts to halt the secularisation of Sunday. Like so many of his contemporaries, Porteus never understood the problems of the populations in the new towns, who had little sense of community, in an expanding industrial region. He was handicapped, as were his contemporaries on the bench, by the

(1) T. Zouch, An Address delivered to the Clergy of the Deaneries of Richmond, Catterick and Boroughbridge 1792 (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1792), pp.8-9

lack of some organisation which could expedite the building of churches and the creation of new parishes. Before any reforms in this direction could be introduced the French Revolution burst upon Europe and created conditions in England that militated against any further reforms which could lead to the civilising of the wild mobs in the new towns. (1)

Hannah More testified to the energy of Porteus. She had first met him when he was Bishop of Chester and Chaplain to George III. Both found each other's company mutually enjoyable and she spent a great deal of time as his guest when he became Bishop of London in 1787. She described Porteus as a thin-faced man, with heavy eyebrows and who was silent in company but silver tongued in the pulpit. He was distinguished for his disposition, his charm of manner and his devotion to work. He rose early each morning to cover the tasks of the day that came before him either from the diocese, or on Sunday Schools, or Sunday observance, missionary work and the slave trade. It was Hannah More who introduced Porteus to Horace Walpole. (2)

Both Markham and Porteus were sound bishops, the former was conservative in type and hesitant of change but he never hesitated to denounce error or corruption in government. Porteus was more adventurous and realistic but both showed concern for the welfare of their clergy and people. Unfortunately both failed to realise, as did so many others, what the real problem was they had to solve and when this was realised Markham was an old man and Porteus had been translated to London where he was burdened with a large diocese and responsibility for the Anglican church in the Colonies. In so far as the diocese of Chester was concerned, The Anglican Church had lost the support of the working class in the industrial areas by the end of the century and in many country parishes poverty stricken clergy struggled to fight against an attitude of indifference.

(1) J. Addy, op.cit., pp.82-92

(2) M.A. Hopkins, Hannah More and her Circle (London, 1947), pp.136-137



BIBLIOGRAPHYTHE DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

In the majority of cases, diocesan records are usually available either in the diocesan registry or the county record office. The situation is very different for the records of the Chester Diocese, partly due to the fact that this diocese included two whole counties and a goodly portion of three others and also that the diocese was administered from two centres, ie. Chester and Richmond.

The diocesan archives are still very far from being completely catalogued and, because of the peculiar nature of this diocese, are stored in more than one record office. In addition these archives were carelessly stored so that many antiquarians were able to appropriate many documents for their own private use and collections. The whole of the episcopal records, the bishops' registers, episcopal visitations, the consistory act books (from 1524) and the institution act books (missing from 1688-1752); are stored in the Cheshire Record Office. In the same repository are the visitation and correction records of the Archdeacon of Chester and the parish papers for the Cheshire deaneries. The latter consist of collections of papers relating to each parish ie. presentations, ordination papers, letters testimonial, resignations, consecration deeds, church plans, school records, and letters from incumbents to the bishop. These papers were bound in bundles during the middle of last century by some industrious clerk in the registry.

During the thirties of the present century, these papers were in process of transfer to the registrars of the dioceses of Liverpool, Manchester, Blackburn, Ripon and Carlisle. Many of the parish bundles for the dioceses of Liverpool and Manchester were destroyed by enemy action between 1941-1943. What survives of these plus those papers for the diocese of Blackburn are now housed in the Lancashire Record Office, at Preston. The deaneries of Copeland, Kendal and the Westmorland portion of Kirby Lonsdale were transferred to the diocese of Carlisle so the parish papers for these deaneries are to be found in the Carlisle Record Office. Those for the old deaneries of Richmond,

Catterick and Boroughbridge plus the parishes of Kirby Lonsdale, which are within the Yorkshire county boundary, being part of the diocese of Ripon are stored in the Leeds City Archives.

To the above distribution must be added the division of the archives of the Archdeaconry of Richmond. Until 1954 these were regarded as lost but during a clearance of the cellars of Church House, Leeds, in 1955 the missing archives turned up bundled in forty-eight sacks. Since 1957 the writer has been engaged during vacations and other spare moments, in sorting, cleaning, cataloguing and generally making these archives available for students. The collection is proving to be as large as that of many dioceses. The consistory court books from 1542, the faculty books, the rural deans court books for the whole archdeaconry are in Leeds City Archives, with two exceptions; the first are the court books from 1719-1748 when the court was at Lancaster are stored in Preston and the second is the survival of a series of court books from 1708-1718 for a court at Kendal; these are in Preston.

The correction books, probate records and terriers, or most of the latter, for the five western deaneries of Richmond are in Preston while those for the three eastern deaneries are in Leeds.

The consistory court papers are very badly divided. In the Lancashire Record Office are a number of western deaneries cause papers but there is an equally large number at Leeds mixed in with those for the eastern deaneries. A rough preliminary catalogue is available for the eastern deaneries only. At the time of writing three sections of the catalogue are available, one of the faculties, a second of the parish papers and the third is an index to the correction books of the western deaneries. About five years work remains to be done on the Richmond archdeaconry collection.

Housed in the Borthwick Institute of Historical Research at York are the metropolitical visitation records by the Archbishop of York in 1578, 1579

1590, 1595, 1630, 1633, 1669, 1684-5, of the entire diocese of Chester.

In addition there is a collection of correspondence between the registrars of Chester and York, appeal causes to the chancery court from parishes in Chester diocese and the terriers presented at the archbishops' visitations.

Catalogues of this material are available.

The archives used in this study are those at present available for it is not expected to complete the sorting of these until 1976-7. Any student who contemplates work on the diocese of Chester should make a preliminary study of the catalogues at Chester, Preston, Carlisle and Leeds to find where his source materials are preserved and what is available. The cause papers have been withdrawn from students until extensive repairs can be undertaken to preserve them for mice, rats, water and general neglect have played havoc with these valuable archives.



ARCHIVE SOURCESCHESHIRE RECORD OFFICE

- EDV7/1        Articles preparatory to Visitation 1778. Bound in four volumes
- EDV7/2        Articles preparatory to Visitation 1789 5 volumes
- EDV7/3        Articles preparatory to Visitation 1804 5 volumes
- EDV7/4        Articles preparatory to Visitation 1811 5 volumes  
(parishes numbered consecutively)
- EDR/6         Precedent Book
- EDA2/7        Bishops Register 1768-1779
- EDA2/8        Bishops Register 1779-1791
- EDA1/7        Act Book 1752-1776
- EDA1/8        Act Book 1777-1790
- EDV/1         Comperta Books 1770-1787
- EDP/1         Parish Papers especially those for Brereton, Acton, Chester  
City, Marbury, Alderly, Cheadle, Marple, Sandbach, Macclesfield,  
Stockport, Tarporly, Prestbury, Tarvin, Wallasey, Bebbington,  
Wybunbury, Audlam, Winwick
- EDVA/2        Meeting House Licences
- EDA/6         Return of Catholics 1767, 1780
- EDC/5         Consistory Court Papers (unsorted)

LANCASHIRE RECORD OFFICE

- DRCh/2        Parish Papers especially Silverdale, Kirby Ireleth, Colton,  
Preston, Seathwaite, Torver, Dendron, Urswick, Rochdale,  
Broughton, Woodland, Rampside, Leigh, Birch, Ardwick, Chorlton  
cum Hardy, Newton Heath, Blackley, Warton, Bury, Cloughton,  
Hornby, Ormskirk, Chorley, Bolton, Upholland, Ashton under  
Lyne, Wigan, Prescott, Salford, Sankey, Birch, Unsworth,  
Dobcross, Cockey, Didsbury, Cheetham
- ARR13/5       Faculty Papers
- ARR13/1       Assessment disputes
- PR2848        Torver Parish Records
- DRN/BT        Manchester parish register transcripts
- DRCh/4        Survey of Churches and Parsonages in the Deaneries of  
Amounderness, Lonsdale, Copeland, Furness and Kendal 1782
- PR644         Goosenargh Parish Papers
- QSO/1770-6   Quarter Sessions Orders

ARR/15            Comperta Books 1771-1787  
 FRM/1/40        Marsden Quakers Monthly Meeting Sufferings Books 1764-1792  
 QV/4             Quarter Sessions Licences  
 ARR13/11        Miscellaneous Cause Papers  
 DRC/3            Carlisle terriers (Lancashire parishes)  
 DRB/3            Blackburn terriers  
 DRM/3            Manchester terriers  
 DRL/3            Liverpool terriers  
 ARR/17           Churchwardens presentments  
 ARR/13           Consistory Court Book 1641-1748  
 PR2851           Bretherton Parish Records  
 PR2863/1/5     Padiham Parish Records  
 ARR/16           Exhibit and Call Books 1737-1780

LEEDS CITY ARCHIVES

RD/A/49           Consistory Court Act Book 1782-1789  
 RD/PR/8           Probate Act Book  
 RD/RF/A-D        Faculty Books (eighteenth century)  
 MP/29             Masham Peculiar Records  
 RD/CB/8/10-11   Churchwardens presentments (eighteenth century)  
 RD/AC/1/7        Cause Papers  
 RD/AB/2a         Citations  
 RD/AQ/1           Sequestrations  
 RD/RU             Survey of the Archdeaconry of Richmond 1780  
 RD/CB/9           Archdeacons Papers  
 RD/C/1-47        Comperta Books 1663-1790  
 RD/B1/1           Valuation of Livings 1714  
 RD/RM             Meeting House Licences  
 RD/G              Glebe terriers  
 CD/G              Glebe terriers transferred from Chester  
 WD/2E/1          Western deaneries cause papers unsorted  
 CD/PB/1-8        Parish Papers especially Hugil, Hawes, Garsdale, Rookeby, Wycliffe, Richmond, Aysgarth, Knaresborough, Ingleton, Sedberg, Catterick, Hipswell, Hudswell, Tanfield, Witton, Great Ouseburn, Kirby Hill, Hawkswell, Well, Wath, Kirklington, Kirby Ravensworth, Clapham, Dent, Thornton, Askrigg

NH2837 Newby Hall correspondence

VY6026 Vyner correspondence

CARLISLE RECORD OFFICE

DRC/10 Parish Papers especially Ambleside, Clifton, Whitbeck, Buttermire, Ponsonby, Haile, Mosser, Kendal, Beethom, Wythop, Egton, Whicham, Crook, Embleton, Heversham, Millom, Hutton Roof, Mansergh, Corny, Lorton, Burnside, Wasdalehead, Gosforth Harrington, Setmurthy  
Bishops Register 1765-1823  
Bishops Register 1734-1764

BORTHWICK INSTITUTE OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH

R.Bp.6B Bishopthorpe Papers

R.Bp.68/6 Bishopthorpe Papers

R.VII PG154, Precedent Papers  
175,182

X Bp.V 1765 Visitation of Archbishop Drummond

R.VII.H2700 Cause Papers

R.IV.N1367 Certificates of Conformity

B.Inst.A.B.15 Institution Act Book 1779-1781

BRITISH MUSEUM

X Additional Manuscripts: 39,311, 42,085, 32,969, 32,963, 32,917,  
32,932, 32,907, 38,216, 38,305, 38,227.  
5836 Cole Collection Volume XXX

CHESTER CATHEDRAL LIBRARY

Notitia Cestriensis 1723 with additions by Porteus 1780

Treasurers' Accounts

Dean and Chapter Act Book 1747-1816

BODLEIAN LIBRARY, OXFORD

Tanner Ms 152

Ms Oxford Diocesan Papers B.21 Bishops Register 1737-1802

CHRIST CHURCH LIBRARY, OXFORD

Dean and Chapter Act Book 1752-1775; 1776-1779

Dean and Chapter Minute Book 1752-1776

LAMBETH PALACE LIBRARY

MS.2098-2099 Beilby Porteus Diaries Vols. I,II  
Reports of the S.P.G. 1812

MSS.930 Todd: Archiepiscopal MSS. (Report on the visit of a  
Recusant Bishop to Blackburn)

VPIIa/3/16-17 Visitations of the Deanery of Shoreham 1765-1787  
Register of Archbishop Secker 1758-1768

HAMPSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

Register of Bishop John Thomas 1761-1781

GREATER LONDON RECORD OFFICE

P85/MRY1/50/15 and 20 Lambeth Parish Records

JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY

X/135; X/B9 Legh Letters

MSS.978.073 Hulme Mss

MANCHESTER CITY ARCHIVES

M39/3/5 Manchester Diocesan Papers (Collegiate Church)

LEEDS UNIVERSITY BROTHERTON LIBRARY

Notebooks of C.T. Longley, first Bishop of Ripon completed from parochial  
returns of visitation queries 1837-1856. Vol.I (Holden Library)

PRIMARY PRINTED SOURCESPORTEUS'S LIBRARY

Beilby Porteus bequeathed his library to the Bishops of London and until 1955  
it remained at Fulham Palace. It was then removed as a special collection  
to Goldsmith's Library, University of London where it still remains. The  
collection has not been catalogued nor are there any reliable shelf marks.  
All refernces are to a specific volume and there are, unfortunately, two  
groups of miscellaneous volumes each with an identical sequence mark. It  
is by no means an easy collection to work amongst and the greatest need is  
for a reliable catalogue.

The following volumes have been used but the sermons and pamphlets can, in  
several cases, be found either at Lambeth Palace, Bodleian Library or  
Manchester City Library.

Miscellaneous Volumes: 10, 15, 21, 29, 31, 49, 52, 53, 57, 64, 78  
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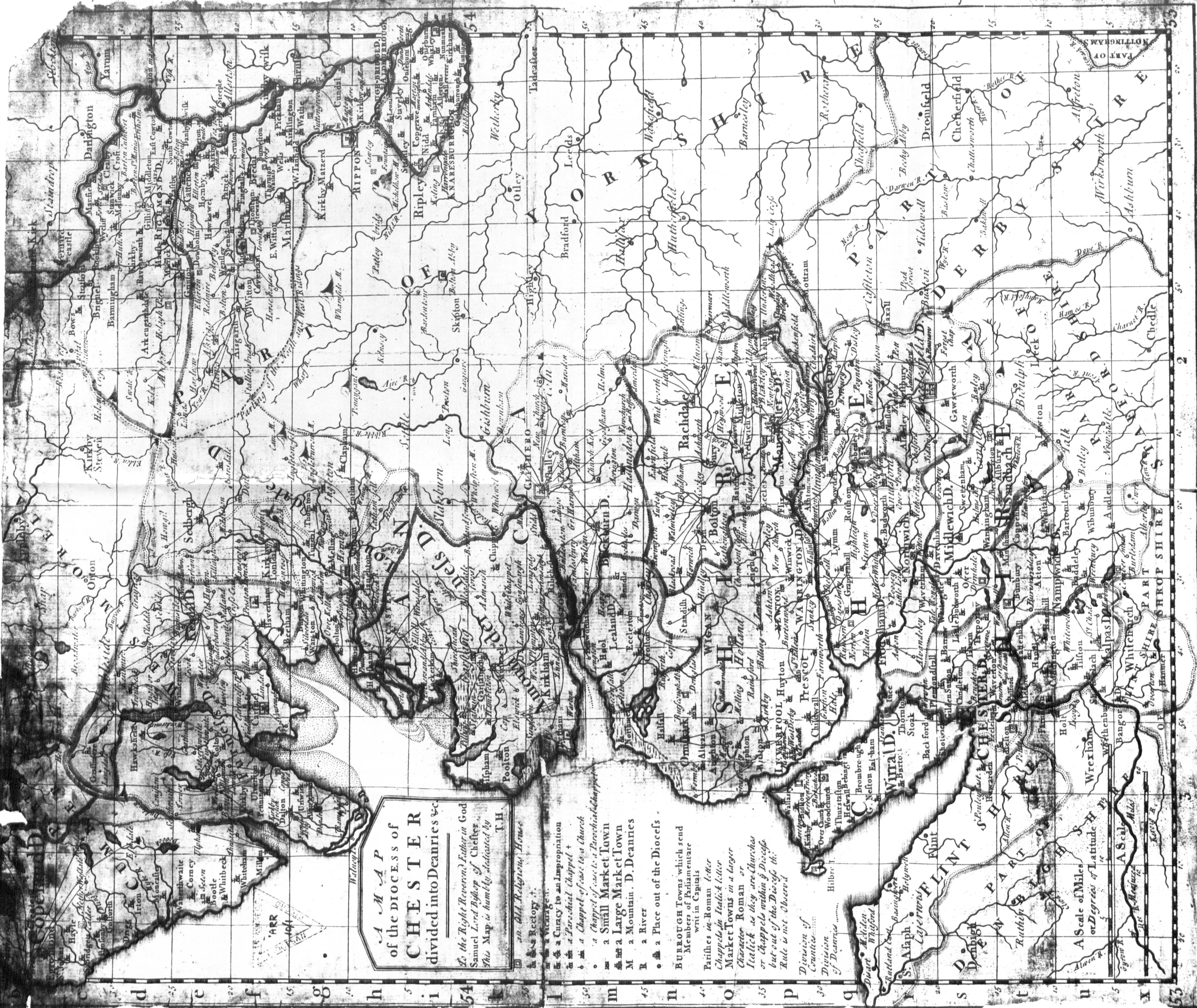
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ORIGINAL SIZE  
SIX INCHES



**A MAP**  
**of the DIOCESS OF**  
**CHESTER**  
**divided into Deaneries &c.**

To the Right Reverend Father in God  
Samuel Lord Bishop of Chester  
This Map is humbly dedicated by  
T. H.

- a Rectory
- a Vicarage
- a Curacy to an Impropriation
- a Parochial Chapel
- a Chapel of ease to a Church
- a Small Market Town
- a Large Market Town
- a Mountain
- a River
- a Place out of the Diocess

**BURROUGH Towns** which send Members of Parliamentare writ in Capitals

Parishes in Roman letter  
Chapels in Italic letter  
Market Towns in a larger Character Roman or Italic as they are Churches or Chapels within a Diocess but out of the Diocess th. Rule is not Observed

Division of Counties  
Division of Deaneries

Warrald. Flint  
S. Alaph  
Layertons  
D. Denbigh  
Ruthin  
Wrexham  
Bangor

A Scale of Miles  
on Degrees of Latitude