

THE PARISH CLERGY IN THE DIOCESE OF CANTERBURY
AND ARCHDEACONRY OF BEDFORD IN THE REIGN OF CHARLES I
AND UNDER THE COMMONWEALTH

A THESIS PRESENTED FOR THE DEGREE OF
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GILLIAN L. IGNJATIJEVIC
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD
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SUMMARY OF THESIS

THE PARISH CLERGY IN THE DIOCESE OF CANTERBURY AND ARCHDEACONRY OF BEDFORD IN THE REIGN OF CHARLES I AND UNDER THE COMMONWEALTH

GILLIAN L. IGNJATJEVIC

This study is concerned with the nature of the parish ministry in the diocese of Canterbury and archdeaconry of Bedford, its educational, professional, economic and social status, its work and its relations with the laity. It is also concerned with the impact of the Civil War and Interregnum on the profession.

The pre-Civil War clergy formed a professional group with its own hierarchy, set of rules, rudimentary form of training and career structure. There was a strong sense of professional identity amongst them. The parish ministry was a popular profession in which most ministers could expect reasonable remuneration and some chance of promotion. It can be termed a distinct social group, reasonably close to the gentry in social standing. It is likely that most ministers fulfilled their duties; and it is also likely that behind many presentments for clerical negligence lay local conflicts. Between the Scylla and Charybdis of Arminianism and Laudianism on the one hand and Puritanism on the other lay the Anglicanism of the majority of the pre-Civil War clergy.

The 1640's and 1650's was a period of extreme but temporary dislocation for the profession. A significant number of ministers were deprived of their livings. Few of these were avid Laudians or implacable opponents of parliament. Many ministers found it difficult to collect their tithes. However, the overall adverse effects of the upheavals of this period should not be exaggerated, for a number of the ejected ministers made peace with parliament and were given new livings. Others were restored to the Church in the early 1660's. Most ministers escaped ejection; and many Anglican ministers survived in their livings undisturbed and it is likely that a number still used the traditional liturgy. The Anglican Church thus survived at a local level into the Restoration period.

CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|------|
| PREFACE | 1 |
| ABBREVIATIONS | 2 |
| LIST OF TABLES | 5 |
| LIST OF MAPS | 6 |
| MAPS | 7-8 |
| INTRODUCTION | 9 |
| I THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND, EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL STATUS OF THE CLERGY | 21 |
| II THE INCOME OF THE CLERGY | 54 |
| III THE PROBLEM OF TITHES | 86 |
| IV CLERICAL NEGLECT AND THE VISITATION PROCESS 1625-42 | 133 |
| V THE EJECTION OF MINISTERS 1640-59 | 169 |
| CONCLUSION | 228 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 237 |

PREFACE

It should be noted that in quotations from manuscript sources spelling and punctuation have been modernized. Titles of seventeenth century works have been modernized where appropriate. Where it is possible the year is taken to begin on 1st. January. All percentages used in this thesis have been rounded off to the nearest whole number.

Many thanks are due at the end of writing this thesis. I am grateful to the staff of the Bedford Record Office, the Bodleian Library, the British Library, the Cathedral Archives and Library, Canterbury, the House of Lords Record Office, the Kent Archives Office, Lambeth Palace Library, the Lincoln Archives Office and the Public Record Office for their assistance. I would like to thank my supervisor, Anthony Fletcher, for his help and encouragement. I would also like to thank my parents and my husband, Julian Popple, for their support and encouragement; I am particularly grateful to Julian for typing this thesis.

A TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Acheson | R. Acheson, "The Development of Religious Separatism in the Diocese of Canterbury 1590-1660", Kent Ph.D., 1982. |
| Add. MS. | Additional Manuscripts |
| <u>Al.Cantab.</u> | J. Venn and J.A. Venn, <u>Alumni Cantabrigienses Part I: from the Earliest Times to 1751</u> , 4 vols. (Cambridge, 1922,1924,1927). |
| <u>Al.Oxon.</u> | J. Foster, <u>Alumni Oxonienses: The Members of the University of Oxford 1500-1714</u> , 4 vols. (Oxford, 1982). |
| B | Bodleian Library |
| Barratt | D.M. Barratt, "The Condition of the Parish Clergy Between the Reformation and 1660 With Special Reference to the Dioceses of Oxford, Worcester and Gloucester", Oxford D.Phil., 1949. |
| <u>BHRS</u> | <u>Bedford Historical Record Society</u> |
| <u>BIHR</u> | <u>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research</u> |
| BL | British Library |
| <u>BNQ</u> | <u>Bedfordshire Notes and Queries</u> |
| Bodl. MSS. | Bodley Manuscripts |
| BRO | Bedfordshire Record Office |
| <u>Calamy Revised</u> | A.G. Matthews, <u>Calamy Revised: Being a Revision of Edmund Calamy's Account of the Ministers and Others Ejected and Silenced 1600-2</u> (London, 1934). |
| CALC | Cathedral Archives and Library Canterbury |
| Clark | P. Clark, <u>English Provincial Society from the Reformation to the Revolution: Religion, Politics and Society in Kent 1500-1640</u> (Sussex, 1977). |
| CJ | <u>Commons Journals</u> |
| Collinson, <u>Religion</u> | P. Collinson, <u>The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society 1559-1625</u> (Oxford, 1982). |

- Culmer, Lawless R. Culmer, Lawless Tithe Robbers Discovered: Who Make Tithe-Revenue a Mock-Maintenance. Being Encouraged Thereunto by the Defect of Law and Justice About Ministers' Maintenance (London, 1655).
- DNB Dictionary of National Biography
- EHR English Historical Review
- Everitt A. Everitt, The Community of Kent and the Great Rebellion 1640-60 (Leicester, 1973).
- Fletcher, Sussex A.J. Fletcher, A County Community in Peace and War: Sussex 1600-60 (London, 1975).
- Freeman J. Freeman, "The Parish Ministry in the Diocese of Durham c 1570-1640", Durham Ph.D., 1980.
- Green, "Careers" I.M. Green, "Career Prospects and Clerical Conformity in the Early Stuart Church", Past and Present, vol.90 (Feb. 1981).
- Green, "Scandal" I.M. Green, "The Persecution of 'Scandalous' and 'Malignant' Parish Clergy During the English Civil War", English Historical Review, vol.94 (1979).
- HAGS Historical Association General Series
- Hasted E. Hasted, The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent, vols.5-12 (Canterbury, 1798-1800).
- Hill, Economic C. Hill, Economic Problems of the Church: from Archbishop Whitgift to the Long Parliament (Oxford, 1963).
- HLMP House of Lords Main Papers
- HLRO House of Lords Record Office
- HMC Historical Manuscripts Commission
- JBAA Journal of the British Archaeological Association
- JEH Journal of Ecclesiastical History
- KAO Kent Archives Office
- Larking L.B. Larking, ed., Proceedings Principally in the County of Kent in Connection with the Parliaments Called in 1640 and Especially with the Committee of Religion Appointed in that Year (Camden Society, 1862).

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|-----------------------|--|
| LAO | Lincoln Archives Office |
| Laud, <u>Works</u> | Parker, J.H., ed., <u>The Works of the Most Reverend Father in God William Laud D.D. Sometime Archbishop of Canterbury, 7 vols.</u> (Oxford, 1847,1849,1853-4,1857,1860). |
| LJ | <u>Journals of the House of Lords</u> |
| LPL | Lambeth Palace Library |
| LRS | <u>Lincoln Record Society</u> |
| O'Day, <u>Clergy</u> | R. O'Day, <u>The English Clergy: The Emergence and Consolidation of a Profession 1558-1642</u> (Leicester, 1979). |
| PP | <u>Past and Present</u> |
| PRO | Public Record Office |
| SCH | <u>Studies in Church History</u> |
| SRS | <u>Suffolk Record Society</u> |
| UBHJ | <u>University of Birmingham Historical Journal</u> |
| <u>VCH Bedford</u> | <u>The Victoria History of the County of Bedford</u> |
| <u>Walker Revised</u> | A.G. Matthews, <u>Walker Revised: Being a Revision of John Walker's Sufferings of the Clergy During the Grand Rebellion 1642-1660</u> (Oxford, 1948). |
| White | J. White, <u>The First Century of Scandalous, Malignant Priests, Made and Admitted into Benefices by the Prelates in Whose Hands the Ordination of Ministers and Government of the Church Has Been</u> (London, 1643). |

LIST OF TABLES

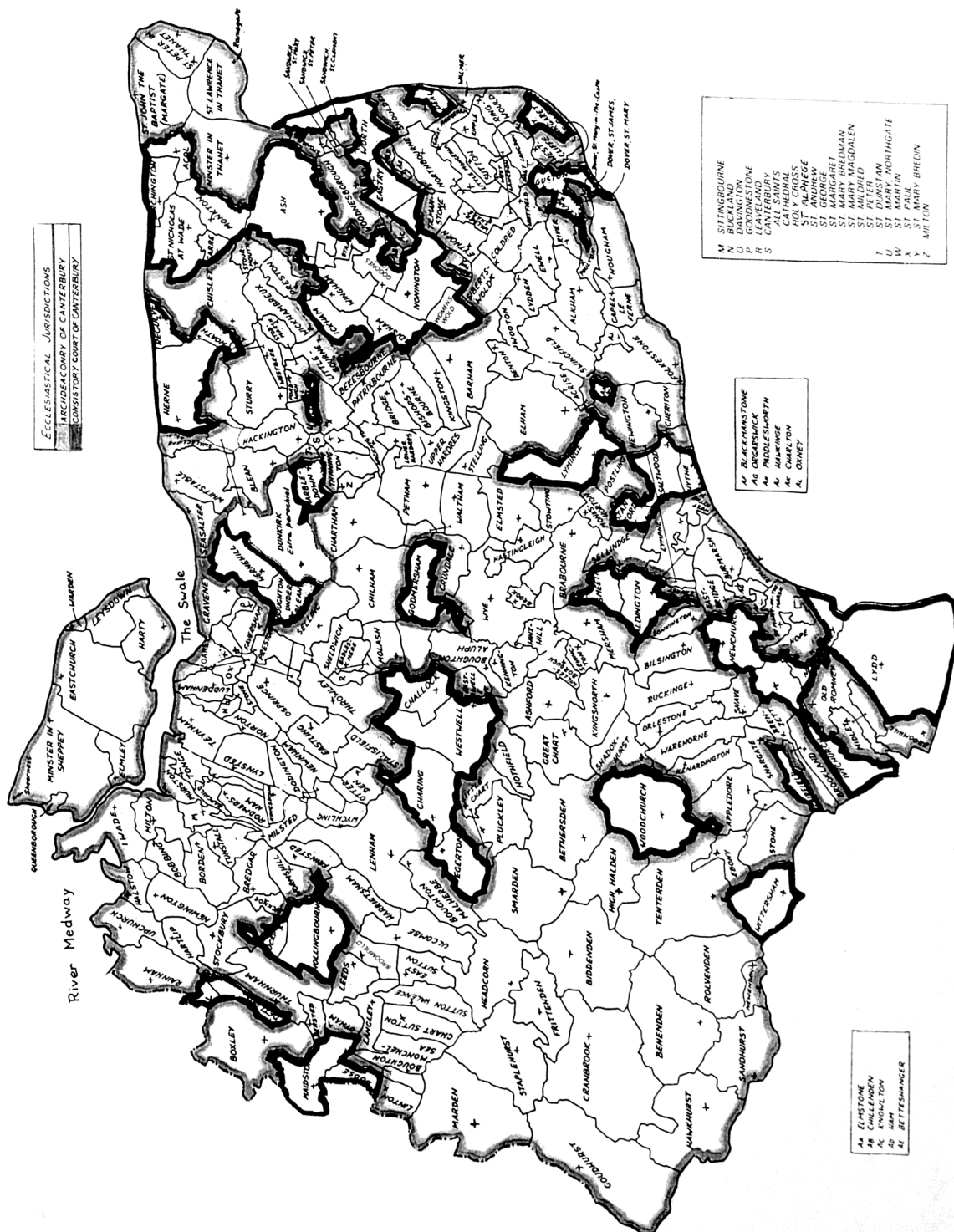
| | | Page |
|----|---|------|
| 1 | QUALIFICATIONS OF THE KENTISH MINISTERS OF 1607 AND 1637 WHO HAD ATTENDED UNIVERSITY | 24 |
| 2 | QUALIFICATIONS OF THE BEDFORDSHIRE MINISTERS OF 1603 AND 1633 WHO HAD ATTENDED UNIVERSITY | 24 |
| 3 | THE PLACE OF ORIGIN OF BENEFICED MINISTERS FROM THE DIOCESE OF CANTERBURY AND ARCHDEACONRY OF BEDFORD IN 1637 AND 1633 RESPECTIVELY | 35 |
| 4 | THE PATTERN OF PATRONAGE IN THE DIOCESE OF CANTERBURY BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR AND IN 1663 | 37 |
| 5 | THE PATTERN OF PATRONAGE IN THE ARCHDEACONRY OF BEDFORD BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR | 37 |
| 6 | VALUES OF BENEFICES IN THE DIOCESE OF CANTERBURY IN 1650 | 56 |
| 7 | AMOUNTS OF GLEBELAND ATTACHED TO BENEFICES IN THE DIOCESE OF CANTERBURY AND THE ARCHDEACONRY OF BEDFORD | 59 |
| 8 | THE VALUES OF KENTISH MINISTERS' GOODS 1623-65 | 68 |
| 9 | THE PRESENTMENT OF NEGLECTFUL MINISTERS IN THE DIOCESE OF CANTERBURY 1625-42 | 137 |
| 10 | THE DATES OF EJECTION OF MINISTERS IN THE DIOCESE OF CANTERBURY AND ARCHDEACONRY OF BEDFORD 1641-58 | 176 |
| 11 | EJECTION OF PLURALISTS IN THE DIOCESE OF CANTERBURY | 178 |

LIST OF MAPS

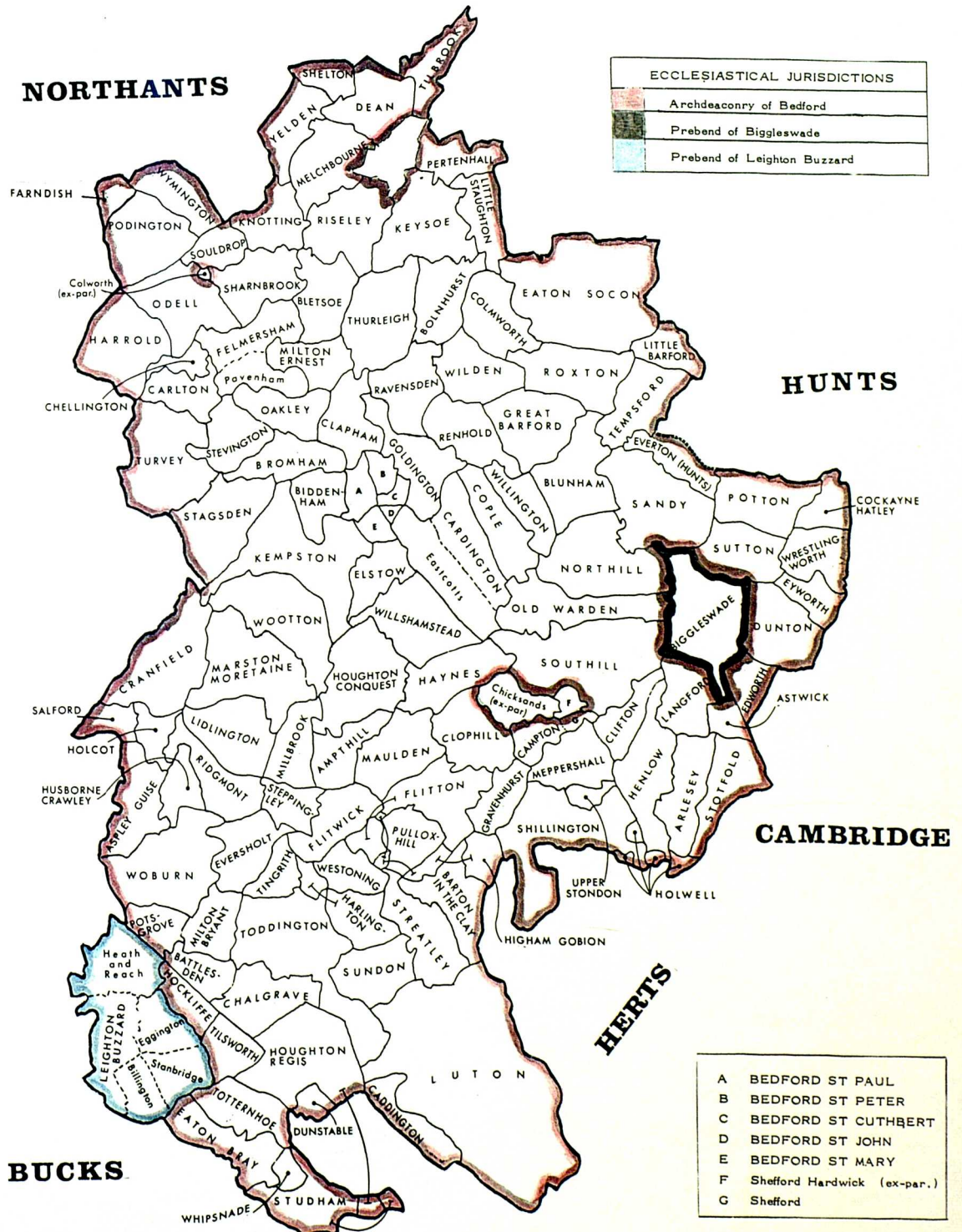
| | | Page |
|---|---|------|
| 1 | MAP OF THE DIOCESE OF CANTERBURY SHOWING ECCLESIASTICAL JURISDICTIONS | 7 |
| 2 | MAP OF THE COUNTY OF BEDFORDSHIRE SHOWING ECCLESIASTICAL JURISDICTIONS | 8 |

1. MAP OF THE DIOCESE OF CANTERBURY SHOWING

ECCLESIASTICAL JURISDICTIONS



2. MAP OF THE COUNTY OF BEDFORDSHIRE SHOWING
ECCLESIASTICAL JURISDICTIONS



INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this thesis is to add to the work already done on the parish clergy, particularly by Drs. O'Day, Barratt, Freeman and Beddows.¹ It is a study of the nature of the parish ministry, its educational, social, professional and financial status, its work and its relations with the people during a period of intense religious and political change. For purposes of analysis I have not always confined myself to the period after 1625; where necessary I have looked back to the Jacobean, Elizabethan and Henrician periods. This thesis differs in focus from most other studies of the parochial clergy insofar as it is concerned not only with the pre-Civil War period, but also with the impact of the Civil War and Interregnum on the clerical profession, particularly on its composition, financial affairs and relations with the laity. The attitude of the laity towards the clergy is difficult to gauge as one can find almost as many opinions as people. Therefore, I have confined my study in this respect to an analysis of local conflicts and disputes in Chapters III and IV and the role of the laity in the ejection of ministers in Chapter V. It is important to gain as broad a picture as possible and that is why I have chosen two areas, namely, the diocese of Canterbury and the archdeaconry of Bedford.² The former was the archbishop's diocese and centre of his province and

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1. O'Day (the diocese of Lichfield), Barratt (the diocese of Gloucester and Worcestershire), Freeman (the diocese of Durham) and H.Beddows, "The Church in Lincolnshire 1593-1640", Cambridge Ph.D., 1980.
 2. In general, there is more evidence available for the diocese of Canterbury than for the archdeaconry of Bedford. There are full ecclesiastical court records extant for the former area, but very few court records for the latter. Moreover, Bedfordshire lacks surveys of church livings and clerical inventories. However, there are plentiful supplies of other types of documents for both areas, including wills, terriers, Exchequer tithe cases, petitions and clerical works.

presided over in our period first by George Abbot and then by William Laud. The latter was part of the moderate Bishop Williams' vast diocese of Lincoln. Both were close to London and under parliament's sphere of influence during the Civil War.

The diocese of Canterbury consists of that part of the county of Kent which lies east of a line which runs approximately north and south on the west side of the parishes of Rainham, Boxley, Maidstone, Marden and Goudhurst to the Sussex border. It is, in fact, a relatively small diocese. Nonetheless, it is substantially larger in terms of square miles than the archdeaconry of Bedford, which is almost coterminous with the county of Bedford. The diocese of Canterbury consisted of two hundred and seventy five parishes and this included one hundred and fourteen rectories, one hundred and fifteen vicarages, twenty seven perpetual curacies and nineteen chapels.¹ These parishes were grouped into eleven deaneries, those of Bridge, Canterbury, Charing, Dover, Elham, Lympne, Ospringe, Sandwich, Sittingbourne, Sutton and Westbere. The archdeaconry of Bedfordshire consisted of fifty nine rectories, fifty nine vicarages and six perpetual curacies, one hundred and twenty four parishes in all. Moreover, the town of Leighton Buzzard and its four chapelries, Heath and Reach, Egginton, Billington and Stanbridge, were under the jurisdiction of the prebend of Leighton Buzzard and the town of Biggleswade was under the jurisdiction of its own prebend. For the purposes of analysis these parishes will be treated as part of the archdeaconry of Bedford. In general, the Bedfordshire parishes were larger than those of the diocese of Canterbury and they were grouped into six deaneries, those of Clapham, Dunstable, Eaton, Fleete and

1. The term parish is used to denote a geographical unit served by a church or chapel with cure of souls.

Shefford. Much of the agricultural land in the diocese of Canterbury had been enclosed by the early seventeenth century, whereas, in Bedfordshire, the open field system of farming was still widely practised. In Kent, there was mainly pasture farming in the Weald and marshlands of Romney and Thanet and a mixture of arable and pasture farming and market gardening in other parts of the diocese.¹ Bedfordshire had a largely arable economy with some market gardening. Both areas of our study contained only four sizeable towns apiece and these were Canterbury, Dover, Faversham and Maidstone in Kent and Bedford, Dunstable, Leighton Buzzard and Luton in Bedfordshire.

Ecclesiastical justice was dispensed in Bedfordshire by both the bishop's and archdeacon's courts as well as those of the prebends of Leighton Buzzard and Biggleswade; and the diocese of Canterbury was served by the courts of the archbishop and the archdeacon respectively. Altogether fifty one Kentish parishes were under the archbishop's personal patronage and were therefore outside the jurisdiction of the archdeacon's court.² In the areas of our study most people, at the very least, availed themselves of the so-called *rites de passage* that the church had to offer, the ceremonies of baptism, marriage and burial, but problems for individual ministers and the unity of the Church as a whole were created by groups of religious radicals and Roman Catholic recusants in the diocese of Canterbury and archdeaconry of Bedford. Although religious separatism *per se* was rare³ before the mid-

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1. J.Thirsk, "The Farming Regions of England", ed. H.P.R.Finberg, The Farming Regions of England and Wales Vol.IV: 1500-1640 (Cambridge, 1967), pp.56-60,62.
 2. J.M.Potter, "The Ecclesiastical Courts in the Diocese of Canterbury 1603-65", London M.Phil., 1973, p.13.
 3. P.Collinson, "Cranbrook and the Fletchers: Popular and Unpopular Religion in the Kentish Weald", ed. P.N.Brook, Reformation Principle and Practice: Essays in Honour of A.G.Dickens (London, 1980), pp.200,202.

seventeenth century its roots grew rapidly during the 1620's and 1630's, particularly in the old Lollard areas of Kent, that is the Weald, Romney Marsh and the extreme east of the diocese. It has been suggested that the religious policies of Archbishop William Laud were in some measure responsible for this.¹ By the mid-century full blown religious separatism in the guise of Independency, Baptism and Quakerism developed. Quakerism spread in the diocese of Canterbury following a visit to that area of William Caton and John Stubbs in 1655.² A paucity of documentary evidence precludes a survey of religious radicalism in the archdeaconry of Bedford in the 1630's; however, after 1653 the town of Bedford established itself a centre of religious Independency when John Gifford formed his Independent congregation at St. John's church. John Bunyan, himself, became a member of that congregation. There were other Independent, as well as Baptist and Quaker churches spread out across Bedfordshire, though there was a slightly higher than average incidence of these in the deanery of Eaton in North Bedfordshire and in the deanery of Fleete, which is just to the south of the deanery of Bedford. Quakerism was brought into the county in 1654 by William Dewsbury.³

In the diocese of Canterbury Roman Catholic recusancy was confined mainly to two deaneries, those of Sittingbourne and Ospringe in the north west of the diocese.⁴ William Laud, himself, had commented that:

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1. Acheson, p.14; B.Reay, "Popular Religion", ed. B.Reay, Popular Culture in Seventeenth Century England (London, 1985), p.103.
 2. Acheson, p.288.
 3. J.Godber, History of Bedfordshire (Bedford, 1969), pp.232-3.
 4. This conclusion has been reached after a detailed study of the ex-officio court books of the diocese of Canterbury between 1625 and 1642 which are housed in the CALC and LPL.

"About Sittingbourne there are more recusants than in any other part of my diocese."

As in other parts of England, Roman Catholicism was mainly a seignorial religion which was centred on a few great gentry families, such as the Rayners of Bobbing, the Ropers of Hartlip and the Finches of Milton-next-Sittingbourne, all in the Sittingbourne deanery, and the Hawkins of Boughton Blean, the Turners of Linsted and, after the death of John Finch, Susan Finch, his widow, who had moved from Milton to Preston-next-Faversham.² These last three centres of Catholicism were in the Ospringe deanery. Moreover, other pockets of Roman Catholicism existed in the diocese and were centred on the households of John Best and William Gibbons of St. Paul's, Canterbury, and Sir Henry Guildeford and Sir Edward Guildeford of Rolvenden in the deanery of Charing. The Catholics were linked together not only by a common religion but also by ties of kinship. There were a number of obscure people who adhered to Roman Catholicism besides the servants and tenants of the above-mentioned gentry families, for example, one Steddal, a mason of Barham and his family.³ A particularly large proportion of those presented for recusancy were women and this implies that the male heads of household attended church at least occasionally to avoid presentation.⁴ Those people who were presented for recusancy often appear again and again in the visitation records; for example, Margaret Rayner, wife of John Rayner, gentleman, of Bobbing, was presented nine times between 1625 and

1. Laud, Works, vol.V, p.348.

2. CALC, X6-3, ff.80,133,153,167,180,186,191, X6-11, f.105, X7-1, ff.10,13,23,41,44,49,71,81, Y6-4, ff.315,319,363, Z3-16, f.242, Z4-5, f.142, Z4-6, f.52; Fletcher, Sussex, pp.94-5.

3. CALC, X6-10, f.118, Z3-16, f.163; Larking, p.651; Fletcher, Sussex, pp.94-5.

4. E.R.C.Brinkworth, "The Laudian Church in Buckinghamshire", UBHL, vol.8(1955-56), p.57; Fletcher, Sussex, p.95.

1637.¹ Excommunication was no deterrent. It was said in 1635 that Thomasine Hoades of Borden had not attended church for five years and that she had:

"had aggravation upon aggravation out of both courts denounced against her [but] she regards [this] not but remains obstinate in error."²

Eventually, a few harried recusants, such as Richard Hawkins of Selling, Henry Roper of Hartlip and Susan Finch of Preston-next-Faversham, were permitted liberty of conscience.³ Few ecclesiastical court records have survived for Bedfordshire; even so, it is clear that there were very few adherents to the Roman Catholic religion in this county. There were a few Catholics in Turvey in North Bedfordshire centred around the household of the widow of the fourth Lord Mordaunt. Between 1625 and 1631, the Vicar Apostolic resided there. Two other Bedfordian families, the Hunts of Roxton and the Watsons of Beckerings Park were recusants.⁴

There has been much debate and some confusion about the terms which historians have used when discussing religious issues in the period covered by this thesis. Four main terms have been adopted here to describe the personnel of the Church and these are Arminian, Laudian, Puritan and Anglican. All members of the Church, as well as those who separated from it, were Protestants; and so this term is not considered to be distinctive enough to describe any one particular religious group. In this study the term Arminian is used in a strictly doctrinal sense and it is applied to those ministers who were known to have adhered to Arminius of Leyden's belief that the grace of God is freely available

1. CALC, X6-3, ff.70,147,153,189,204,218,224, X6-11, ff.3,24, 23-16, f.20.

2. CALC, X6-3, f.251.

3. CALC, X6-3, f.180, X7-1, f.48, 23-16, f.241.

4. The Vicar Apostolic's jurisdiction extended over recusants in the whole of England as well as the plantations of America. Godber, History of Bedfordshire, p.225.

to the believer.' The term is used, therefore, in a more narrow sense than that adopted by Dr. Tyacke, who has maintained that English Arminians adapted the Dutch theologian's views to the local situation and so held that the grace of God was freely available in the sacraments. This then resulted in a preoccupation with the "beauty of holiness". Led by Archbishop Laud the English Arminians wrecked the Calvinist consensus that had existed in the Church since the Reformation.² Arminianism is treated as a purely doctrinal concept in this study for, although the few ministers who are known to have believed that God's grace was freely available to the believer were also known to have been avid supporters of Laud's policy of ceremonial innovation, there is no evidence to suggest that all those ministers who were forward promoters of these practices were also Arminian.³ Moreover, Archbishop Laud, himself, did not claim to be an Arminian, neither did he espouse Arminian doctrine in any shape or form. In fact, on doctrinal issues Laud remained quiet. It is likely that Arminianism was a minority issue in the Church.⁴ In view of all this it is more useful to describe those ministers who were zealous promoters of Archbishop Laud's policy of ceremonial innovation and sacerdotalism as Laudian. Not only did they obey Laud's directive that their communion tables should be placed at

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1. K.Sharp, "Archbishop Laud and the University of Oxford", eds. H.Lloyd-Jones, V.Pearl and B.Worden, History of the Imagination: Essays in Honour of H.R.Trevor-Roper (London, 1981), p.161.
 2. N.Tyacke, "Puritanism, Arminianism and Counter Revolution", ed. C.Russell, The Origins of the Civil War (London, 1975), pp.119-21, 129-30, 139.
 3. Hugh Reeve, rector of Ampthill in Bedfordshire, and Edward Boughen, vicar of Woodchurch in Kent, can be described as Arminians who were staunch supporters of Laud's policies of ceremonial innovation. HLRO, HLMP, 16th. Jan. 1640-41; Larking, p.123.
 4. Sharp, eds. Lloyd-Jones, Pearl and Worden, History of the Imagination: Essays in Honour of H.R.Trevor-Roper, pp.160-1; H.R.Trevor-Roper, Archbishop Laud 1573-1645 (London, 1962), p.307; P.White, "The Rise of Arminianism", PP, vol.101 (November 1983), p.50.

the east end of the chancel and railed in to protect them from profanation, unlike their purely conformist colleagues, some also decorated their altars with carvings and crucifixes, their churches with images and pictures and many embellished their services with extra forms of ritual such as bowing before the altar and at the name of Jesus.' Like the archbishop, many Laudians stressed the importance of the sacraments in the salvation process and this contrasted to the Puritan view that preaching was of vital importance. The Puritan preoccupation with sermons was condemned by some Laudians. Sacerdotalism, an elevated view of the role of priesthood, is another aspect of Laudianism.² Like Bishop Montagu of Chichester, Archbishop Laud built up a following in his own cathedral city of Canterbury, appointing Laudians to high office in the Church.³ The nature of the evidence, however, precludes a statistical assessment of the incidence of Laudianism in the diocese of Canterbury and archdeaconry of Bedford.

At the other extreme in the Church were the Puritan ministers. The term Puritan is difficult to define. It was used by some contemporaries, particularly the Laudians, as a term of abuse, a synonym for dissent and subversion.⁴ Nevertheless, in this study it shall be used to describe those ministers who were zealous and Calvinist and who laid great stress upon the scriptures and the preaching of the Word.⁵

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1. Laud, Works, vol.VI, p.39; Larking, pp.88,185,190-1,223; Walker Revised, p.223.
 2. HLRO, HLMP, 16th. Jan. 1640-41; Laud, Works, vol.VI, p.57; Tyacke, ed. Russell, The Origins of the English Civil War, pp.139-40; J.F.H.New, Anglican and Puritan: The Basis of Their Opposition 1558-1640 (London, 1964), p.70.
 3. Thomas Blechinden was appointed Canon of Canterbury in 1633 and William Dunkin was appointed Prebend of Canterbury in 1639. Al.Cantab., vol.I, pp.75,166; Walker Revised, pp.212,215-16; Fletcher, Sussex, p.78.
 4. P.Collinson, "English Puritanism", HAGS, vol.106 (1983), p.7; Fletcher, Sussex, p.61.
 5. Fletcher, Sussex, p.74.

Puritans tended to be staunch upholders of the Sabbath day believing that it should be dedicated to the worship of God and religious instruction.¹ Some Puritan ministers preached to their congregations on Sunday afternoons when they should have been catechising the young people of the parish; and it was common practice for lay Puritans from neighbouring parishes to flock to hear these ministers preach when there was no sermon in their own parishes.² Household religion, consisting of family prayers, the repetition of sermons and religious instruction, was a common practice amongst lay Puritans and some ministers participated too. One should not fall into the trap, however, of interpreting these religious meetings in the home as separatist conventicles, for they tended to be means by which the godly compensated for the unreformed nature of the established Church whilst remaining within it.³ The reform of the Church, purging it of practices which were considered Roman Catholic in origin and more to the point, unscriptural, was high on the list of both lay and clerical demands. Laud's policy of ceremonial innovation and sacerdotalism was considered to have been particularly obnoxious. The extent of lay and clerical Puritanism is difficult to gauge. Lay Puritanism was particularly strong in those areas which had a Lollard tradition, for example, the Weald of Kent.⁴ It is likely, however, that, in general, this rigorous form of religion had only limited appeal amongst the laity.⁵ The detection of clerical Puritanism is problematic. It is likely that many Puritan ministers conformed to the rites and

1. Collinson, *HAGS*, vol.106(1983), pp.32-3.

2. Large numbers of people from Maidstone, for example, flocked to neighbouring Otham church to hear the Puritan minister, Thomas Wilson, preach on Sunday afternoons. LPL, VG4/22, ff.5,7.

3. Samuel Keame, rector of Little Chart, was presented for participating in non-separating conventicles in the city of Canterbury. LPL, VG4/13, f.95; Collinson, *Religion*, pp.274-5.

4. Collinson, *HAGS*, vol.106(1983), p.26; Fletcher, *Sussex*, p.62.

5. Collinson, *Religion*, p.201.

ceremonies of the Church of England without compromising themselves. Some wanted promotion and others merely wanted a trouble-free life. It is more than likely that many felt that they should obey the archbishop and the King.' Most of the Puritan ministers who can be identified tended to be those who drew attention to themselves by refusing to conform to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England, particularly those which were introduced by Archbishop Laud.² Non-conformist Puritans were presented on any number of counts, for refusing to wear their surplices during the divine service, for omitting the sign of the cross in baptism and for baptising infants in a basin rather than at the font.³ Other nonconformist practices included the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to those who did not kneel, for kneeling implied the adoration of the elements, the omission of some parts of the services prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer, usually in order to leave more time for the sermon, the refusal to use the Prayer Book at all and the refusal to read the Book of Sports of 1633.⁴ Few Puritan ministers took their nonconformity to great lengths. It was rare for a minister to be presented more than once for the same misdemeanour and most agreed to conform. Only one Bedfordshire and four Kentish Puritans were deprived of their livings for their nonconformity during the Archiepiscopate of William Laud; and these were Peter Buckley, rector of Odell, Richard Culmer, vicar of Goodnestone, Thomas Hieron, vicar of Hernhill and John Player, vicar of Kennington.

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1. Fletcher, Sussex, p.73; R.C.Richardson, Puritanism in North West England (Manchester, 1972), p.35.
 2. Most of the evidence is drawn from the ex-officio court books of the diocese of Canterbury.
 3. CALC, X6-5, f.122, X6-8, ff.198-9, Y6-4, f.77, Z4-5, f.151; P.Collinson, Elizabethan Puritan Movement (London, 1967), p.370; Richardson, Puritanism in North West England, p.27.
 4. CALC, X5-7, pt.II, f.151, X6-5, f.192, X6-8, ff.198-9, Y6-4, f.77; Richardson, Puritanism in North West England, p.31.

Each was deprived in 1635 for refusing to read the Book of Sports to their respective congregations.¹ The total number of nonconformist Puritan ministers cannot be determined for it is likely that some were protected from presentment by like-minded parishioners. A paucity of documentary evidence renders an analysis of clerical nonconformity in Bedfordshire impossible. Laud, himself, reported in 1634 that:

"divers ministers in Bedford....are suspected for nonconformity,"

but no other details are given.²

Between the Scylla and Charybdis of Laudianism and Puritanism was Anglicanism. The term Anglican was first used in the nineteenth century. However, it can be used in a seventeenth century context to describe those who adhered to the *ecclesia Anglicana*, and who were neither Laudian nor Puritan. They were conformists, staunch supporters of the royal supremacy, the authority of the bishops and the Book of Common Prayer.³ One should not assume, of course, that all the ministers who are not known to have been Laudian or Puritan can be categorised as Anglican. However, it is likely that Anglicanism was the religion of the lay and clerical majority during the period of our study.⁴ It is more than likely that most ministers wore their surplices at the celebration of divine service, made sure that their communion tables were placed altarwise at the east end of the chancel, expected their parishioners to receive the communion kneeling at the altar rails and used the sign of the cross in baptism. There is no evidence to support Dr. Clark's view that:

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1. LPL, VG4/22, f.107; PRO, SP16/308/27; Everitt, p.60; Clark, pp.326,365; *VCH Bedford*, vol.I, p.337.
 2. PRO, SP16/274/12, f.23.
 3. Fletcher, *The Outbreak of the English Civil War* (London, 1981), pp.288-9,291.
 4. Collinson, *Religion*, p.191.

"it may well be that a considerable number of parishes, perhaps the majority in the diocese, never, in fact, abandoned the practice of having the communion table standing in the church nave."¹

According to the visitation records of 1638, approximately twenty one per cent of the parishes in the diocese of Canterbury had not placed their communion tables altarwise. There is no absolute proof that the communion tables were subsequently moved to the east end of these churches, but not one of these parishes appear again in the church court books in relation to this issue, which might imply compliance.² It is likely that the Anglican liturgy continued to be widely used during the Civil War and Interregnum, particularly as there is no evidence of widescale use of the Directory in England at this time. Old habits, traditions and loyalties die hard and it is more than likely that in many areas of the diocese of Canterbury and archdeaconry of Bedford, in spite of political and religious upheaval, the Anglican Church survived at a parish level into the Restoration period.³

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1. Clark, p.637.
 2. CALC, X5-7, pt.II, ff.241,243, X6-4, ff.208,240,265, X6-6, ff.171,234,247, X6-9, ff.100,124-7,129-30, X6-10, ff.19,77,128, 195-8, X6-11, pt.II, ff.69-72,76-7,79,81, Y6-4, ff.276,392,399, Z4-6, ff.164,171,193,196-8,214,227,229.
 3. J.Morrill, "The Church in England 1642-9", ed. J.Morrill, Reactions to the English Civil War 1642-1649 (London, 1982), pp.100,104-5,108,112.

THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND, EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL STATUS OF THE
CLERGY

The seventeenth century clergy were a professional group bound together by a rudimentary form of training, a discernible career structure and ties of kinship and friendship within the profession. Moreover, the clergy can be viewed as a distinct socio-economic group set apart from other groups in society by their education, the nature of their work and, above all, the means by which they supported themselves.¹ However, a clear picture of the social origins of the clergy in the diocese of Canterbury and archdeaconry of Bedford is difficult to obtain. Some insight into the backgrounds of those who attended university might be given, but the information is fragmentary and can be misleading.² Of the one hundred and fifty six ministers in the diocese of Canterbury, in 1637, who had attended university, the social origins of only twenty three can be discerned. Dr. Francis Mansell, rector of Elmley was the son of a baronet, Peter Hardres was the son of Sir Thomas Hardres and two ministers were the sons of rural gentlemen. Sixteen came from clerical backgrounds, the father of Samuel Raven, rector of Brooke, was headmaster of the King's School, Canterbury and John Grime, vicar of Rainham, was the son of a Norfolk yeoman. The origins of only sixteen ministers from the archdeaconry of Bedford can

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1. The nature of the clerical income will be considered in Chapter II.
 2. Although most of those registered as pensioners or gentlemen came from the landed gentry or professional classes, prosperous merchants might have registered their sons as pensioners or gentlemen in order to satisfy their own social aspirations. Moreover, at Oxford a gentleman's son might pay lower fees if he registered as a plebeian or sizar, statuses normally adopted by the sons of lesser merchants and below. Green, "Careers", p.78; L. Stone, "The Educational Revolution in England 1560-1640", PP, vol.28 (1964), pp.58-60; Al.Oxon.; Al.Cantab.

be determined; Thomas Pell, rector of Cockayne Hatley was the son of a knight, the mother of Walsingham Shirley, rector of Haynes, was the daughter of Sir Thomas Walsingham and Charles Wynne of Milton Bryan was of rural gentry stock. Twelve ministers came from clerical backgrounds and, in addition to this, John Aylmer, rector of Bletsoe and vicar of Melchbourne, was the grandson of the Bishop of London.¹ It is more than likely that the social origins of many ministers are unknown because their backgrounds were too humble to merit note. Their university education and their professional career enhanced their status.

Since the sixteenth century it had been the policy of the ecclesiastical hierarchy to try to improve the quality of the parochial ministry and one important way in which they sought to achieve this formidable goal was to obtain a graduate ministry. Moreover, with the general expansion of educational opportunities in England during this period the more zealous and articulate members of the laity recognized the need for a well qualified clergy which was able to teach and preach effectively. By the 1630's a university degree was becoming an almost essential prerequisite for anyone considering a career in the Church. True, the possession of university degrees did not necessarily guarantee an improved, conscientious parish ministry, but, in the absence of a comprehensive vocational training programme, the university supplied a common, though rudimentary, form of training for the future members of the clerical profession. There was a marked increase in the number of university-trained ministers during the first four decades of the

1. Lists of clergymen for the diocese of Canterbury for 1637 are taken from the Liber Cleri for that date, CALC,X8-2 and Hasted, vols VIII and IX. Lists of Bedfordshire ministers for 1633 are from C W Foster, "Institutions to Ecclesiastical Benefices in the County of Bedford 1536-1660", BHRS,vol.8 (1924),pp.133-64.Al.Cantab., vol.I,pp.59,73,114,250;vol.II,pp.50,69,112,172,268,303,406,411; vol.III,pp.18,52,159,160,254,337,423,462;vol.IV,pp.1-2,76,272,439. Al.Oxon.,pp.17,147,248,555,578,736,914,967,1323,1361,1374,1438.

seventeenth century and this trend had already begun in the late sixteenth century.' In the diocese of Canterbury in 1607 seventy eight per cent of beneficed ministers² had attended university and seventy three per cent had obtained degrees. If perpetual curates and the curates of chapels are added then the corresponding figures are seventy seven per cent and sixty nine per cent respectively. A total of sixty seven per cent of the beneficed ministers in Bedfordshire in 1603 had attended university and sixty one per cent of the total parish ministry had obtained degrees. Unfortunately, figures for perpetual curates and curates of chapels cannot be calculated. One possible explanation for the difference in educational standards between the two groups of ministers in our study was that better qualified men were attracted more to the centre of the province of Canterbury than they were to the largely rural archdeaconry in the diocese of Lincoln. Educational opportunities expanded and, by the 1630's, the possession of a university degree had become commonplace amongst members of the clerical profession; and so the overall educational standards of the parish ministry in the diocese of Canterbury and the archdeaconry of Bedford rose. In fact, ninety three per cent of the beneficed clergy in Bedfordshire in 1633 had attended university, compared with ninety per cent in the diocese of Canterbury in 1637. Moreover, as many as ninety one per cent of the Bedfordshire clergy and eighty seven per cent of the Kentish clergy had degrees. Bedfordshire had certainly benefitted from its proximity to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The level of academic qualifications of the Bedfordshire and Kentish clergy who had attended university were very similar, for eighty five per cent of the former and

1. O'Day, *Clergy*, pp.3-4,6.

2. The term beneficed ministers applies to those who held rectories or vicarages.

eighty three per cent of the latter had attained the degrees of Master of Arts, Bachelor of Divinity or Doctor of Divinity. A detailed breakdown of the academic achievements of the ministers in the diocese of Canterbury and archdeaconry of Bedford is represented in Tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1. Qualifications of the Kentish Ministers of 1607 and 1637 who had Attended University.¹

| Qualification Dates | Matriculated % | BA % | MA % | BD % | DD % |
|---------------------|----------------|------|------|------|------|
| 1607 | 7 | 15 | 54 | 13 | 12 |
| 1637 | 3 | 15 | 63 | 8 | 12 |

Table 2. Qualifications of the Bedfordshire Ministers of 1603 and 1633 who had Attended University.²

| Qualification Dates | Matriculated % | BA % | MA % | BD % | DD % |
|---------------------|----------------|------|------|------|------|
| 1603 | 9 | 20 | 54 | 12 | 6 |
| 1633 | 2 | 13 | 66 | 9 | 9 |

Included amongst those who attained the degree of Master of Arts was John Chamber, rector of St. Mary's, Bedford in 1603, who also achieved the degree of Bachelor of Medicine at Merton College, Oxford.³ In the first four decades of the seventeenth century more beneficed ministers in the diocese of Canterbury and the archdeaconry of Bedford had attended university than had their colleagues in the dioceses of Durham and Worcester and a likely explanation for this is the fact that the diocese of Canterbury was the centre of the archbishop's province and the proximity of the archdeaconry of Bedford to the two great centres of

1. CALC, V/V13, X8-2; Hasted, vols.VIII and IX; Al.Cantab.; Al.Oxon.
2. C.W.Foster, BHRS, vol.8(1924), pp.133-64; Al.Cantab.; Al.Oxon.
3. Al.Oxon., p.256.

learning. The number of ministers who attained degree status in the diocese of Oxford was even higher than in the diocese of Canterbury and archdeaconry of Bedford.¹ What of the perpetual curates or assistant curates, those who failed to obtain a benefice for at least the first few years of their clerical careers? A large proportion of ministers who received cures in the diocese of Canterbury between 1633 and 1640, eighty six per cent in all, had attended university and eighty two per cent had attained a Bachelor of Arts or Master of Arts degree.² Besides his Master of Arts degree, Ambrose Richman, curate of Wye, also had a Doctorate of Medicine.³ Thus, those ministers who had no formal qualifications were relatively few in number and were to be found amongst the ranks of the beneficed almost as frequently as amongst the ranks of the unbeneficed ministers.

More than two thirds of the ministers beneficed in the diocese of Canterbury in 1637 and seventy eight per cent of those beneficed in Bedfordshire in 1633 went to the University of Cambridge, which was in-keeping with the general trend that most people from the south and East Anglia, areas from which many of our ministers were drawn, attended this University rather than the University of Oxford.⁴ A small minority of Kentish ministers, such as Walter Balcanquall, rector of Kingston, John Ramsey, rector of Mersham and John Maccuby, vicar of Stockbury, had attended Scottish universities.⁵ Of the colleges attended by the Kentish

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1. Freeman, pp.28-9; Barratt, pp.86-7.
 2. Unfortunately the corresponding figures are not available for the archdeaconry of Bedford. A.J.Willis, Canterbury Licences 1568-1646 (London, 1972), pp.66-8; Al.Cantab.; Al.Oxon.
 3. It was common for ministers, particularly curates, to have a second string to their bow, an issue which is considered below, pp.62-3, 71-2; Al.Cantab., vol.III, p.456.
 4. Barratt, p.49.
 5. Balcanquall had attended the University of Edinburgh and both Ramsey and Maccuby had attended St. Andrews University. Al.Cantab., vol.I, p.73; Al.Oxon., pp.957,1231.

clergy, Trinity and St. John's College, Cambridge, baulk large as do Trinity and the Puritan Emmanuel College for the Bedfordshire clergy. A significant minority of the ministers in our study, seventeen Kentish ministers and ten Bedfordshire ministers, had been Fellows of their respective colleges. Of those ministers beneficed in the diocese of Canterbury in 1637, three had attained offices at university. Doctor John Bancroft, vicar of Biddenden and future Bishop of Oxford had been Dean of Christchurch, Oxford, between 1609 and 1632. Doctor Francis Mansell, rector of Elmley, was Principal of Jesus College, Oxford between 1630 and 1648 and Doctor Robert Austen, rector of Harbledown had been Reader of Rhetoric at University College, Cambridge.¹ Contacts made at university could prove important both for the career of the individual and the consolidation of the clerical profession as a whole and this issue will be considered later in this chapter.

Many ministers believed that their own educational process should not stop once they had left university. In fact, some even went back to university years after they had left in order to obtain more academic qualifications. John Lee, rector of Bishopbourne in 1622, attained the degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1660 from the University of Oxford, thirty years after he had received his Master of Arts degree. At the time, he was beneficed in the diocese of Rochester. In 1660, as rector of Sittingbourne, John Gough received his Doctorate and this was thirty years after he had completed his Master of Arts degree. While beneficed at Edworth in Bedfordshire, Robert Condoll was awarded his Doctorate of Divinity from Brasenose College, Oxford, in 1585.² The combination of study and religious and pastoral duties could present problems for a minister.

1. Al.Oxon., pp.65,967; Al.Cantab., vol.I, p.57.

2. Al.Oxon., pp.316,578,893.

Mr. Langley, rector of Shadoxhurst, was presented by his churchwardens in 1637 for absenting himself from his benefice. The reason for his neglect of his parish was that he was "a scholar at Oxford".¹ The continuing process of education did not necessarily have to take on a formal guise. A study of sixty seven clerical wills from the diocese of Canterbury and fifty nine from the archdeaconry of Bedford reveals that most clergymen, regardless of wealth or formal educational achievement, numbered books amongst their possessions. Although learning cannot be measured in pounds, shillings and pence, the values of ministers' books set out in their inventories can give us some idea of the size of clerical libraries. It should be pointed out that there is no direct correlation between levels of wealth and standards of educational attainment on the one hand and values of books on the other. At the one extreme, John Ramsey M.A., rector of Mersham in Kent, owned books worth £100, while the total value of his goods was £422 4s. 6d., and the library of Dr. Bargrave, rector of Eythorne and Dean of Canterbury was worth £100 while his goods were worth £743 12s. 8d.. At the other extreme, Arthur Colymer B.D., rector of Burmarsh, left books worth £6 10s. 6d., which was more than a third of the total value of his moveable goods. Osmund Clutting B.A., curate of Eastchurch possessed only a Bible, worth 8s., even though his goods were valued at £25 7s. 6d.. Even though he left only 18s. 4d. worth of goods behind him, Robert Taylor, curate of Appledore, owned "six small books" worth a total of 2s..² Few ministers itemized their books. Most of those who did owned Bibles, parts of the Bible, Biblical commentaries, sermons or devotional works. The type of Bible owned was not always specified, but only

1. CALC, X6-9, f.83.

2. KAO, PRC 10/72/583, PRC 11/1A, PRC 11/3/10, PRC 11/8/249,
PRC 27/10/9.

Thomas Buckner, minister of Sandhurst in Kent, listed a Geneva Bible amongst his possessions. Thomas Archer, rector of Houghton Conquest in Bedfordshire, bequeathed a Great Bible, worth 43s. 4d., to his parishioners. Few mentioned patristic works amongst their list of books, though Robert Houghill, vicar of Willington in Bedfordshire, owned the works of Aquinas and St. Bernard. Lexicons and philosophy books also featured in clerical libraries as well as the works of classical scholars such as Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca and Virgil. Robert Houghill owned a Turkish history.¹

A large number of ministers both in the diocese of Canterbury and archdeaconry of Bedfordshire left their own works to posterity. As one would expect, these consisted mostly of sermons, Biblical commentaries and devotional works. Moreover, Doctor Richard Clarke, vicar of Minster in Kent, and Francis Dillingham B.D., rector of Wilden in Bedfordshire, both had a hand in the translation of the Authorized Version of the Bible.² A small number of clergymen wrote histories, such as William Slater, rector of Newchurch in Kent, who, in 1621, The History of Great Britain, from the First Peopling of this Island to the Present Reign of Our Happy and Peaceful Monarch King James. Dillingham's successor at Wilden, Jasper Fisher, wrote a play entitled Fuimus Troes, Aenead, 2. The True Trojans Being a Story of the Britons' Valour at the Romans' First Invasion. This was published in 1634. Only one clerical commonplace book has survived, that of Thomas Archer M.A., rector of Houghton Conquest in Bedfordshire between 1589 and 1630. It consists of multifarious pieces of information of personal, local and national

1. BRO, ABP/W1630/129, ABP/W1648/126; KAO, PRC 16/201, PRC 16/215, PRC 16/239, PRC 16/247; PRO PROB 11/192/35, PROB 11/192/56.

2. AlCantab., vol.I, p.345; vol.II, p.42.

significance. It is written in English and Latin and it reveals that Archer was a well educated and highly literate minister. There is a personal history of Archer himself and an account of lands that he owned in the local area. There is also a list of rectors of Houghton Conquest, a terrier of glebelands belonging to the rectory and details of tithing practices in the parish, information which would have been extremely useful to his successors. Archer also compiled a list of marriages, births and deaths, as well as epitaphs of the local gentry. There is a short history of the kings and queens of England from the reign of Henry VIII to that of James I and accounts of "memorable things" including executions of famous people and the ravages of the plague in London. Thomas Archer also jotted down miscellaneous pieces of information of local interest including the robbery which took place in his church in 1626. Not only were the contents of the poor man's box rifled, but his surplice was purloined as well, leading him to observe jocularly that the thief must have been a Puritan.¹

Motivated by either personal interest or financial considerations or both, a significant number of ministers used their academic qualifications to best advantage by teaching local children.² In 1644 John Sackett, rector of Great Mongeham in Kent, bequeathed 10s. to the local schoolmaster. Those ministers whose livings were worth £100 or more were required to contribute to the upkeep of a poor scholar at university. Some ministers were particularly generous. In 1643, Dr. John Pocklington, rector of Yelden in Bedfordshire, left £10 a year "for ten poor graduate scholars of good life".³ Moreover, in his will of 1642, Walter Richards, rector of St. James', Dover, declared that after his

1. BRO, P11/28/1.

2. Below, p.71.

3. PRO, PROB 11/191/76; KAO, PRC 31/121/247.

wife's death, the rents from his lands in Liddon and Ewell should go to his old college at Cambridge, Emmanuel, to help support two poor scholars. In all they should receive £6 a year each for maintenance, £3 to buy books and £4 towards the fees for the Bachelor of Arts degree. Richards also made further provision for them if they wished to proceed to the degree of Master of Arts, but stipulated that if they did they must then enter holy orders. He did specify, in fact, that one of the scholars was to be a proctor of Canterbury, one Henry Jenkin, and, if no member of his family wished to take advantage of his munificence, then the Master and Fellows of Emmanuel College should choose a son of a member of the Salter's Company who was taught either at Greyfriars or Christchurch school in London. Presumably, Jenkin had attended one of these schools.'

That the clergy, as a whole, believed fervently in the value of education, either for its own sake or as a means of social or professional advancement, or all three, can be clearly illustrated by the fact that many sent their sons to university. It is likely that most of these ministers hoped that their sons would pursue a career in the Church. It was common for a minister to make known his desires for his son's future in his will:

"I do desire that my son may be bred a scholar," declared Ambrose Richman, curate of Wye in Kent, in his will of 1642. John Boughton B.A., vicar of Boughton Aluph, was more specific. He wanted his son to study Divinity. Dr. John Pocklington, rector of Yelden in Bedfordshire, insisted that his son should attend his old college, that of Sidney Sussex, Cambridge.² Some ministers bequeathed their books to

1. KAO, PRC 31/121/247.

2. KAO, PRC 16/238/275, PRC 16/239/33; PRO, PROB 11/191/76.

their sons on the understanding that the latter should become scholars. If they did not, then the books should be sold or left to other relatives or friends.' Robert Gilpen, rector of Hockliffe in Bedfordshire, ordered his wife to give his books:

"to such of my sons as shall be a divine."²

During the first four decades of the seventeenth century the great value of a university education, both for themselves and their sons, became increasingly apparent to the clergy. By the 1630's most ministers had at least obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree and, although a university degree did not necessarily guarantee a new ordinand a rich benefice, or even a poor benefice for that matter, the lack of a degree could prove a positive disadvantage.³ Friendships within the profession and useful contacts could be made at university. Moreover, an education, especially one which did not end at university, distinguished even the poorest minister from the vast majority of his parishioners. Illiteracy and extreme ignorance amongst the clergy was very rare. Three Kentish ministers were termed "dumb dogs" by individual members of their congregations, including John Aymes, curate of Loose in 1628 and George May, vicar of Willesborough in 1625. In 1631 Thomas Lane, vicar of Stockbury, took one Robert Buscon to court for claiming that he was:

"like a dumb dog that could neither bark nor wag his tail."

A group of parishioners from Chislet complained to parliament in 1641 that their minister, Edward Barbette:

"never studied divinity, as may appear by his weak and unlearned sermons."⁴

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1. KAO, PRC 16/217, PRC 16/239/33; PRO, PROB 11/256/244; BRO, ABP/W1665-66/93.
 2. BRO, ABP/W1641-42/96.
 3. O'Day, Clergy, p.142.
 4. CALC, X6-1, f.277, Z4-5, f.94, PRC 39/40, ff.298-9; Larking, p.176.

However, one should treat instances where ministers are termed ignorant "dumb dogs" with extreme caution. All four of the above ministers had achieved a university degree - Aymes, May and Lane had Master of Arts degrees and Barbette, in spite of what his parishioners had said, had a Bachelor of Arts degree.¹ It is possible that we are dealing with illustrations of the argument that the possession of a university degree did not necessarily make a man a successful minister. Moreover, other factors have to be taken into account when considering the accusations made in the above kind of defamation case and in petitions to parliament. In each of the three defamation cases, we are dealing with the testimony of one person only. could that person have had a personal grudge against his or her minister? Did they use the term "dumb dog" as a randomly picked insult? John Aymes was involved in a feud with his churchwardens and it is possible that he was also on bad terms with his parish clerk, who was the person who called him a "dumb dog".² It is possible that religious differences lay behind the case between George May and Christian Hill for it is known that May was demanding that his parishioners kneel when receiving communion as early as 1626. If there was any truth in the accusations made against Aymes and Barbette, it is possible that the ministers concerned were guilty of culpable negligence rather than actual ignorance. John Aymes was presented in 1628 for neglecting to catechise the young people of the parish and, in the previous year, he had been reported for spending too much time in the alehouse.³ The petitioners from Chislet also reported that Barbette was careless in the way in which he conducted divine service.⁴

1. *Al.Cantab.*, vol.I, pp.27,82; vol.III, pp.42,166.

2. John Aymes and his feud with his churchwardens will be considered in detail, below, pp.101,164-5.

3. CALC, X6-1, ff.229,243.

4. Larking, p.176.

In 1663, only sixty nine per cent of the beneficed ministers in the diocese of Canterbury had been to university and only sixty six per cent of ministers possessed a degree.¹ Thus, the proportion of university trained ministers had fallen by about twenty per cent since 1637. Moreover, there had been a fall in the quality of degrees that the ministers held, for only seventy four per cent held Master of Arts, Bachelor of Divinity or Doctor of Divinity degree, compared with eighty three per cent in 1637 and seventy nine per cent in 1607. One likely explanation for the fall in the educational standards of the clergy during the Civil War, Interregnum and Restoration periods was that there was a shortage of well educated ministers because so many had been ejected from their benefices. Of the nineteen ministers presented to livings in the diocese of Canterbury between 1650 and 1652 by the Commissioners of the Great Seal, only sixty eight per cent had been to university and only fifty eight per cent had degrees.² The fall in the number of university trained men amongst the clergy was an illustration of the dislocation within the profession during the 1640's, 1650's and early 1660's.

During the seventeenth century, the Church was a popular profession, attracting large numbers of well educated men. Many sons followed their fathers into the ministry. Other young men gave up the possibility of a career in the legal field in order to become ministers. Christopher Bachelor M.A., rector of Kingsdown and vicar of Tonge in Kent in the 1630's, Had studied at the Inner Temple as had William Slater B.A., rector of Otterden. William Fulbeck M.A. had qualified as a

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1. Corresponding figures are not available for the archdeaconry of Bedford. LPL, MS.1126; Al.Cantab.; Al.Oxon.
 2. BL Add. MS.36792, ff.10,24,32,39,41,43,47,53-6,58,61-2,64,82,85,112; Al.Cantab., vol.I, pp.47,162,331; vol.II, p.244; vol.III, p.328; vol.IV, pp.262,295,411,420; Al.Oxon., p.194.

Barrister-at-Law before he became ordained and was presented to the vicarage of Waldershare.' What, then, was so attractive about a career in the Church? It is difficult to ascertain with any certainty why each individual chose the Church rather than, for example, a career in the legal profession. However, a few general principles might be put forward. Too much emphasis can be placed upon the non-religious reasons why men joined the clerical profession. Youthful religious idealism and a very real sense of vocation should not be discounted as a major factor.² Many already had direct experience of clerical life as sons of parish ministers. Of the ministers in the diocese of Canterbury in 1637 who had been to university, twenty sent their sons to university. Of these eleven clerical offspring entered the Church.³ Of the ministers in the archdeaconry of Bedfordshire in 1633 who had attended university, fourteen sent their sons to university and as many as twelve of these young men joined the parish ministry.⁴ Material considerations, such as the fact that, at least until the 1640's, most ministers could have expected a steady and reliable income and would have enjoyed at least a reasonable lifestyle, do not detract necessarily from ideological considerations. Moreover, even the most zealously committed ordinand should be allowed at least some ambition. A man of humble origins could have combined religious reasons for entering the profession with his ambition to improve his social standing in the world by joining the ranks of the parish ministry. It is true to say that some men were motivated almost entirely by material or social considerations - this

1. *Al.Oxon.*, pp.52,538,1364.

2. Green, "Careers", p.79.

3. *Al.Cantab.*, vol.I, pp.1,33,57,77,84,279,429, vol.II, pp.120,268, 299,314,478, vol.III, pp.145,249-50,286,478-9, vol.IV, pp.2,305; *Al.Oxon.*, pp.1364,1680.

4. *Al.Cantab.*, vol.I, pp.29,192,222,354,389, vol.II, pp.40,43,50,405-6, 426, vol.III, pp.76,263,275, vol.IV, pp.88-9.

happens in all professions - and at least some of these would have found themselves reprimanded in the church courts for their indifferent attitude to their work. It is possible that Edward Barbette, vicar of Chislet, was that kind of minister, if we are to believe the testimony of a group of his parishioners who claimed that he:

"living heretofore as a gentleman upon his lands and having by riotous living consumed the greatest part of his estate, lay in prison by the space of half a year and more; and having made composition with his creditors betook himself to the ministry for his better maintenance and livelihood and was presented by the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury to the vicarage of Chislet."¹

Whatever the reasons for joining the profession, many were attracted from other parts of the country both to the archdeaconry of Bedford and the diocese of Canterbury. Unfortunately, the place of origin of only certain ministers who had attended university is known and this includes seventy Kentish ministers and fifty clergymen from Bedfordshire. This information is represented by Table 3 below.

Table 3. The Place of Origin of Beneficed Ministers from the Diocese of Canterbury and Archdeaconry of Bedford in 1637 and 1633 Respectively.²

| Place of Origin | Nos. for Kent 1637 | Nos. for Beds 1633 | Place of Origin | Nos. for Kent 1637 | Nos. for Beds 1633 |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Bedfordshire | - | 11 | Middlesex | 3 | - |
| Bristol | 1 | - | Norfolk | 1 | 1 |
| Buckinghamshire | 1 | 8 | Northamptonshire | 1 | 1 |
| Cambridgeshire | 2 | 2 | Oxford | 1 | - |
| Cumberland | 1 | - | Somerset | 3 | - |
| Derbyshire | - | 2 | Suffolk | 1 | 1 |
| Devon | 2 | - | Surrey | 3 | - |
| Dorset | 1 | 1 | Sussex | 2 | 1 |
| Essex | 1 | 1 | Warwickshire | 1 | - |
| Gloucestershire | 1 | - | Wiltshire | 1 | 2 |
| Herefordshire | - | 2 | Yorkshire | - | 2 |
| Hertfordshire | 2 | 1 | Scotland | 1 | - |
| Huntingdonshire | 1 | 3 | Wales | 4 | - |
| Kent | 24 | 2 | Abroad | 1 | - |
| Lancashire | 2 | 2 | | | |
| Lincolnshire | 3 | 3 | TOTALS | 70 | 50 |
| London | 5 | 4 | | | |

1. Larking, p.176.

2. CALC, X8-2; Hasted, vols.VIII and IX; Foster, BHRS, vol.8(1924), pp.133-64; Al.Cantab.; Al.Oxon..

Only twenty two per cent of the Bedfordshire incumbents and thirty four per cent of their colleagues in the diocese of Canterbury were local men. Few were drawn from the north of England, that is Yorkshire, Lancashire and beyond, and Scotland and Wales. Almost three quarters of those ministers who were beneficed in Bedfordshire came from East Anglia, the East Midlands and London, and more than two thirds of the Kentish ministers came from the south of the country. The above picture contrasts to those of the more northern parts of the country such as the diocese of Durham.¹ The parts of the country with the most newcomers were near London and the universities.² Bedfordshire was very close to Cambridge and not far from the University of Oxford and the capital. The diocese of Canterbury was the centre of the archbishop's province; it is more than likely that many hoped, albeit optimistically, that by securing a benefice or even a cure in this area they would have set themselves on the first rung of the clerical ladder of promotion.

The question of how ministers came to be chosen for benefices in the diocese of Canterbury and archdeaconry of Bedford is a complex one. Already it is clear that local connections were not always of supreme importance. Before an analysis of the issues can be made, it is important to get some idea of who owned the right to present to benefices in the two areas of our study. Table 4 below shows the pattern of patronage in the diocese of Canterbury before the outbreak of the Civil War and in 1663; Table 5 shows the pattern of patronage in Bedfordshire before the outbreak of the Civil War. The greatest single patron of benefices in the diocese of Canterbury was the archbishop, followed by the dean and chapter of Canterbury and the Lord Keeper.

1. Freeman, pp.23-4.

2. Green, "Careers", p.91.

Table 4. The Pattern of Patronage in the Diocese of Canterbury before the Civil War and in 1663.¹

| Patron | Before the Civil War | 1663 |
|--|----------------------|------|
| The King | 2 | - |
| The Lord Keeper ² | 14 | 18 |
| The Archbishop of Canterbury | 77 | 89 |
| The Bishop of Rochester | 2 | 2 |
| The Archdeacon of Canterbury | 4 | 10 |
| The Dean and Chapter of Canterbury | 23 | 16 |
| The Dean and Chapter of Rochester | 11 | 13 |
| The Dean and Chapter of Chichester | 1 | 1 |
| The Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's | 1 | 2 |
| The University of Oxford | 4 | 4 |
| The University of Cambridge | 1 | 2 |
| Eton College | 1 | 1 |
| The Laity | 69 | 68 |
| Not Known | 19 | 3 |
| TOTALS | 210 | 226 |
| Total Number of Benefices in the Diocese | 229 | 229 |

Table 5. The Pattern of Patronage in the Archdeaconry of Bedford before the Civil War.³

| Patrons | Numbers |
|---|---------|
| The King | 2 |
| The Lord Keeper | 18 |
| The Bishop of Lincoln | 2 |
| The Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's | 1 |
| The University of Oxford | 2 |
| The University of Cambridge | 5 |
| The Laity | 59 |
| TOTALS | 89 |
| Total Number of Benefices in the Archdeaconry | 120 |

As one might have expected, the Church held the majority of advowsons - at least fifty seven per cent in the earlier period and about fifty nine per cent in 1663. Amongst the lay patrons, excluding the Crown, the

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1. The statistics are expressed in numbers, not in percentages. The first set of statistics is taken from the Commonwealth survey of Church livings of 1650, BL, Lansdowne MS.958, ff.135-40, and the second from the survey of 1663, LPL, MS.1126.
 2. The Lord Keeper presented ministers to Crown livings which were valued at less than £20 *per annum* in the King's Book.
 3. Foster, *BHRS*, vol.8 (1924), pp.133-64.

universities and Eton College, no one person held a significant *bloc* of advowsons. The picture in Bedfordshire was quite different. There, the greatest single patron was the Lord Keeper and the Church had few patronage rights. Again, as in the case of the diocese of Canterbury, no one lay patron, excluding the Crown, held a *bloc* of advowsons.

There were no uniform criteria laid down either for admission to the profession or for presentation to a cure or benefice.¹ Lack of comprehensive information must render any analysis of why ministers were presented to livings purely illustrative. The reasons why nineteen ministers in the diocese of Canterbury in 1637 and twenty six in the archdeaconry of Bedford in 1633 were presented to their livings can be ascertained. Local connections baulk large. Many lay patrons presented relatives. Gabriel More of Grantham in Lincolnshire came to be presented to his benefice of Barton-in-the-Clay in Bedfordshire by his kinsman Alexander More who was also from Grantham.² Stephen Sackett was presented to St. Cosmus and Damien Blean in Kent by his father, John Sackett.³ John Hunt, rector of Goodnestone-next-Faversham had received the grant of next presentation to his benefice from his patrons Mistresses Mary and Anne Fagge, and had passed it on to his wife in his will with the proviso that she should present their son, Michael, to the rectory, which she did accordingly.⁴ Four Bedfordshire ministers, Edward Risely of Wilhamstead, John Francis of Langford, Christopher Slater of Leighton Buzzard and Charles Lawrence of Stonden each followed their fathers into their benefices, as did Daniel Horsmonden of Ulcombe and

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1. I.M.Green, Review of R.O'Day, The Parish Clergy, History, vol.65 (1980), p.479.
 2. Foster, BHRS, vol.8 (1924), p.141.
 3. Al.Cantab., vol.IV, p.2; Hasted, vol.VIII, p.535.
 4. KAO, PRC 17/70/156.

Edward Master of Linton in Kent.¹ Some ministers had been presented to their benefices purely because they had local connections and were known to have been sound men of good conscience. In fact, it is likely that local connections were very important when a minister was being considered for a benefice. But what of the substantial number of ministers who came from further afield? In many cases connections made at university would have proved useful. William Marshall, for example, who came from Nottinghamshire, was presented to the vicarage of Ospringe in Kent by his old college of St. John's at Cambridge.² Francis Ostler of Thirkleby in Yorkshire was presented to the rectory of Eaton Bray in Bedfordshire by his old college of Trinity at Cambridge; William Ramsey of Herefordshire was presented to the vicarage of Flitton-cum-Silsoe by his old college of Christchurch at Oxford.³ Moreover, distant family connections and chance friendships would have helped many ministers from other parts of the country to secure a living in the diocese of Canterbury and archdeaconry of Bedford.

As Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud held over a third of the advowsons in the diocese and this gave him at least the potential to influence the nature of the parish clergy in the diocese, though it should not be forgotten that he was not at Canterbury long enough to make an enormous impact. There is, however, some evidence to suggest that he did present those who supported his policy of ceremonial innovation to some of the more lucrative livings in the diocese.⁴

1. *Al.Cantab.*, vol.II, pp.172,411, vol.III, pp.52,159, vol.IV, p.462; *Al.Oxon.*, p.1323.

2. *Al.Cantab.*, vol.III, p.149; *Hasted*, vol.VI, p.530.

3. *Al.Cantab.*, vol.III, p.287; *Al.Oxon.*, p.1231.

4. This does not mean, of course, that all the best livings in the diocese went to Laudians. The absence of a record of values of livings for the archdeaconry of Bedford, other than the King's Book, precludes a comparative study. Values of Kentish livings are taken from the survey of the diocese of 1650, BL, Lansdowne MS.958, ff.135-40.

Edward Boughen, for example, was presented to the rectory of Woodchurch in 1633. This benefice was worth £200 a year. Not only was Humphrey Peake made a Canon of Canterbury by Laud, in 1639 he was also given the vicarage of Tenterden worth £120 a year. Dr. Meric Casaubon, a Canon of Canterbury, was presented to the vicarage of Minster in 1633 and this was worth £100 a year.¹ The role of Puritanism in presentations to livings is difficult to gauge. Those ministers who were presented by town corporations tended to have been Puritan, or at least anti-Laudian and this is true of Thomas Warren, rector of St. Peter's, Sandwich.² There seem to have been no other obvious connections between Puritanism and patronage in either of the two areas of our study. One important question of the selection of ministers remains - if religious leanings sometimes counted, did the social background or education of a clergyman determine the kind of living that he would receive? Those who came from gentry stock could receive a lucrative benefice especially if a relative of theirs held the advowson. Peter Hardres was a case in point. He was presented to the rectory of Great Hardres, worth £100 a year, by his father, Sir Thomas Hardres Knt.³ In some cases local connections would have played a part, but, as in the diocese of Worcester, there does not seem to have been an obvious connection between social background and the value of livings in the diocese of Canterbury.⁴ Doctor Francis Mansell, the son of Sir Francis Mansell Bart. of Camarthen held the relatively poor rectory of Elmley, worth £40 a year. The most valuable

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1. BL, Lansdowne MS.958, ff.137,139-40; Larking, pp.104-7,122-3; Al.Cantab., vol.III, p.327; Al.Oxon., pp.128,154; Walker Revised, p.212.
 2. The religious standpoint of Theodore Crowley, who was presented to the rectory of St. John's Bedford by the town corporation, is not known. BL, Lansdowne MS.958, f.136; CALC, X5-7, pt.II, ff.157,217; Foster, BHRS, vol.8 (1924), p.142; C.Hill, Economic, pp.56-7.
 3. Al.Cantab., vol.II, p.303.
 4. Barratt, p.27.

living in the diocese, that of Wickhambreux, worth £250 a year, went to John Smith who was the son of a minister.¹ By no means all the best livings went to men with higher degrees. John Copley, for example, had never been to university and yet his rectory at Pluckley was worth £100 a year. Moreover, many of the poorer livings in the diocese, worth £40 or less, were held by men with Master of Arts degrees such as William Dunkin of St. Lawrence, Thanet, and Edward Skinner of Ewell.² The holding of two livings in plurality, of course, might help improve a minister's lifestyle. John Marston, for example, held two livings in Canterbury, those of St. Mary Bredin and St. Mary Magdalen, both worth £20 a year.³ In general, the quality of academic qualifications do not seem to have been a determinant factor in the selection of ministers for the best livings in the diocese. Almost eighty five per cent of the livings worth £80 a year or more went to men with Master of Arts, Bachelor of Divinity or Doctor of Divinity degrees and this is in keeping with the proportion of men in the diocese who had achieved these higher degrees. It is also worth noting that no one patron had a tendency to choose the best educated men for the livings in their gift.

No actual cases of simony can be found, though it is more than likely that this practice went on. In the survey of the diocese in 1663 Isaac Atkinson, rector of Frinsted, was described as:

"a poor, good man, but suspected to have come in by simony."⁴

There was an alleged attempt at obtaining a benefice by bribery involving Archbishop Laud and the Puritan minister Richard Culmer. In

1. Al.Oxon., pp.967,1374.

2. Al.Cantab., vol.II, p.75, vol.IV, p.85.

3. Al.Oxon., p.976.

4. LPL, MS.1126, f.40.

1642, Dr. Isaac Bargrave, Dean of Canterbury, died, leaving empty the lucrative rectory of Chartham, worth £160 a year. Chartham was in the gift of the imprisoned archbishop. Parliament asked him to present one Edward Corbett of Merton College, Oxford. Laud refused, as Corbett was a personal enemy of his, and his resolve was strengthened by a letter from the King requesting him to present John Reading, the moderate minister of St. Mary's, Dover, instead. Shortly after this Laud was brought to trial.¹ The situation became even more complex. Richard Culmer, who, in 1635, had been suspended by Laud from Goodnestone in Kent for refusing to read the Book of Sports, wrote to the Earl of Warwick asking him to persuade the archbishop to present him to Chartham instead, claiming erroneously that Reading was "of the tribe of Lambeth".² The Earl of Warwick's appeal on Culmer's behalf fell upon deaf ears, for Laud preferred Reading and believed Culmer to be a "schismatic". At his trial Laud related what happened next:

"Mr. Culmer came to me about the benefice and protested his conformity to the Church. I think the man forgot that I knew both him and his ways. I told him I had given my Lord of Warwick my answer. But Mr. Culmer rested not, but got a servant of mine down the stairs to him and was very earnest with him whether it was possible to persuade me to give him Chartham. And then out of the abundance of his honesty and worthiness offered my servant a hundred and fifty pounds to procure him the benefice and added that he should have no cause to distrust him, for he should have the money presently paid him. This [was] a worthy piece of simony."

In spite of Laud's protests, Richard Culmer managed to get possession of the rectory of Chartham, but his stay there was brief and he was soon replaced by Edward Corbett.³

There were many ways in which a minister might gain preferment.

1. H.R.Trevor Roper, Archbishop Laud 1573-1645 (London, 1962), pp.417-18.
2. LPL, VG4/22, f.107; HMC, 5th. Report, p.70.
3. Laud, Works, vol.IV, pp.17-19; AL.Oxon., p.328; DNB, vol.I, p.285; Hasted, vol.VII, p.318.

There was also a basic form of career structure in the profession from humble curate to archbishop, but there was no clearly defined career ladder available to all ministers.¹ Whether or not a minister would find promotion depended upon a variety of factors - his social connections, education, religious standpoint, his ability or, at the very least, whether he was in the right place at the right time. It is true to say that most ministers must have believed that there was some prospect of promotion otherwise men would have been deterred from entering the profession.² Lack of comprehensive evidence precludes a statistical study of the paths to promotion. However, it does seem that a large number of those who began their clerical apprenticeships as assistant or perpetual curates managed to find a benefice in the diocese of Canterbury, although this might have taken a number of years. Nevertheless, a significant minority, such as John Streating of Ivychurch, remained in the lower ranks of the profession for their entire lives.³ At the other extreme, it does seem that cathedral offices at Canterbury and Lincoln went to men with the highest degrees. Moreover, it is clear that Laud, like Montagu at Chichester, built up a party of his followers in the cathedral city.⁴ The right family connections helped some men gain high office in the Church. This must have worked for John Bancroft, rector of Biddenham in Kent, who became Bishop of Oxford in 1632. His uncle had been Archbishop of Canterbury.⁵

The clergy formed a distinct profession with its own rudimentary training programme and its own set of rules and it was governed by its

1. O'Day, Clergy, p.158.

2. Green, "Careers", p.78.

3. Larking, p.152.

4. Fletcher, Sussex, p.78; above, p.16.

5. Al.Oxon., p.65.

own hierarchy.¹ However, here one should enter a caveat; namely that the exclusiveness of the clerical profession should not be exaggerated as the Church did not have complete control over patronage. Moreover, a significant number of ministers were also involved in farming activities in order to augment their incomes. In spite of all this, it is obvious from reading the clergy's works and wills that they had a strong sense of professional identity and a conviction that they were part of a distinct clerical community. Their sense of community was strengthened in most cases by their common education as well as ties of kinship and friendship. There was a strong element of dynasticism amongst the clergy.² At least ten per cent of the university educated, beneficed ministers in the diocese of Canterbury had followed their fathers into the profession. A similar figure can be obtained amongst the clergy of 1633 in the archdeaconry of Bedford. Moreover, about seven per cent of the Kentish ministers and as many as thirteen per cent of Bedfordshire ministers had sons who entered the Church. Nepotism was fairly common. Amongst the Kentish clergy, Daniel Horsmonden succeeded his father as rector of Ulcombe and William Master succeeded his father as rector of Rucking. Moreover, William Osborne's son succeeded him at East Langdon and William Slater's son succeeded him at Otterden.³ Christopher Lawrence of Stondon, Edward Riseley of Wilhamstead, Peter Buckley of Odell and John Francis of Langford, all in Bedfordshire, succeeded their fathers in their respective benefices. A number of Kentish and Bedfordshire ministers had brothers who entered the Church. Some ministers came from families in which a number of men had joined the profession. This is true of John Gough of Tenham, whose father was

1. O'Day, Clergy, p.159; Collinson, Religion, p.99.

2. O'Day, Clergy, p.141.

3. Al.Cantab., vol.II, p.411, vol.III, pp.150,286; Al.Oxon., p.1364.

minister of Stanmer in Sussex. His brother Stephen was chaplain to the King and his other brother, William, succeeded their father at Stanmer in 1649.¹ Christopher Slater, rector of Leighton Buzzard in Bedfordshire, had a son who became vicar of Monken Hadley in Hertfordshire in 1633, a brother, John, who was rector of Church Rawford in Warwickshire and another brother, called William, who was rector of Lympsham in Somerset and a Prebend of Wells.² In all, twenty per cent of those university trained Kentish ministers of 1637 and twenty two per cent of those university trained Bedfordshire ministers of 1633 are known to have had relatives in the Church. It is possible that the proportions are higher for there was still a minority of ministers whose degreeless state precludes investigation. There is no greater testimony of the popularity of the clerical profession than the fact that many men followed members of their families into the Church; and so young, educated men must have viewed the parish ministry as a career with at least reasonable prospects. More sons of clergymen went into the Church than into any other profession. It is interesting to note that kinship links stretched not merely across the diocese and archdeaconry of our study, but radiated out from these areas into other parts of the country. This is especially true of Bedfordshire ministers whose relations tended not only to have been beneficed in Bedfordshire but also in the surrounding counties of Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Huntingdonshire and Northamptonshire and further afield into Essex and Norfolk. The son of John Hughes, perpetual curate of Gravenhurst in Bedfordshire, found preferment in Llanfairysghornwy in Anglesey.³ These kinship links, which stretched not only across the diocese of Lincoln, but also into parts

1. Al.Oxon., p.578.

2. Al.Cantab., vol.IV, pp.88-9.

3. Al.Cantab., vol.II, p.426.

of other dioceses as well, would have increased further the possibility of geographical mobility amongst the clerical profession.

Marriage connections between clerical families helped to bind the clerical profession together. Moreover, ties of friendships within the profession helped to consolidate the clerical community. Wills from the diocese of Canterbury and archdeaconry of Bedford reveal that it was very common for ministers to make bequests of money, books or clothes to colleagues. In 1630, Thomas Archer, rector of Houghton Conquest in Bedfordshire, left 5s. in gold to each of seventeen Bedfordshire ministers.¹ In his will of 1642, Ambrose Richman, perpetual curate of Wye, put the responsibility for his son's education into the hands of Thomas Sandford, minister of Sandwell in Kent.² A substantial number of ministers appointed other members of the profession as executors, witnesses or overseers of their wills. Moreover, it was a common practice for ministers to leave money to a colleague to preach their respective funeral sermons. Walter Richards of St. James', Dover, instructed his executor that he wanted four ministers with Master of Arts degrees to carry his corpse at his funeral.³ It was common for ministers to use not only their curates but also neighbouring ministers as witnesses on their behalf in their court cases. A curate or neighbouring minister was particularly useful in tithe cases, for they were often familiar with the geography of the area and had some idea of what the local tithing practices were. Thus, in 1628, Doctor Kingsley, Archdeacon of Canterbury and rector of Hythe, used his curate and tithe gatherer, Thomas Kingsmill, as a witness in a tithe case against one of his parishioners; and Robert Ely, vicar of Charing, acted as a witness

1. BRO, ABP/W1630/129.

2. KAO, PRC 16/238/275.

3. KAO, PRC 31/121/247.

in a tithe case brought by Robert Barrell, rector of Boughton Malherbe, against a parishioner called Elliot in 1626.¹

Friendships between ministers came about because of the strong feeling of community amongst the parish ministry. The foundations of many of these friendships were made at university. Thomas Buckner, rector of Sandhurst in Kent, left books to an old contemporary of his at Magdalen College, Oxford, one Dr. Henry Hammond, minister of Penshurst in the neighbouring diocese of Rochester.² Three of the seventeen ministers cited in the will of Thomas Archer, rector of Houghton Conquest in Bedfordshire - Edward Colby, perpetual curate of Gravenhurst, Daniel Goldsmith, rector of Campton and Walsingham Shirley, vicar of Haynes - had all been at Trinity College, Cambridge, with him in the 1570's.³ Often, another minister would have been the only educated person in the area with whom a clergyman would have had something in common; and that is why so many ministers, including Thomas Archer, made friends with ministers from neighbouring parishes. As in all professions, colleagues would have been a valuable source of support and advice, particularly for the young and inexperienced minister. This was recognized by Thomas Archer, who explained that:

"A young priest shall never be rich nor wise until he has heard an old priest's confession."⁴

It is likely that some friendships were founded on commonly held religious views. Unfortunately, a paucity of evidence for both areas of our study precludes a detailed analysis of this. In some cases ties of professional friendship must have overridden religious differences, especially for ministers who felt isolated in their parishes.

1. CALC, PRC 39/39, f. 88, X6-11, pt.II, f.77.
2. PRO, PROB 11/192/35; Al.Oxon., pp.260,640.
3. BRO, ABP/W1630/129; Al.Cantab., vol.I, p.369; vol.II, p.230, vol.IV, p.68.
4. BRO, P/28/1, f.37.

Little is known of the religious standpoint of Thomas Archer, except that he was a Calvinist, but it is known that, amongst those neighbouring ministers whom he cited in his will, there was one Hugh Reeve, rector of Ampthill, who, in 1640, was said to have been an Arminian and, at the other extreme, Walsingham Shirley, vicar of Haynes, who was accused of nonconformity by Sir Richard Conquest in 1634 and Humphrey Hill, rector of Tingrith, who appeared before the bishop's court in 1604 for refusing to wear his surplice.¹ During the 1630's some relationships within the clerical community were put under a strain because of the policies of Archbishop Laud. Zealous supporters of Laud's policy of ceremonialism sometimes found themselves at odds with their Puritan colleagues. These disputes became particularly serious when members of the laity became involved. In 1634, the Laudian minister of Maidstone, Robert Barrell, presented fifteen members of his congregation for gadding to the nearby parish church of Otham to hear Thomas Wilson, a Puritan minister, preach. Barrell further complained that, altogether, hundreds of his parishioners had been to Otham church.² In fact, Wilson was suspended from his benefice in the following year for refusing to read the Book of Sports and it is likely that Robert Barrell had a hand in his downfall.³

Thus, the sense of profession amongst the clergy was strengthened by the friendship links within the clerical community. Ministers gave each other support, encouragement, advice, ideas and even money. Unfortunately, no accounts of organized meetings between ministers in our areas of study are extant. However, there is some

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1. BRO, ABP/W1630/129; HLRO, HLMP, 16th. Jan. 1640-41; PRO, SP16/274/12 f.23; ed. C.W.Foster, "The State of the Church in the Reign of Elizabeth and James I", LRS, vol.23 (1926), p.cxvii.
 2. LPL, VG4/22, ff.5,7.
 3. Everitt, p.60.

evidence that there was a combination lecture held weekly in the town of Ampthill in Bedfordshire. In a petition of 1641 against Hugh Reeve, the Arminian rector of Ampthill, it was reported that there was:

"a lecture performed weekly in the parish church of Ampthill by divers ministers who were conformable to the doctrines of the Church of England."

Reeve, himself, was said to have been "an enemy to preaching" and therefore condemnatory of these lectures. Combination lectures were organized by conformist ministers as a means of making adequate provision for regular preaching. The lectures were sometimes followed by a conference between the ministers involved and a meal.¹ In 1636, six ministers from the city of Canterbury and surrounding parishes were presented for eating a shin of beef at the Sun Inn at Canterbury during a public fast. Although it is possible that these ministers were enjoying a meal after a combination lecture it is more likely that they were participating in a purely social occasion organized for ministers in the local area.²

How did the clergy, as a group, view themselves and their profession? There was, in fact, some difference of opinion within the profession about the nature of the parish ministry. Those who adhered to Laudian sacerdotalism adopted a more elevated view of the ministry than did their Puritan colleagues.³ Jasper Fisher, the Laudian rector of Wilden in Bedfordshire, declared that:

"When the Bishop laid his hands upon your head, remember, you are set apart and separated from all common and profane business. When you hear, 'Receive the Holy Ghost,' remember you are elevated above the wicked world and imbued with heavenly power. When you hear sins and forgive them they are forgiven..."

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1. HLRO, HLMP, 16th. Jan. 1640-41; P.Collinson, "Lectures by Combination", *BIHR*, vol.48 (1975), pp.183-4.
 2. CALC, Z4-6, ff.14,19.
 3. N.R.N. Tyacke, "Arminianism in England and Politics 1604-1640", Oxford D.Phil. (1968), pp.251-3.

When you take the Bible with authority to preach the Word and to minister the holy sacraments, remember your commission was sealed in the court of Heaven and you dispatched a messenger from the Lord of Hosts. Be not then flattered or terrified to please the sinful multitude and to abuse your Master's trust."¹

The Laudians stressed the importance of the sacraments in the salvation process and so, in their opinion, the minister's role in the consecration of the bread and wine set him on a level above the laity.² Edward Boughen, rector of Woodchurch in Kent, used an image to describe the clergy which was commonly used by Laudian ministers. He described a minister as:

"An Angel of Light, appearing in his white vestments, behaving himself with that gravity and reverence and decency which well befits his calling and the religious duty he has in hand."³

For his part, Jasper Fisher observed:

"I am sure [that] consecrated priests may be counted as angels."⁴

Moderates, such as Robert Abbot, vicar of Cranbrook in Kent, stressed the importance of the teaching role of the parish clergy. Moreover, Abbot described the parish ministry as shepherds tending their flocks. Furthermore, he believed that ministers should provide their congregations with good examples of how life should be led.⁵

Whatever the differences in emphasis between Laudian and Puritan ministers, they were in agreement about one thing and that was that the parish ministry was set apart from the laity and that, as God's ministry, they should be treated with respect and obedience. Robert Abbot, for example, instructed ministers that they should not frequent

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1. J.Fisher, The Priest's Dignity and Duty (London, 1636), pp.46-7.
 2. J.Pocklington, Altare Christianum (London, 1637), p.128.
 3. E.Boughen, A Sermon Concerning Decency and Order in the Church (London, 1637), p.10.
 4. Fisher, The Priest's Dignity and Duty, p.48.
 5. R.Abbot, A Hand of Fellowship to Help Keep Out Sin and Antichrist (London, 1623), pp.xvii,19,22; The Danger of Popery (London, 1625), pp.30,34; A Trial of Our Church-Forsakers (London, 1639), p.185.

the company of their parishioners, for familiarity breeds contempt.¹ In fact, the clergy were not just members of a profession, they were also members of a distinct social group. They were set apart from the rest of the population, not merely by their sense of vocation, but also by their education, the emphasis that, as a group, they placed on the importance of a university education and the way in which many continued to participate in the learning process through studying and writing. Moreover, the nature of their incomes helped to make them a distinct social group for, unlike other sections of society, they could not pass on to their heirs the houses and lands which they held during their respective lifetimes. Any attempt to ascertain the position of the clergy within the social hierarchy is fraught with difficulties particularly because by no means all ministers had attended university or held the freehold rights to a benefice. The Laudian minister of Ampthill in Bedfordshire, Hugh Reeve, was said to have placed ministers on a very high plane indeed and this was a common feature of Laudian sacerdotalism. In 1640, it was reported that he had claimed that:

"A priest is in dignity above the King, especially in the administration of the sacraments because...he that gives is more worthy than he that receives and he that stands is more worthy than he that kneels....The priest and the Gospel have power to bind kings in chains and nobles with links of iron."

Moreover, he:

"accounted himself to be the best man in the parish and has told a noble Earl, who lives there, to his face that when he delivers him the sacrament he is [a] better man than he."

Furthermore, he added that:

"a minister which is a Master of Arts ought to take the place of any gentleman, a Bachelor of Divinity of any Esquire, a Doctor of Divinity of any Knight, a Bishop of any Baron, an Archbishop of any Duke and, if there were a Patriarch, he ought....to take the place of the King."²

1. Abbot, A Hand of Fellowship, p.21.
2. HLRO, HLMP, 16th. Jan. 1640-41.

Nevertheless, it is likely that, as a group, the clergy were somewhere between the middle and upper sections of the social pyramid, with a number being closer to the gentry than to the yeomanry in their social attitudes.¹

A number of ministers married the daughters of landed gentlemen. These ministers were by no means all sons of landed gentlemen themselves. In fact, some were sons of clergymen. Isaac Bargrave, Dean of Canterbury and rector of Chartham, married Eliza, the sister of Sir Edward Dering, and Daniel Horsmonden, vicar of Goudhurst, married Ursula, the daughter of Sir Warham St.Leger.² Thus, some ministers who came from clerical backgrounds were considered to have been socially acceptable to many daughters of the landed gentry, particularly if, like Bargrave, they held high office in the Church or had rich benefices like those of Chartham and Goudhurst. A number of ministers became friends with the local landed elite. Andrew Dennis, for example, rector of St. John's Bedford, left 28s. to his "ancient and faithful friend", Sir Oliver Luke, so that he could buy rings for himself and his wife.³ In his will of 1643, John Boughton, vicar of Boughton Aluph in Kent, directed that his son's education should be committed into the hands of Robert Wyvill, gentleman of Wye.⁴

In conclusion, the parish ministry can be termed a profession with its own rudimentary training programme, its own rules, career structure and hierarchy. Moreover, the clerical community was bound

1. Collinson, *Religion*, p.96.

2. Ed.J.Philipot, "The Visitation of Kent"(Harleian Society, XLII,1898), p.41; *Al.Cantab.*, vol.II, p.411.

3. BRO, ABP/W1633/178.

4. KAO, PRC 16/239/33.

together by ties of kinship and friendship; and the sense of group identity was strong amongst them. They were closer to the gentry than to the yeomanry in their social attitudes but they formed their own distinctive social group.

THE INCOME OF THE CLERGY

This chapter is concerned with the financial status of the clergy. As a group, did they prosper, or were they impoverished? What effect did inflation have upon their incomes? Were they burdened with heavy financial responsibilities? How effective was state intervention to aid their poorer brethren? More evidence is available for the diocese of Canterbury than for the archdeaconry of Bedford. For the former there are plentiful supplies of terriers and clerical wills and inventories; moreover, two surveys of the values of Kentish benefices are extant, the Commonwealth Survey of 1650 and a survey for 1663.¹ While the archdeaconry of Bedford is well supplied with clerical wills and terriers, no clerical inventories are extant and the only surviving survey of church livings is that of 1603 which adopts the figures of the Valor Ecclesiasticus of 1535.²

Any attempt to ascertain just how well off the clergy were as a group is fraught with difficulties. A beneficed minister's main sources of income were his tithes and his glebeland. However, his income from these might vary from year to year depending upon harvests, his own husbandry and his parishioners' willingness to pay him their tithes and customary offerings at Easter. The payment of fees for the *rites de passage* of baptism, marriage and burial were, by their very nature, irregular. Thus, the figures given in the Commonwealth survey of Church livings of 1650 can only be used as a rough guide as to the level of

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1. There are sixty eight wills and forty eight inventories extant for the clergy of the diocese of Canterbury who between 1625 and the late 1660's. Fifty nine wills have survived for the clergy of Bedfordshire. These documents are housed in the PRO, KAO and BRO. BL, Lansdowne MS.958, ff.135-40; LPL MS.1126.
 2. Ed. Foster, LRS, vol.23 (1926), pp.253-64.

clerical incomes in Kent, and this is exactly what it was intended to have been, providing the authorities with evidence of livings in need of financial aid. Moreover, it is not certain whether these estimates contain any augmentations made by the Committee for Plundered Ministers during the Civil War; and furthermore, it is possible that, in some cases, clerical incomes had declined during the Civil War as a number of ministers found it difficult to collect their tithes.¹ Above all, some of the less well off might have undervalued their incomes deliberately in order to stand a better chance of qualifying for an augmentation. One also needs to take into account the fact that the survey of 1650 was concerned with the value of benefices and so it does not include income from other sources such as teaching, medicine, personal property, business interests, accountancy, the preparation of legal documents and subsistence farming. Pluralism is another issue which must be considered in any discussion of clerical incomes. Bearing in mind all these caveats, an idea of the values of benefices in the diocese of Canterbury can be obtained from Table 6.

An examination of the figures reveals that there was a large gulf between rich and poor beneficed ministers. Moreover, rectors were, on average, better off than vicars. When one compares these figures with those in the Valor Ecclesiasticus of 1535 it can be found that the average incomes of beneficed ministers rose five times, keeping pace with prices which rose between four and five times during the period.²

1. Green, "Careers", p.79; R.O'Day and A.Hughes, "Augmentation and Amalgamation", eds. F.Heal and R.O'Day, Princes and Paupers in the English Church 1500-1800(Leicester, 1981), pp.167-93; Barratt, p.187; Freeman, p.136.

2. It should be noted that the accuracy of the Valor figures is suspect as it is likely that ministers undervalued their livings, for this survey was carried out for tax purposes. Valor figures are taken from LPL MS.1126. Phelps Brown and Hopkins, "Seven Centuries of the Price of Consumables, Compared with Builders' Wage Rates", ed.Ramsey The Price Revolution in Sixteenth Century England(Suffolk,1971),p.22.

Table 6. Values of Benefices in the Diocese of Canterbury in 1650.¹

| VALUES | RECTORIES % | VICARAGES % |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| £100 or above | 23 | 5 |
| £80 | 13 | 6 |
| £70 | 3 | 2 |
| £60 | 14 | 15 |
| £50 | 12 | 19 |
| £40 | 15 | 18 |
| £30 | 9 | 15 |
| £20 | 6 | 14 |
| £10-£19 | 4 | 6 |
| Below £10 | - | 1 |

Again, however, there is an inequality between rectors and vicars, as the former's revenues rose at an average rate of six times and the latter's at four times between 1535 and 1650.² Closer examination of the evidence reveals that one fifth of all rectories and a half of vicarages declined in value in real terms. Moreover, poorer livings were, on average, increasing in value at a higher rate than richer livings, a phenomenon which can also be detected in the diocese of Durham.³ The rectory of Acrise increased in value more than eleven fold, from £7 to £80, and the value of Witchling rectory increased twenty times, from £4 to £80; whereas the rectory of Biddenden, worth £35 in 1535, increased in value less than three times to £100 and a similar rate of increase was achieved by the vicarage of Minster in Thanet. No comprehensive survey of the values of perpetual curacies exists, though one can obtain a rough idea of their incomes as well as those of assistant curates. They tended to earn between £10 and £20 for their pains.⁴

1. BL, Lansdowne MS.958, ff.135-40.

2. These findings are similar to those found in other parts of the country. O'Day, *Clergy*, p.175; Hill, *Economic*, p.117; F.W.Brooks, "The Social Position of the Parson in the Sixteenth Century", *JBAA*, vol.10 (1945-47), p.25; P.Tyler, "The Status of the Elizabethan Parochial Clergy" *SCH*, vol.4 (1967), p.91; Barratt, p.205; Freeman, p.137; D.M.Gansby, "Tithe Disputes in the Diocese of York 1540-1639", *York M.Phil.*, 1968, p.136.

3. Freeman, p.137.

4. LPL, COMM XIIa/24, f.16; LAO, D/TN16; Larking, pp.50,178,189,201, 233; Hasted, vol.VI, p.229, vol.VII, p.256.

Rectors were, on average, better off than vicars because the former received both the great tithes of grain and hay and the small tithes, which consisted mainly of livestock and wool, and their colleagues in impropriated livings only received the small tithes. The price of grain and hay had risen more rapidly than that of livestock and wool.¹ Moreover, in the diocese of Canterbury the great tithes tended to have been collected in kind, whereas there was widespread commutation of the small tithes for cash payments, which meant, in practice, that the value of the latter tended to decline in real terms. Those few vicars who were in receipt of all or part of the great tithes tended to be better off than their colleagues in impropriated livings. The vicarage of St. Clement's, Sandwich, for example, had risen in value five times between 1535 and 1650 to £70 and the vicarage of Ospringe had increased in value five fold to £50.² Fifty five per cent of livings in the diocese of Canterbury and fifty two per cent of livings in the archdeaconry of Bedford were impropriated. These proportions are higher than the national average which Usher has calculated to have been forty three per cent, but substantially lower than the figures for the diocese of York and Durham which were sixty three per cent for each diocese.³ Impropriations were a major cause of clerical poverty. The ecclesiastical hierarchy blamed lay impropiators specifically, believing that the revenues from impropriations belonged to the Church and should be used to alleviate the problem of poor benefices.⁴ Critics of Archbishop Laud

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1. C.Cross, "The Incomes of Provincial Urban Clergy 1520-1645", eds. Heal & O'Day, Princes and Paupers in the English Church 1500-1800, p6.
 2. CALC, D/TS4, D/T09.
 3. Hill, Economic, p.145; R.G.Usher, The Reconstruction of the English Church, vol.2 (London, 1910), p.241; Freeman, p.129.
 4. Hill, Economic, p.239; M.L.Zell, "Economic Problems of the Parish Clergy", eds. Heal and O'Day, Princes and Paupers in the English Church 1500-1800, p.41.

and his followers might argue that the latter were themselves impropiators - in the diocese of Canterbury approximately forty per cent of impropiations were owned by the Archbishop and cathedral church of Canterbury and, of these, at least a third were worth less than £40 a year, and a quarter were worth less than £30.¹ However, the issue of impropiations is a complex one, for so many vested interests were involved - the King's, the ecclesiastical hierarchy's and the lay impropiators' revenues. At the bottom of this pile of vested interests lay extremes of wealth and poverty. Stipendiary vicars and curates were amongst the poorest ministers, for they had to rely on fixed incomes which were less likely to keep pace with rising prices than tithes paid in kind. The vicars of Bobbing in Kent and Lidlington in Bedfordshire received only £20 and £10 a year respectively from their impropiators.² While most beneficed ministers were given a house and at least some glebeland, even if it was a garden, most unbeneficed ministers had to fend for themselves on very low incomes. Much to the outrage of his flock, the poor curate of Otham was forced to lodge in an alehouse, for he could not afford anything better with an income of only £12 a year.³

Of those vicars who prospered during our period, some received at least part of the great tithes, while it is more than likely that others, such as the vicar of Boxley, whose revenue rose sixfold between 1535 and 1650, increased the values of their livings by the efficient exploitation of the glebeland.⁴ This is an important factor to bear in mind in any explanation of why poorer livings, both rectories and vicarages, rose in value at a higher rate than richer ones. Table 7

1. BL, Lansdowne MS.958, ff.135-40.

2. CALC, D/TB36; LAO TER 7/270.

3. CALC, X6-11, pt.II, f.51.

4. BL, Lansdowne MS.958, f.138; CALC, D/TB57.

represents the amounts of glebeland which rectories and vicarages in the diocese of Canterbury and archdeaconry of Bedford possessed.

Table 7. Amounts of Glebeland Attached to Benefices in the Diocese of Canterbury and Archdeaconry of Bedford.¹

| Amounts of Glebe (Acres) | Rectories in the Diocese of Canterbury % | Vicarages in the Diocese of Canterbury % | Rectories in Bedfordshire % | Vicarages in Bedfordshire % |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| 80 or above | - | - | 9 | 3 |
| 61 - 80 | - | - | 12 | - |
| 41 - 60 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| 21 - 40 | 15 | 7 | 30 | 3 |
| 11 - 20 | 27 | 8 | 6 | 15 |
| 5 - 10 | 24 | 12 | 9 | 26 |
| Below 5 Garden or half acre or less | 32 | 69 | 24 | 41 |
| Nothing | 8 | 17 | 3 | 7 |
| | - | 3 | 1 | 3 |

On the whole, livings in Bedfordshire possessed more glebeland than did those in the diocese of Canterbury. This might be partly explained by the fact that parishes were larger on average in Bedfordshire than in Kent. In both areas rectories had more land than vicarages. In general, however, most livings possessed some land, even if it consisted of a few perches or a garden.² Those without glebeland might use the churchyard to graze a few animals. Four Bedfordshire livings had no glebe at all; these were: the rectory of Dunstable and the vicarages of Oakley, Henlow and Stotfold. The vicar of the latter added a plaintive comment to the terrier of 1625:

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1. This information is taken from terriers from the respective areas from 1605 to 1664. These are housed in CALC, BRO and LAO. Terriers for seventy nine of the one hundred and fourteen rectories and eighty nine of the one hundred and fifteen vicarages in the diocese of Canterbury are extant and there are terriers for thirty three of the sixty one rectories and twenty seven of the fifty nine vicarages in Bedfordshire.
 2. There are one hundred and sixty perches to an acre.

"If the vicarage has any glebeland belonging to it, it were to be wished it had. It knows none."

Both the vicars of Stotfold and Oakley, however, might have looked to their share of the great tithes of their respective benefices as a form of compensation.¹ The vicarages of Hedcorn and Lypne in Kent had no glebeland attached to them.² As one might expect, urban livings in both counties tended to possess little land, for example, the rectory of St. Cuthbert's, Bedford, was said to have had only a churchyard, which was a quarter of an acre, and the livings in the city of Canterbury had between a few perches and one and a half acres.³ At the other extreme, one hundred acres were attached to the north Bedfordshire benefice of Yelden and ninety five acres to the rectory of Meppershall.⁴ The largest amount of glebeland that a Bedfordshire vicarage possessed was sixty seven acres, and this was at Eaton Bray.⁵ Kentish livings were not so well endowed with land. The rectory of Great Hardres possessed the largest amount of rectorial glebeland, forty three acres in all; but the benefice with the largest amount of glebeland, overall, was the vicarage of Patricbourne which had a total of forty seven acres.⁶ By the seventeenth century much of Kent had been enclosed and so most of the glebeland had been consolidated into fields, whereas in Bedfordshire the open field system of farming still prevailed and so glebeland tended to consist of strips of land scattered about the parish, except in the case of Studham where the glebeland consisted of a six acre field.⁷ The laity tended to respect the clergy's rights to their land and in only two

1. LAO, TER 1625 BUNDLE, TER 1634 BUNDLE, TER 12/32.

2. CALC, D/TH31, D/TL39.

3. LAO, TER 1664 BUNDLE; CALC, D/TC3, D/TC6, D/TC9, D/TC12, D/TC14, D/TC17, D/TC20, D/TC22, D/TC25, D/TC29, D/TC33.

4. BRO, ABE1; LAO, TER 12/25.

5. LAO, TER 7/320-2.

6. CALC, D/TH12, D/TP1.

7. LAO, TER 15/117.

terriers were there reports that glebeland had been lost or encroached upon. In the case of Warehorne in Kent it was two acres, but the problem was more serious for the ministry at Marston Moretaine in Bedfordshire, for Thomas Cookson, the rector there, wrote:

"There are divers lands both arable and meadow which belong to the said rectory of Marston which cannot be found, but I determine to procure a commission for the setting of them forth."¹

Only a small number of court cases can be found involving glebeland for the diocese of Canterbury and county of Bedfordshire.²

It is impossible to determine what proportion of the clergy's income was derived from glebeland, except in a few individual cases; for example, just under fifty per cent of the income of the vicar of St. Margaret's at Cliffe in Kent came from glebeland.³ Moreover, there is not always a correlation between size of glebeland and the value of a living. The rectory at Deale, for example, possessed three acres and was worth £120 a year, whereas the rectory of St. Mary Bredman in Canterbury was worth only £15 even though it also had three acres.⁴ To explain this one needs to take into account not only the quality of the land and the use to which it was put, but also the value of tithes in the particular parishes concerned. The fact that livings which had the most glebeland attached to them did not necessarily increase in value at higher rates than those which had smaller amounts of land tells us more about the significance of glebeland. The rectory of Great Hardres in Kent, for example, possessed forty three acres but only increased in value five fold between 1535 and 1660, whereas the rectory of Stowting, which had

1. CALC, D/TW12; LAO 7/325-7.

2. CALC, PRC 39/43, ff.270-7; PRO, C3 412 418(1638), C5 375 195(1645), E112 190 139(Easter 1634).

3. LPL, COMM XIIa/24, f.4.

4. BL, Lansdowne MS.958, f.135; CALC D/TD1, D/TC17.

only five and half acres of land, increased in value ten times during that period of time. True, the vicarage of Patricxbourne, which had forty seven acres attached to it increased in value thirteen times during the period, but the vicarages of Hackington and Marden increased in value eight fold, even though they each possessed only half an acre of land.¹ Thus, it was not always how much land a living had that was of significance *vis a vis* the value of a living, but what its quality was and what the minister concerned did with it. Those who farmed their land, particularly those who grew arable crops, would have found that the values of their livings would have risen at a higher rate than those who did not. Moreover, land use is an important factor in explaining why poorer livings rose in value at a higher rate than richer ones.

Few ministers in the diocese of Canterbury leased their glebeland. It was more profitable to farm the land themselves. Clerical inventories reveal that a large proportion of Kentish ministers were practical farmers.² Well over half of the forty eight Kentish clergymen for whom inventories are extant possessed animals such as cows, sheep and hogs as well as poultry. Some of this stock might have been derived from the payment of small tithes in kind, but nevertheless the ministers would have gained benefit from them by pasturing them on their glebeland. Some clergymen were involved in arable farming, John Ramsey and Samuel Raven, the rectors of Mersham and Brook respectively, both listed ploughs amongst their goods.³ In most livings, barns were provided to store produce and to shelter livestock and poultry. It is

1. BL, Lansdowne MS.958, ff.135,137,139-40; LPL, MS.1126, ff.4,11-12, 26,43; CALC, D/TH2, D/TH12, D/TM3, D/TP1, D/TS80.

2. A similar situation has been found in other parts of the country. O'Day, *Clergy*, p.152; Tyler, *SCH*, vol.4 (1967), pp.86-7; Freeman, p.170; H.Beddows, "The Church in Lincolnshire 1593-1640", Cambridge Ph.D., 1980, p.191.

3. KAO, PRC 10/72/501 (1637), PRC 10/72/503 (1638).

more than likely that the clergy managed to combine their roles as farmers and ministers successfully without neglecting their religious duties. In only one of a large number of cases of clerical neglect is the farming activities of a minister given as a reason why he did not perform certain religious duties. In 1625, it was reported that William Brigham, perpetual curate of Ash, spent far too much time at his own farm at Wingham.'

Thus, a study of the revenues of the clergymen in the diocese of Canterbury reveals that, on average, rectors were better off than vicars, particularly as the values of the former's livings rose more rapidly than those of the latter's. The value of tithes was an important explanation of this phenomenon. Moreover, it is more than likely that those vicars and rectors who made the most of their glebeland enhanced the value of their livings at a higher rate than those who did not.

The relative poverty of the fifteen livings in the city of Canterbury is an interesting phenomenon. Of the fourteen livings for which we have values for 1650, twelve were worth less than £40 and nine were worth less than £30 a year. Moreover, the Canterbury livings rose in value at a rate of just over three and a half times between 1535 and 1650. St. Mildred's rectory rose in value just over six times to £50, whereas the rectories of St. Mary Bredman and St. Northgate rose in value only one and a half times to £15 and £20 respectively.² In the city of Canterbury, rectories were, on average, only marginally better off than vicarages. The relative poverty of Canterbury livings cannot be explained in terms of amounts of glebeland, though it is possible that most ministers did not make the most of what little glebeland they had.

1. CALC, Z4-4, f.68.

2. BL, Lansdowne MS.958, ff.135-6, 138-9.

Clues are to be found in the number of parishes and the tithing customs in the city. Canterbury was crowded with parish churches which immediately reduced the size of each parish and the number of people paying tithes to each minister. Moreover, personal tithes, that is one tenth of the profits which people obtained by their labour, had disappeared by the second half of the seventeenth century and had been replaced by a fixed rate of 2s. 6d. in the £ to be paid on houses and rents in the city of Canterbury.¹ This form of payment, which was adversely affected by the price rise, formed the bulk of the Canterbury ministers' tithe income. The rector of St. Mildred's was better off than most of his colleagues in Canterbury; and this can be partly explained by the fact that his rectory lay on the edge of the city and so it is likely that his parishioners owned more land than did those of his colleagues.²

What of the financial burdens which a minister is said to have borne - a wife and children, and taxation?³ The effects of all these factors on the clerical income can be exaggerated. True, in any assessment of the increase in values of livings between 1535 and 1650 one should take into account that in 1535 no clergyman in the diocese of Canterbury was married, yet by the early seventeenth century at least fifty per cent of the ministers in that area were married. It should also be remembered that ministers needed to accumulate money to give to their children as marriage portions and had to make sure that their widows were adequately provided for.⁴ Nevertheless, it is more than likely that the wives and older children of those ministers involved

1. A.G.Little, "Personal Tithes", *EHR*, vol.60 (1945), p.71.

2. BL, Lansdowne MS.958, f.136.

3. Hill, *Economic*, Chapter VIII, p.238.

4. W.H.Frere, *The English Church in the Reigns of Elizabeth and James I 1588-1625* (London, 1904), p.107; Hill, *Economic*, p.200.

in farming activities made their contributions towards the family income by doing their share of the farm work.¹ Moreover, marriage to a rich woman would have been financially advantageous.² The two main forms of clerical taxation consisted of First Fruits, whereby a minister's first year's income was paid to the King, and Tenths, which was an annual tax of a tenth of a minister's income. However, the poorer clergy, those whose rectories and vicarages had been valued at £10 and £6 13s. 4d. *per annum*, respectively, in the Valor Ecclesiasticus of 1535 were exempt from the payment of these taxes; moreover, they were also exempt from the payment of the clerical subsidy which was assessed on the other nine tenths of the clerical income after First Fruits and Tenths had been paid.³ In fact, ministers in twenty three per cent of rectories and fifty six per cent of vicarages in the diocese of Canterbury and in five per cent of rectories and sixty seven per cent of vicarages in Bedfordshire were not liable to pay taxes.⁴ In general, the burden of taxation did not fall very heavily upon the clerical profession. Those ministers who were taxed were assessed according to the value of their respective benefices recorded in the Valor, after synodals and procurations had been deducted. Moreover, it is likely that the figures in the Valor had been underestimated.⁵ The proportion of income that a minister paid in taxes depended upon how much the value of his benefice had risen in value since 1535. The vicar of Holy Cross, Westgate, in Canterbury, whose benefice rose in value from £13 in 1535 to £30 in 1650, would have paid a larger proportion of his income in taxes than

1. Brooks, JBAA, vol.10 (1945-7), p.37.

2. Green, "Careers", p.81.

3. Hill, Economic, p.188.

4. BL, Lansdowne MS.958, ff.135-40; LPL, MS.1126; ed. Foster, LRS, vol.23 (1926), pp.253-64.

5. O'Day, Clergy, pp.172-7; Green, "Careers", p.82.

the vicar of Chilham, whose living rose six times in value from £13 6s. 8d. in 1535 to £80 in 1650.¹

In addition to taxation, all rectors were responsible for the repair of the church chancel and both rectors and vicars had to make sure that the houses with which they had been provided were maintained in a reasonable state of repair. Most livings contained a house - only the rectories of Dunstable in Bedfordshire and Hedcorn in Kent were lacking in this respect.² Although the terriers for the diocese of Canterbury do not include a description of the size of houses, those for Bedfordshire do. The average size of a Bedfordshire clergyman's house was four bays, the same number as for the diocese of Lichfield.³ The rectors of Meppershall lived in a parsonage house consisting of ten bays.⁴ One rarely hears of ministers building new parsonage or vicarage houses because it is more than likely that clergymen preferred to invest in enterprises which would benefit their heirs rather than their successors in their livings. There is evidence of housebuilding in only two of the fifty Bedfordshire terriers used in our study, those of Maulden rectory and Goldington vicarage where it was said that:

"The old vicarage house about some eleven or twelve years since being so much decayed and ruined, as by the judgements of workmen it could not be repaired, was by John Knapp, vicar there, at his first coming, pulled down and at his own cost and charges, being at least an hundred pounds, new built again."⁵

Most ministers repaired their houses⁶, although, between 1625 and 1640, ministers in at least a quarter of the rectories and vicarages of the diocese of Canterbury were presented for failing to keep their houses

1. BL, Lansdowne MS.958, f.138.
2. CALC, D/TH31; LAO TER 1634 BUNDLE.
3. A bay was approximately fifteen to twenty feet long. Barratt, p.324; O'Day, *Clergy*, p.179.
4. LAO, TER 12/25.
5. LAO, TER 12/33; TER 1634 BUNDLE.
6. LAO, TER 1634 BUNDLE; CALC D/TN20.

in an adequate state of repair.¹ The vicarage houses of Doddington, Newnham and St. Peter's, Thanet, were said to have been on the point of falling down, whereas the parsonage houses of Ham and Otterden were said to have already done so.² As a minister could be sequestered or forced to pay delapidations to his successor if he failed to keep his house in a reasonable state of repair, it is not surprising that new ministers took their neglectful predecessors or the latter's executors to court in order to win compensation for houses that had been allowed to decay.³ In general, one can conclude that most clergymen spent as little as possible on their houses.

In an analysis of the financial status of the clergy a study of the value of benefices and the financial burdens that the clergy had to bear gives us only a partial picture. One also needs to take into account the value of goods which the clergy left behind them and this is represented by Table 8. As one might expect, on average, curates were less well off than their beneficed colleagues. However, some unbeneficed ministers were as well off as their more affluent beneficed colleagues; in fact, John Crump, perpetual cuate of Maidstone, left £918 3s. 4d. worth of goods in 1667, which was more than any other clergyman left.⁴ Moreover, more vicars than rectors left goods worth £100 or above. One might, at first, explain this apparent anomaly by calling into question the representative nature of the surviving inventories for the diocese of

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1. CALC, X5-7, pt.II, ff.111,157,163,208,242, X6-1, ff.227,229,280, X6-3, f.18, X6-4, f.129, X6-5, f.40, X6-6, ff.37,61,85,118,142,172, 185,233, X6-8, f.304, X6-9, ff.3,25,65,140,278,291, X6-10, f.120, X6-11, pt.II, ff.95,98,143,149, X7-3, ff.10,13,20, X7-4, f.20, Y6-4, ff.120,164,208-9, Z3-16, ff.24,121,126,128,130,238,259,261, 269,294-5, Z4-4, ff.15,120, Z4-5, f.103, Z4-6, f.161, Z4-7, f.55; LPL, VG4/16, f.27.
 2. CALC, Y6-4, ff.120(1632),164(1635), X6-5, f.164(1635), X5-7, f.208(1635), Z4-7, f.55(1640).
 3. CALC, PRC 39/43, ff.104-5.
 4. KAO, PRC 27/19/5.

Canterbury. However, closer analysis of the financial circumstances of the clergy in our sample reveals that there is no correlation between the values of goods that ministers left behind them and the values of their respective benefices.¹

Table 8. Values of Kentish Ministers' Goods 1623-65.²

| Value of Goods | Rectors % | Vicars % | Curates % |
|----------------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| £500 or above | 10 | 6 | 10 |
| £200 or above | 20 | 23 | 10 |
| £100 or above | 50 | 52 | 10 |
| £50 or above | 75 | 76 | 30 |
| Below £25 | 5 | 6 | 20 |
| £10 - £20 | 5 | - | 10 |
| Below £10 | - | - | 10 |

Men who occupied the less valuable benefices often left considerable estates to their heirs. Although his benefice was worth only £30 a year, Richard Inge, vicar of Petham, left £148 14s. 4d. worth of goods in 1641, whereas Thomas Bishop, whose rectory was worth £100 a year, left £184 6s. 8d. worth of goods in 1630. Moreover, Thomas Baker and John Boughton, whose vicarages were worth £60 left £323 8s. and £71 11s. 2d. in 1641 and 1642 respectively. Furthermore, only £17 3s. worth of goods were left by Arthur Cotymer in 1640 even though his rectory was worth £50 a year.³ Thus the study of clerical inventories, together with wills, which gives us information about lands and houses that ministers owned, might give us more insight into the financial status of the clergy than the mere study of the values of benefices.

Although the clerical inventories reveal that there was a significant gulf between rich and poor ministers few were extremely

1. This has been found to have been the case in the diocese of Durham. Freeman, p.185.
 2. The information is taken from inventories which have survived for forty eight ministers; these documents are housed in KAO. Inventories include moveable goods only.
 3. KAO, PRC 10/62/42, PRC 11/8/213, PRC 11/8/249, PRC 11/10/30, PRC 29/9/5.

poor, for only two curates left goods worth less than £20. In 1635, Edward Chittenden, assistant curate at Milton, left goods worth £13 9s. 6d. and in 1623, Robert Taylor, assistant curate at Appledore, left clothes worth 14s., a pair of shoes worth 4d., a pair of sheets and a blanket and bolster worth 2s. and six small books, also worth 2s..¹ Most clergymen achieved a comfortable standard of living, for they left goods worth between £50 and £200. A few left debts, but it is difficult to determine their sources. Home comforts were important to the clergy, for well over a half possessed luxury goods such as plate, painted cloths, arras, carpets and cushions. Even a relatively poor curate like Osmund Clutting of Eastchurch, who left only £25 7s. 6d. worth of goods in 1686, had owned plate worth £4.² A few clergymen, such as John Ramsey, rector of Mersham, John Phillips, vicar of Faversham, and John Kidd, curate of Egerton, were prosperous enough to have employed servants.³ Of the fifty nine clergymen for whom wills survive, fourteen per cent employed servants. John Donne, rector of Blunham, Dean of St. Paul's and poet, employed a number of servants, including a coach man.⁴

Although it might be said that the clergy had better houses, more furniture and luxury goods than most parishioners, it is difficult to compare the clergy with other social groups such as the gentry and yeomanry.⁵ To start, the wealth of the gentry and yeomanry varied from person to person, as did that of the clergy. Moreover, the clergy only had the income from their benefices for life, and furthermore, the nature of the goods tended to differ between clergymen on the one hand and

1. KAO, PRC 10/72/38, PRC 11/10/93.

2. KAO, PRC 11/3/10.

3. KAO, PRC 10/72/503, prc 16/230/1492; PRO, PROB 11/203/46.

4. PRO, PROB 11/159/46.

5. Brooks, *JBAA*, vol.10 (1945-7), p.36; Barratt, pp.340-1,350; Freeman, pp.187-8.

other social groups on the other. The possession of books differentiated the clergy from the yeomanry even though some ministers' goods were worth the same as those of yeoman.¹ Even Robert Taylor, assistant curate of Appledore, whose worldly goods were worth no more than those of a poor labourer, owned a few books.² As it has been concluded in Chapter I, the clergy were a very distinct social group and, if they can be associated with any other social group, it is true to say that they were closer to the gentry in their social standing than they were to the yeomanry.³

An important question to ask is why was there little correlation between the goods left by clergymen and the values of their livings? One possible answer is that many clergymen were substantial landowners in their own right. At least sixty per cent of ministers in the diocese of Canterbury and just over fifty per cent of the clergy in the archdeaconry of Bedford, for whom wills have survived, owned their own land. Although some must have purchased this land for themselves, it is likely that others inherited it. John Sharp, vicar of Benenden in Kent, provides us with a case in point, as it is unlikely that he purchased his ninety acres of land in Kent, for his benefice was only worth £40 a year.⁴ Some possessed lands in other parishes and Michael Potter, vicar of St. Mary's, Dover, had lands in Devon and the lands of Michael Stone lay in Gloucestershire.⁵ In these and other cases ministers could augment their incomes by leasing out their lands. The same principles might be applied to the large numbers of Kentish and Bedfordshire clergymen who owned their own houses. It is unlikely, for example, that

1. Barratt, p.340.

2. KAO, PRC 11/10/93.

3. O'Day, Clergy, pp.159-60; Collinson, Religion, p.96.

4. KAO, PRC 31/118/169.

5. PRO, PROB 11/206/159; KAO, PRC 16/250/828.

James Hurst bought all five houses that he owned in the parish of St. Paul's in Canterbury, for his income from his vicarage of Hackington was only £40 a year. The leases of these houses should have proved lucrative.¹ Farming, on their own lands or lands that they rented would have improved the clerical income markedly.² Subsistence farming on the glebeland would not have been taken into account when the benefice was valued. Many clergymen would have augmented their incomes by preparing formal documents such as marriage certificates or wills. Some would have received fees by acting as surrogates and agents in the ecclesiastical courts.³ Others acted as creditors to friends, relatives and neighbours. In most cases the sums were small, but when Thomas Baker of New Romney died in 1641 he was owed a total of £190.⁴ Between 1625 and 1640, as many as eighty eight ministers in the diocese of Canterbury used their skills as educated men by becoming teachers. Clergymen represented fifty per cent of those licensed to teach during this period.⁵ Some ministers, such as Mr. Coleby, curate of Ham, and Mr. Fellows, curate of Staple, claimed that they could not have survived financially without teaching children - Fellows said that teaching was "his chiefest maintenance" - while others, such as the pluralists Daniel Horsmonden, rector of Ulcombe and Goudhurst, and Francis Fotherby, vicar of Linsted and St. Clement's, Sandwich in Kent, were merely augmenting their already substantial incomes.⁶ The field of medicine was not a particularly popular sideline for the clergy, for only two curates, Theophilus White

1. KAO, PRC 16/236/228.

2. BRO, ABP/W1624/52.

3. Ed. Foster, *LRS*, vol.23 (1926), pp.193,195.

4. KAO, PRC 27/9/5; B.A.Holderness, "The Clergy as Moneylenders in England 1500-1700", eds. Heal and O'Day, Princes and Paupers in the English Church 1500-1800, p.202.

5. A.J.Willis, Canterbury Licences 1568-1646 (London, 1975), pp.17-21.

6. BL, Lansdowne MS.958, ff.137-9; CALC, X5-7, pt.II, f.225; LPL, VG4/22, f.43.

of Minster in Sheppey, John King (whose parish is unknown) and the vicar of Bethersden, William Turner, were licensed Doctors of Physic. Both White and Turner were in receipt of low incomes for the cure of souls - the latter's living was worth only £20 a year.¹ Only one minister is known to have been involved in a specific business enterprise and that was George Butler, rector of Astwick in Bedfordshire, for he had shares in the Virginia Company. However, a number of clerics held bonds and annuities.²

Pluralism was an important means by which some clergymen augmented their incomes. According to the canons of 1604, only those ministers who had attained the degree of Master of Arts and who were licensed preachers could hold two livings in plurality. Moreover, these two livings had to be within thirty miles of each other. Furthermore, the ministers concerned were required to be resident in each living for some reasonable time each year and, in their absence, each had to supply curates to officiate for them.³ Archbishop Laud recognized that pluralism was a necessary evil in the Church. He himself increased the number of pluralities by allowing those livings worth less than £8 in the King's Book to be held in plurality.⁴ In contrast to the situation in the dioceses of Durham, Oxford and Worcester, the number of endowed

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1. BL, Lansdowne MS.958, f.138; Willis, Canterbury Licences 1568-1646, pp.27,29.
 2. PRO, PROB 11/160/77.
 3. Hill, Economic, p.226; O'Day, Clergy, p.77; Barratt,p.36.
 4. Hill, Economic, pp.236,240.

livings which were held in plurality were not increasing between Elizabeth's reign and 1640, for twenty eight per cent of endowed livings were so held in 1596, twenty five per cent in 1607 and twenty seven per cent in 1637. In 1637, a substantial number of Kentish pluralists, forty per cent in all, held two livings worth less than £40 a year. However, many pluralists did not need more than one benefice in order to make ends meet; for almost a third of the double-beneficed men in the diocese of Canterbury held two livings worth £40 a year or more.¹ Dr. Robert Austen, rector of Harbledown and Aldington, for example, derived a total revenue of £240 from his benefices. Moreover, cathedral clergy, such as the Laudian minister Meric Casaubon, were permitted to hold livings in plurality as a reward for their ability and services. Casaubon's vicarages of Monkton and Minster in Thanet were valued at £40 and £100 a year respectively.² As in other parts of the country, the pluralists in the diocese of Canterbury tended to have been well educated.³

So far it has been established that, although the values of clerical livings varied considerably, most ministers managed to achieve at least a reasonable standard of living, even if it meant holding two benefices or taking on an alternative occupation such as farming or teaching in order to augment their incomes. A small proportion of the clergy, however, remained poor. Nevertheless, the ecclesiastical hierarchy recognized that a minister's income from his cure of souls ought to have been sufficient to support him and that something positive needed to be done to alleviate the poverty of those whose incomes were meagre. Archbishop Laud, in his report to the King in 1634 about the state of

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1. BL, Lansdowne MS.958; CALC, V/V5, V/V13, X8-2; Barratt, p.158; Freeman, p.86
 2. BL, Lansdowne MS.958, ff.135,139.
 3. Beddows, "The Church in Lincolnshire 1593-1640", p.192.

his diocese, wrote:

"I find one great complaint and fit to be redressed, it is the general grievance of the poor vicars, that their stipends are scarce able to feed and clothe them."

Moreover, in 1637 the Bishop of Lincoln reported to the King:

"There are a great number of very poor ministers, vicarages and curateships in many parts of this large diocese and which are almost past all cure and hope of help unless by your major grace and favour some may be had."¹

The most obvious source of money for the augmentation of clerical livings was impropriations, but there were too many vested interests involved here and so nothing of significance was achieved in this respect.² It was not until the Long Parliament met that a national scheme of augmentation of livings was put forward, but by then circumstances had changed.

During the seventeenth century there was an increasing feeling, particularly amongst Puritans, that a minister's income from the cure of souls should be sufficient to support him, that he should be a conscientious preacher who dedicated his life to his flock and that his attention should not be diverted from this task by the necessity of earning extra income. These ideals were held by the Feoffees for Impropriations, who, by 1633, had bought the impropriations of thirty one churches in eighteen counties. They tended to operate in market towns where they devoted ten per cent of the income from impropriate livings to augment the ministers' incomes or to establish lectureships.³ Nothing is known of their activities in the diocese of Canterbury, but they did purchase the impropriate rectory of Dunstable in Bedfordshire, paying the curate, Zachary Symmes, an extra £20 a year to augment his

1. Laud, Works, vol.V, pp.327,249.

2. Hill, Economic, p.326; Trevor Roper, Archbishop Laud 1573-1645, p.172.

3. Hill, Economic, pp.254,260; O'Day, Clergy, p.93.

meagre income.¹ The work of the Feoffees did not last long, however, as Laud considered them to have been:

"The main instruments for the Puritan faction to undo the Church,"²

and so they were abolished.

In order to obtain a preaching ministry, groups of Puritans were prepared to pay ministers to preach regular sermons. Some, like those of the parish of St. Clement's, Sandwich, paid an independent lecturer to preach to them, whereas others took it upon themselves to augment the meagre incomes of their own preaching minister. In a petition to parliament in 1640, a group of parishioners at Walmer in Kent declared that:

"the allowance for the maintenance of the minister there is not above £16 per annum, wherewith it had not been possible for him to sustain himself, his wife and many children, had it not been for the free contribution of some few well disposed people well knowing his merit and integrity and pitying his small allowance."

Moreover, some parishioners in Whitstable augmented the meagre income of their preaching curate.³ The growing feeling amongst the laity that a preaching ministry should receive adequate remuneration is illustrated by a number of petitions to parliament from the diocese of Canterbury between 1640 and 1641. In all, there are twelve petitions concerning the poverty of curates, five concerning the poverty of vicars and only one concerning the poverty of a rector.⁴ All petitions emphasised the need for a preaching ministry. The premise that poverty and lack of preaching often went together was expressed by a group of parishioners at Fairfield. They complained that their curate was paid so small a stipend

1. A.T.Hart, The Curate's Lot (London, 1970), p.77.

2. Laud, Works, vol.III, p.216.

3. Larking, pp.141-2,201-2; Everitt, p.87; Clark, p.323.

4. Larking, pp.130-1,141-2,145-6,149-54,173-4,178-9,188,190-1,193-6, 201-2,233-4,239-40.

that:

"no well deserving man will accept of it, to wait and attend upon it, to read and preach the word of God to us every Sunday and holy day constantly for the advancement of God's glory and the comfort of our souls, so that we are in a manner left utterly destitute of the good means of our salvation, having a sermon but once in a month and common prayer read to us by one that serves another cure, but seldom in due season; which is a great grief to us who desire to be better taught and instructed in the matters of our salvation."

Deprived of regular sermons, for their curate, who was only paid £12 6s. 8d. *per annum*, was a pluralist and resided elsewhere, a group of parishioners of Leeds and Bromfield bitterly declared that:

"some of us have had to go elsewhere to hear preaching and have been molested and cited."

That poverty and scandalous behaviour sometimes went together was expressed by groups of people from Ore and Molash. Those of Ore complained that:

"We have not had (for these twenty years) any minister settled among us, save only one, whose stipend was but £8 by the year to maintain himself with his wife and children and thereupon choosing rather to steal meat for himself and his [family] than to beg or steal, was arraigned [and] condemned of felony to the scandal of our religion and reproach of the ministry in the reformed Church of this land."

So small was the stipend allowed to the curates of the chapel of Molash that it had attracted one Mr Keth:

"a poor curate that cannot preach, a common alehouse haunter and a drunkard, who upon the Lord's day came into the Church and could not read service by reason of his drunkenness."

Most petitioners pointed out the vast difference in income between the impropiators of the benefices concerned, on the one hand, and their ministers on the other.

Between 1645 and 1660, attempts were made on a national scale to augment poor benefices and curacies. The first stages of the work began

1. Larking, pp.130-1, 145-6,150-1,190-1.

in 1645 when the Committee for Plundered Ministers set about augmenting those benefices and curacies which were held by clergymen who had suffered as a result of their opposition to Laud and his followers.¹ Amongst the first livings to be augmented were the rectory of Biggleswade in Bedfordshire and the vicarage of Bethersden in Kent.² Between 1645 and 1649, when the first piece of general legislation was passed for the augmentation of livings, fifteen benefices, two curacies and four chapels in Bedfordshire and sixty seven benefices, sixteen curacies and five chapels in the diocese of Canterbury received augmentations from the Committee for Plundered Ministers. Sums of between £40 and £50 were granted to poor ministers. This money came from the revenues of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the sequestered estates of royalists and was drawn locally.³ Although those who were granted an augmentation in the diocese of Canterbury and archdeaconry of Bedford tended to have held poor livings worth less than £40 or curacies and chapelries, by no means all poor livings, curacies and chapelries were granted an augmentation. This is because the Committee for Plundered Ministers lacked the machinery to provide itself with information about poor ministers and so it had to rely upon petitions from poor ministers and their parishioners. It was, after all, mainly concerned with the sequestration of "unsuitable" clergymen, the granting of compensation to their wives and the appointment of new ministers to fill their places. Moreover, there was no central fund for augmenting benefices, curacies and chapels, for although the first ordinance to establish such a fund was introduced into the House of Commons in 1646,

1. A.Hughes and R.O'Day, "Augmentation and Amalgamation", eds. Heal and O'Day, Princes and Paupers in the English Church 1500-1800, pp.169-70.

2. BL, Add. MS.15669, f.201, Add. MS.15671, f.75.

3. B, Bodl. MSS.322-9; BL, Add. MSS.15669-71; BRO, TW 972, f.270.

it was not made law until 1649, and so the Committee was prevented from obtaining funds from outside the diocese of Canterbury and archdeaconry of Bedford to augment livings. It is impossible to know for certain whether or not the augmentations were actually paid to the ministers concerned; for when the county committees received orders for augmentations from the Committee for Plundered Ministers they ordered those who leased the sequestered rectories or other tithes to pay the augmentation from the rent due to the committee, thus cutting down the county committees administrative work. However, if an augmentation was not paid, then the minister concerned could petition the Committee for Plundered Ministers which would repeat the order for augmentation. A number of orders had to be repeated and this suggests that the system of payment was not as efficient as it might have been.¹ John Wood, vicar of Bethersden in Kent, petitioned the Committee for redress when his augmentation of £50 was not paid by Sir Robert Honeywood, tenant of the inappropriate rectory of Bethersden. In fact, Wood took his case to the court of Chancery, adding that part of his glebeland had been detained from him by a tenant of Honeywood's. Although the original order of augmentation of 1645 was repeated in 1647, it is not known whether Sir Robert Honeywood complied.² In 1647, the Committee for Plundered Ministers ordered the union of two Kentish parishes, those of Charlton and St. James', Dover, as the former was very small and only worth £30 a year. However, this order was not carried out as these rectories continued to appear separately in the surveys of the diocese of 1650 and

1. B, Bodl. MS.322, ff.73,75,187, Bodl. MS.323, f.366, Bodl. MS.325, ff.12-14,128-9,131-2,313, Bodl. MS.326, ff.4,48,154,157,159, Bodl. MS.327, ff.5,7,56-7,266,268, Bodl. MS.328, ff.3,36,218,220,222; Hughes and O'Day, eds. Heal and O'Day, Princes and Paupers in the English Church 1500-1800, pp.171-2,176,178.

2. BL, Add. MS.15671, f.175; PRO, C5 375 95.

1663.¹

In 1649, the Trustees for Maintenance of Ministers were created by Act of Parliament with the specific task of administering augmentations. In practice, however, the Trustees did not take over from the Committee for Plundered Ministers until 1654. Unlike their predecessors, the Trustees had a centralized treasury and bureaucracy, moreover, they had better information as to the values of livings and revenues available drawn from the Commonwealth survey of 1650 and, furthermore, they were given some insight into the character of ministers by the Commissioners for the Approbation of Public Preachers. Nevertheless, like the Committee for Plundered Ministers, they relied on local petitions of poverty when assessing which livings needed augmentation.² Moreover, in spite of the centralized funding system, most grants were made from local sources. Although they built on the work of the Committee for Plundered Ministers, the Trustees made grants of augmentation to fewer livings than did their predecessors. In the diocese of Canterbury they made grants to forty one benefices, ten curacies and one chapel and in Bedfordshire only thirteen benefices and one curacy were given grants of augmentation.³ In Bedfordshire about fifty seven per cent of the grants of augmentation given by the Committee for Plundered Ministers were not renewed by the Trustees and the corresponding figure for the diocese of Canterbury was forty eight

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1. BL, Add. MS.15671, f.49, Lansdowne MS.958, ff.135-6; LPL, MS.1126, ff.20,22.
 2. Hughes and O'Day, eds. Heal and O'Day, Princes and Paupers in the English Church 1500-1800, pp.180-1.
 3. LPL, COMM VIa/2, ff.13,15,105,264, COMM VIa/3, ff.183-4,186, COMM VIa/6, ff.33,361,364, COMM VIa/7, ff.132-3,554,596-7, COMM VIa/8, pp.5-6,9-10,128,218,322-3,349, COMM VIa/9, ff.444,540-1,618, COMM VIa/10, ff.7,12,132-3,202-3,220,268, COMM VIa/11, ff.33,63-4,85-6,129, COMM VIa/12, ff.214-5, COMM VIa/13, f.205, COMM VII/1, f.44, COMM VII/2, ff.17-18,97,145,98-9; PRO SP28/290, ff.41-2,61-2,99-100,102,111.

per cent.¹ Furthermore, in the diocese of Canterbury fifty six per cent of vicarages and eighty six per cent of rectories worth less than £40 a year were not augmented.² Thirty seven per cent of perpetual curacies and only five per cent of chapels in the diocese of Canterbury and only one out of six curacies and no chapels in the archdeaconry of Bedford were given grants of augmentation. In general, the grants made were between £40 and £50, although some livings and curacies, such as the vicarage of St. Peter's, Thanet, and the curacy of Leeds which were granted £60 each, received more depending on the availability of funds. The Trustees wanted to increase the revenues of poor livings to £100 a year, but this was never achieved.³

The Trustees granted fewer augmentations to ministers than the Committee for Plundered Ministers partly because they had less funds with which to work, particularly because a number of delinquent royalists compounded or died which meant that their revenues were no longer at the disposal of the Trustees. In 1658, Mr. Hawkins, rector of Knotting in Bedfordshire, was brought before the Trustees:

"to show cause why the augmentation granted formerly should not be reduced,"

for the parish of Knotting consisted of only fourteen or fifteen families and the benefice was worth £60 a year. It is likely that the real reason why the Trustees wanted to reduce the augmentation was because the former rector of Leighton Buzzard, Sir Thomas Leigh, whose revenues were used to augment the rectory of Knotting, amongst others, had compounded. The Trustees did not wish merely to augment the

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1. B, Bodl. MS.322, ff.71,73,75,77,79,81,185,187,311,313,315, Bodl. MS.323, ff.15-17,154,157-8,365,367, Bodl. MS.325, ff.124-5,127-8; BRO, TW 972, f.270.
 2. BL, Lansdowne MS.958, ff.135-40.
 3. LPL, COMM VIa/10, f.210, COMM VII/2, f.13.

revenues of poor livings, they were concerned also with a more long-term plan - the reorganization of ecclesiastical finances. An ordinance of 1654 gave them the power to unite small, poor neighbouring parishes and to divide large populous ones so that everyone had easy access to a church. No examples of this policy can be discerned in the diocese of Canterbury or in the archdeaconry of Bedford. Moreover, no schemes for the union of parishes can be found for the diocese of Canterbury and the plan for the union of the rectories of Charlton and St. James', Dover, put forward in 1647, appears to have been dropped.¹ However, two schemes were put forward for Bedfordshire, one in 1658 for the uniting of the vicarages of Leighton Buzzard and Linslade and the other in 1655, for uniting the rectory of Farndish with that of Irechester in Northamptonshire. Neither plan reached fruition. The latter was shelved until more information about the respective livings might be gleaned, but that was the last that was heard of it.² The trouble with plans to unite parishes was that they were often impracticable for too many vested interests were involved, for the rights of patrons, impropriators and their tenants as well as those of the clergymen concerned had to be taken into account. It is difficult to determine just how much money was paid to clergymen. Many orders of augmentation were repeated more than once, which implies that payment was not always forthcoming; moreover, some payments are known to have been in arrears, for example, those of the vicarage of Monkton in Kent.³ Nevertheless, there is some evidence in the account books of the Trustees that at least some money was paid to nearly two thirds of the ministers concerned, but it was generally

1. BL, Add. MS.15671, ff.49,193; LPL, COMM V/7, ff.15-17, COMM VIa/1, ff.13-14; Hughes and O'Day, eds. Heal and O'Day, Princes and Paupers in the English Church 1500-1800, pp.182-5.

2. LPL, COMM VIa/10, f.175, COMM XIIC/2, ff.147,462.

3. PRO, SP28/290, f.99.

much less than the grants that were originally made.' Although the work of the Trustees for the Maintenance of Ministers represented a major attempt to reorganize ecclesiastical finances, it was hampered by problems of funding and vested interests both in and outside the Church and so, although the poverty of a few livings was alleviated, albeit temporarily, many ministers continued to receive meagre incomes from their benefices and curacies. The greatest achievement of the Trustees for the Maintenance of Ministers was that their work led the way for later reform - Queen Anne's Bounty and the Church Commission.²

From 1660 onwards, a much less systematic attempt at the augmentation of poor livings was made by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The swiftness with which they recovered their revenues varied from diocese to diocese, but the archbishop, dean and chapter were amongst the first members of the hierarchy to do so, for by the midsummer of 1660 they were collecting rents on their newly leased property. On 9th August 1660, Charles II sent a letter to the episcopate, ordering it to augment the value of poor vicarages and curacies when these formed part of a lease. The response to this letter was good. In practice, the ecclesiastical landlords made a concession, usually a reduction in an entry fine, and in return the tenants would augment the incomes of the poor clergy.³ A total of forty four per cent of curacies, and over twenty per cent of vicarages in the diocese of Canterbury were augmented in this way. About two thirds of these augmentations were made by the archbishop, dean and chapter of Canterbury. The vicarages concerned tended to have been worth £40 or less a year with the

1. PRO, SP28/290, ff.41-2,61-2,99-100,102,111.

2. Hughes and O'Day, eds. Heal and O'Day, Princes and Paupers in the English Church 1500-1800, p.189.

3. I.M.Green, The Re-Establishment of the Church in England 1660-1663 (Oxford, 1978), pp.100,106,109.

exception of the vicarages of Reculver, Sutton Valence and Marden which were worth £50, £50 and £60 a year respectively; moreover, the amounts granted were rather less than those allowed by the Trustees for they tended to have been between £20 and £30, with the exception of the vicarages of Littlebourne and Tilmanstone which were paid £50 and £40 respectively.¹ Much depended upon the generosity of the individual lessees of ecclesiastical revenues and the archbishop, dean and chapter of Canterbury. This would explain why three curates, those of Wye, Fairfield and Hawkhurst and seven vicarages worth less than £40 *per annum*, those of St. Paul's, Canterbury, Kennington, Lidden, Postling, River, Sheldwich and Willesborough, all belonging to the archbishop or the dean and chapter of Canterbury, did not receive any augmentations.² In all, the incomes of less than a third of all vicarages which were valued at £40 or less in 1663 and those of about forty per cent of curacies in the diocese of Canterbury were augmented in the early 1660's. Contemporary critics might have suggested that the hierarchy could have relieved the poverty of the poor ministers by granting them a proportion of the massive fines which it had obtained through new leases of property, but the hierarchy did not envisage widescale aid to poor clergymen.³

Although the full effects of the above attempts to augment the incomes of poor clerics cannot be determined, what is known is that in 1663, just over a third of vicarages and a seventh of rectories were worth less than £40 a year; moreover, at least a half of the perpetual curacies were worth less than £30 a year.⁴ This, in itself, clearly

1. LPL, MS.1126, ff.2,4,7-12,14,17-18,20-1,24,35,38,40-3,53; Hasted, vol.IV,p.364, vol.IX, pp.408,563.

2. LPL, MS.1126, ff.4,22,25,29,34,37,53,131.

3. Green,The Re-Establishment of the Church of England 1660-1663,p.110.

4. LPL, MS.1126.

reveals the shortcomings of the various attempts at augmentation. Many members of the Restoration clergy would have found it necessary to earn extra income through farming or teaching. Four ministers, Jeremy Dobson M.A., perpetual curate of Wye, Robert Cropley M.A., curate of Tenterden, and John Cooper and Nicholas Monyman, the vicar and curate of Cranbrook respectively, were licensed to teach between 1660 and 1662.¹ Moreover, by 1663 a third of all benefices in the diocese of Canterbury were held in plurality, much more than in 1637.² This sudden increase in the number of benefices held in plurality at the Restoration might be explained at least partly by the shortage of suitable ministers to replace those who were ejected in the early 1660's. Only thirteen per cent of the pluralists held two poor benefices worth less than £40 a year. William Russell held the vicarages of Ewell and Liddon, worth £20 and £10 respectively, William Lovelace's benefices of St. Mary Bredin and St. Mary Magdalen, Canterbury, were both worth £20. William Dunbar's benefices of Doddington and Newnham were worth £30 and £15 respectively, John Stocker's benefices of St. Mary Northgate and St. Alphege, Canterbury, were worth £26 and £30 respectively and Thomas Peerce's benefices of Knowlton and Buckland were worth £30 and £32 respectively.³ Moreover, forty eight per cent of pluralists in 1663 held at least one benefice worth less than £40 a year. However, this means that over a half of the pluralists held two benefices of at least reasonable value, and this was a greater proportion than in 1637. John Bargrave and John Reading, both Prebendaries of Canterbury held benefices which were worth a total of £200 and £370 respectively.⁴

1. A.J. Willis, Canterbury Licences 1660-1714 (London, 1975), p.1.

2. LPL, MS.1126.

3. LPL, MS.1126, ff.1-3,20-22,50-2.

4. LPL, MS.1126, ff.2,20,38.

Contemporaries were well aware of the problems of clerical finance and pluralism and, although attempts had been made to find solutions, these problems remained as serious in 1663 as they had been in the 1630's.

THE PROBLEM OF TITHES

For most beneficed clergy their tithes represented the most important source of income; and so it is important to analyse the problems which ministers encountered with the collection of their tithes. Most of our evidence for the period before 1640 will be drawn from the Deposition Books of the ecclesiastical courts of the diocese of Canterbury. Only a few tithe cases are extant for Bedfordshire during this period, which precludes a full comparison of the tithe issue in the two areas of our study. However, the problem of tithe collection is well documented for both areas in the Exchequer Court records between 1640 and 1660. As with all studies of court material our attention is drawn to those who did not fulfil their obligations and so this study is concerned with the extent and nature of the problem of collection of tithes. The problem of tithes between 1625 and 1660 cannot be treated as one entity for the nature of the problem changed in the early 1640's and so our study will be divided into two periods, those of 1625-1642 and 1642-1660.

Before embarking upon an analysis of the tithe problem it is important to define what clerical tithes actually were. Tithes were divided into three main categories, predial, mixed and personal. Predial tithes were the tenth part of the fruits of the earth such as grain, hay, fruit and vegetables; mixed tithes were the tenth part of the increase of animals, together with milk, cheese, honey, eggs and wool. Personal tithes were levied on the profits of labour and industry, but these tithes had always been difficult to assess and collect and the statute of 1550, for payment of tithes, had rendered them almost impossible to collect, since tradesmen were no longer compelled to give details of

their profits on oath.¹ In the city of Canterbury, for example, the payment of personal tithes had been commuted to a payment of 2s. 6d. in the £ on the rents of lands and houses.² In other places they had been replaced by fixed sums paid at Easter, for example, in the town of Luton in Bedfordshire every man, wife, child, journeyman and apprentice that communicated at Easter paid 2d. each to the minister, whereas every hired male servant was expected to pay 6d. and every female servant, 4d..³ Tithes were further divided into two categories, the great tithes and the small tithes. The former usually consisted of the tenth part of grain and the latter were the tenth part of the remainder of predial tithes, together with mixed and personal tithes. Clerical rectors received both great and small tithes. In the case of impropriated benefices the impropiator received the great tithes and the vicar the small tithes. There were, of course, some exceptions to this general rule; for example, in at least seven parishes in the diocese of Canterbury, those of Hollingbourne, Ospringe, Reculver, Minster, Thurnham and St. Clement's, Sandwich, and three Bedfordshire parishes, those of Henlow, Roxton and Stotfold, the vicar had been granted the right to receive the great tithes in at least some parts of the parish.⁴ Tithes were paid either in kind or by a composition rate in the form of a money payment *in lieu* of tithes which was laid down by ancient custom in individual parishes. Most tithes were paid in kind during this period. The great tithes were virtually always paid in kind. In some parts of Kent, particularly the Weald and Romney Marsh, where the pasturing of livestock was the major farming activity, small tithes were commuted to

1. 2 and 3 Edward VI c.13.

2. Little, *EHR*, vol.60(1945), p.71.

3. LAO, TER BUNDLE 1635.

4. CALC, D/TC38, D/TH33, D/TM, D/TO9, D/TR3, D/TS4, D/TT10; LAO, TER BUNDLE 1625, TER BUNDLE 1634, TER 16/47.

fixed customary payments.

Tithes, like any form of taxation, were unpopular. At least up to the early 1640's most people accepted their obligation to pay tithes to a minister or impropriator. Disputes tended to arise as to how much was due and how it was to have been paid. Some members of the laity resented the fact that scandalous, neglectful clergy should have had a tenth share of the fruits of their labours. In 1604, a Bill was passed through the House of Commons which gave people permission to withhold their tithes from those ministers who could not produce testimonials from a university which attested they were of upstanding life and had ability to preach, but this Bill was rejected by the House of Lords.¹ Thomas Archer, rector of Houghton Conquest in Bedfordshire, composed a ditty on this subject:

"God loveth a cheerful giver
Ill tithers, ill thrivers
Pay God's part first and not of the worst
Pay justly thy tithes whosoever thou be
That God may in blessing send foison² to thee
Thou vicar be bad and parson as evil
Go not for thy tithing thyself to the devil
Tithe duly and truly with harty goodwill
That God and his blessing may dwell with thee still
Thou person neglecteth his duty for this
Thank ye the lord God and give every man his."³

Apologists for the payment of tithes tended to emphasise that they were due *iure divino*. Archbishop Laud, for example, interpreted Christ's statement that:

"those who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel,"
to mean that ministers should be paid tithes and this view was shared by moderate ministers, for example, Robert Abbot, vicar of Cranbrook in Kent. Opponents of the system of tithes, however, such as the religious

1. O'Day, *Clergy*, p.203; Hill, *Economic*, p.160.

2. abundance.

3. BRO, P/11/28/1.

radicals in Abbot's parish, took Christ's statement to have meant that a minister should be supported by the voluntary contributions of his flock as was Christ himself and his apostles. John Pocklington, rector of Yelden in Bedfordshire, Prebend of Lincoln and Canon of Windsor and a keen supporter of Archbishop Laud, considered that the principle of voluntary maintenance for ministers was the:

"dull device of a foggy brain,"

intended to deprive God of his dues and to subvert the Church, for then the clergy would have been dependent upon the goodwill and whims of their respective congregations. Opposition to the payment of tithes of an ideological nature was on a relatively small scale before 1640 and was based upon the premise that tithes were a popish remnant founded upon the Judaic law which Christ had come to abolish. Moreover, that lay impropiators had been entitled to receive tithes since the reformation, added fuel to their argument that tithes were not due by the Law of God.¹

Court cases involving tithes were dealt with mainly by the ecclesiastical courts, but the common lawyers also had jurisdiction over tithes. The latter were unpopular amongst many ministers, for, as Dr. Slater, rector of Newchurch in Kent, observed, they used:

"the most illaudable and corrupt practices and customs that can be and against the law or meaning of it quite to wrong the Church."²

No tithe cases in the common law courts for the diocese of Canterbury and archdeaconry of Bedford are extant. Between 1625 and 1642 several hundred tithe cases were brought before the church courts in the diocese

1. Laud, Works, vol.VI, p.159; Abbot, A Trial of Our Church-Forsakers, pp.196-7; Pocklington, Altare Christianum, p.154.

2. PRO, SP16/308/46, ff.91,95.

of Canterbury and five cases reached the Exchequer court.' These latter cases concerned government revenue, for in each case the minister concerned claimed to be "debtor and accomptant" to the King for tenths. Owing to the amounts of tithes which were owed him he claimed that he could not pay his taxes. It has already been established by Miss Potter that the extent of the tithes controversy during Laud's ascendancy has been exaggerated, a view which contradicts those held by Drs. Hill and Clark, and that, although there was an increase in the number of tithe cases dealt with in the ecclesiastical courts during this period, this increase was matched by a proportionate increase in other types of case.² It is true say that any measurement of the tithe problem by counting the number of tithe cases is, as Dr. O'Day has pointed out, a futile task for it is likely that many tithe controversies did not reach the courts, but were resolved, for good or bad, within the parish situation.³ A number of ministers might have been reluctant to take their tithe problems to court as this was a costly business; moreover, in some cases the amounts of unpaid tithes might have been insignificant and furthermore, some ministers might have considered a resort to litigation demeaning and guaranteed to raise the ire of their parishioners. Some of these views were expressed by Dr. John Partenton, rector of Maulden in Bedfordshire, who, in the end, had been forced to go to the Exchequer court for redress. He complained that a group of seven

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1. CALC, Z1-9, Z1-10, Z1-11, Z1-12, Z1-13, Z1-16, Z1-17, Z1-18, Z1-19, Z1-20, Z1-21, Z2-1, Z2-2, Z2-3, Z2-4, Y5-23, Y6-1, Y6-2, Y6-3, Y6-5, Y6-6, Y6-7, Y6-8, Y6-9, Y6-10, Y6-11, Y6-12, Y6-13; PRO, E112 189 85(Hil.1629), E112 190 73(Hil.1636), E112 190 139(Easter 1634), E112 190 149(Mich.1634), E134 6Car.I Mich.25, E134 7Car.I Mich.36, E134 7 and 8Car.I Hil.2, E134 11Car.I Mich.28, E134 13 Car.I Mich.51.
 2. In fact there was a greater increase in the proportion of tithe cases involving lay impropiators than of cases involving clergymen. J.M.Potter, "The Ecclesiastical Courts in the Diocese of Canterbury 1603-65", pp.28-30; Hill, Economic, p.102; Clark, p.369.
 3. O'Day, Clergy, p.192.

troublesome parishioners had intended:

"to put your orator to a great and unnecessary charge of multiplicity of suits which your orator is loathe to undergo, being a churchman and desiring to live in peace with his neighbours and is not willing to sue at all for his said tithes, if by fair and peaceful means he might obtain the same to be paid to him."

Other ministers might have avoided litigation because they could not find witnesses to back up their case. Financial necessity drove Peter Knight, vicar of New Romney, to seek redress in the Exchequer court, but he complained bitterly that potential witnesses were:

"very unwilling at the said trial to deliver their consciences freely for fear of displeasing the owners of the said marshland ...who are many and powerful within the said county and landlords to such witnesses."²

Instead of counting tithe cases, an analysis of the reasons why tithes were not paid and the effects that this might have had on individual ministers' incomes would be more illuminating in our investigation of the tithe problem. Therefore, the tithe cases in the Deposition Books for the ecclesiastical courts of the diocese of Canterbury, which yield more information than the Instance Act Books, surviving deposition papers for the archdeaconry of Bedford and the few cases amongst the Bills and Answers of the Exchequer court shall be used in our study. *In toto* our sample consists of forty eight court cases, involving thirty four ministers and sixty seven members of the laity in the diocese of Canterbury, which were heard between 1625 and 1642 and eight cases, involving eight ministers and fourteen laymen in the archdeaconry of Bedford for the same period. Five of the above cases from Kent and one from Bedford were heard in the Exchequer court, the rest were heard in the ecclesiastical courts. The discrepancy between

1. PRO, E112 158 38 (Mich.1634).

2. PRO, E134 13 Car.I Mich.36.

the total numbers of tithe cases begun in the church courts and the comparatively small number in the Deposition Books can be explained by the fact that a large number of cases petered out suggesting that the commencement of legal action had led to an agreement on a local level.¹ The cases in the ecclesiastical courts tended to have involved between one or two people, and in those cases brought before the court by the few ministers who were involved in more than one tithe dispute, only as many as three or four people were involved. Some of the cases brought before the Exchequer, on the other hand, included a number of defendants - John Copley, rector of Pluckley in Kent, for example, took Sir Edward and Sir Anthony Dering and six of their tenants to court in 1634; Thomas Warren, rector of St. Peter's, Sandwich, also took eight people to court in 1629, and John Partenton took legal proceedings against seven of his parishioners of Maulden in Bedfordshire in 1634.² Our evidence does not suggest large scale opposition to the payment of tithes. Obviously, the seriousness of the tithe cases depends upon the amounts of tithe withheld and this tended to vary from case to case and will be discussed hereafter. Suffice it to say that in only ten per cent of the cases for the diocese of Canterbury and two out of eight cases for Bedfordshire the defendants paid nothing at all.³

Before embarking upon an analysis of the nature of tithe cases between 1625 and 1642, it should be pointed out that the issues involved in four out of the forty eight tithe cases for the diocese of Canterbury

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1. Potter, "The Ecclesiastical Courts in the Diocese of Canterbury 1603-65", p.30.
 2. PRO, E112 158 38 (Mich.1634), E112 189 69 (Mich.1629), E112 190 139 (Easter 1634).
 3. PRO, E112 158 38 (Mich.1634), E112 190 139 (Easter.1634), E112 190 149 (Mich.1634), E134 11Car.I Mich.28; CALC, PRC 39/39, ff.85,90, PRC 39/44, f.132.

and two out of eight for Bedfordshire cannot be discerned.¹ Most of the cases in our study involve the collection of small tithes; moreover, almost all cases involved disputes over the *modus decimandi*, that is the payment of money *in lieu* of tithes. Forty seven per cent of cases for the diocese of Canterbury and two cases for Bedfordshire concerned disputes about how much the *modi* should have been. This included disagreements over the nature of the *modus* itself, and cases where the defendants had concealed the amounts of goods that they possessed in order to cheat their respective ministers out of their full dues.² A further twenty per cent of cases for the diocese of Canterbury and one case for the archdeaconry of Bedford involved disputes about whether tithes should have been paid in kind or commuted.³ The *modus* itself was not a popular form of tithing amongst ministers in all parts of the country, for, unlike the payment of tithes in kind its value depreciated as prices rose.⁴ Nevertheless, there is no evidence amongst our tithe cases to suggest that ministers were trying to raise the value of their respective *modi*. The only examples of clerical enhancement of the *modi* can be found amongst the petitions from Kent to Parliament in 1640. A group of parishioners from Minster in Thanet complained that their minister, Dr. Meric Casaubon, had exacted too much money *in lieu* of tithes from them:

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1. CALC, PRC 39/38, f.179, PRC 39/39, ff.202,258, X11-16, f.77; BRO, ABCP 16-17, 32.
 2. CALC, PRC 39/37, ff.118,215-16, PRC 39/39, ff.20-1,164-5,190-1, PRC 39/40, f.147, PRC 39/41, ff.39,67,123,273-4, PRC 39/42, f.11, 168, PRC 39/43, ff.179-80, PRC 39/44, f.224, PRC 39/46, f.102, X11-16, f.23; BRO, ABCP, 35, f.2; PRO, E112 158 38 (Mich.1634), E134 6Car.I Mich.25, E134 11Car.I Mich.28.
 3. CALC, PRC 39/38, f.157, PRC 39/39, ff.85,138, PRC 39/42, ff.14-42, PRC 39/43, f.56, PRC 39/45, ff.17-21, PRC 39/46, f.22; BRO, ABCP 30, ff.1-2.
 4. Barratt, p.253; Beddows, "The Church in Lincolnshire 1593-1640", p.215; Gransby, "Tithe Disputes in the Diocese of York 1540-1639", p.121.

"And whereas the marsh and pasture lands in the said parish of Minster never, heretofore, paid above 12d. per acre for tithes, yet the said Doctor, since his coming, has exacted 18d. per acre and his said curate reports that he will have 2s. 6d. per acre."

A similar tale is told by groups of parishioners from his other parish of Monkton. Casaubon explained his exaction of 18d. per acre for pasturelands thus:

"In Minster, above forty years ago, they compounded with Dr. Clark (my predecessor) for 1s., and in Monkton, above thirty years ago for 14d. by the acre, when lands were let (as I conceive) for little more than half of what they are now in both places."

Moreover, Robert Carter, rector of Stourmouth, was said to have enhanced the value of his tithes in order to:

"recover his losses sustained by gaming."

Furthermore, parishioners of Maidstone claimed that they had been so afraid that their curate, Robert Barrell, who farmed the vicarage tithes of that town, would have put them to great cost by taking them to court that they paid the enhanced sums for tithes that he had demanded.¹

An important problem with the commutation of tithes in our sample of cases was that groups of powerful parishioners had attempted to reduce the value of the *modi*. This happened on a serious scale in the parishes of Romney Marsh in Kent, where there was little arable land and so nearly all the tithes, on wool, lambs, calves and pasturage, had been commuted to money payments. Amongst our cases, those of Barnabus Pownoll, vicar of Westhithe in 1625, and Peter Knight, vicar of New Romney in 1636, are concerned with this problem.² A group of powerful landowners in Romney Marsh had got together to devise a scheme whereby the paltry sum of 2d. per acre was to have been paid for marshland

1. Larking, pp.105,107,109-10,196-7,204.

2. PRO, E112 190 173 (Hil.1636); CALC, X11-16, f.23, PRC 39/40, ff.143,147.

even though as much as 12d. or 14d. per acre had been paid for marshland in this area, depending upon the customs of individual parishes.' Fearing that they would not obtain satisfaction through the usual legal channels, the ministers of Romney Marsh petitioned the King about their plight, naming the Earl of Winchelsea, Sir Edward Hales, Perceval Brett, Richard Ginder and John Burrow amongst the culprits.

They maintained that:

"Sir Edward Hales has been the chief man to devise and set on foot this pretended custom of 2d. the acre and the better to colour his pretence for future times has caused many poor ministers beneficed in the Marsh (who would not subsist, their tithes being withheld) to allow of the said custom under their hands and seals; and upon that consideration have given them more; or, if they should not set their hands to this, so contrary to their mind and knowledge, would allow them nothing at all."

Moreover, they took pains to draw the King's attention to the irony that, as an impropiator, Hales:

"receives tithes in several places in Kent [and] challenges them in kind in the strictest manner and way that may be and for the tithe wool which he opposes to the petitioners he has taken very large allowances in those parishes and has taken 10s., 12s. and 20s. an acre for tithe of hops and vexed poor men with suits for 2d., 3d., 4d., 5d. and 6d. a piece, and in every parish where he is not himself parson he pretends custom."²

Dr. Slater, rector of Newchurch explained the practical problems which resulted from the enforcement of this pretended custom:

"We may well note here the present and daily increasing wrong to the Church of such customs, 2d. not being so much now as a farthing scarce half a farthing in former times and likely by improvement of things to higher prices not to be half the value it is now. So if new customs be daily raised, prices of things enhanced and the old rates failing so much the Church revenue shall by this means be though nothing, as not a quarter of a farthing an acre worth now or then....not the tenth or almost the twentieth part of the true tithe which, if it were truly paid, is no more then due by all the best laws both divine and human."³

1. PRO, E112 190 173(H11.1636).

2. PRO, SP16/312/60.

3. PRO, SP16/308/46, f.94.

Nine cases from the diocese of Canterbury and one from Bedfordshire were concerned with the controversy about whether tithes were due in kind or in the form of a money payment. In each case the ministers concerned demanded tithes in kind. In four of the Kentish cases the minister appears to have been attempting to change the customs of the parish; for example, Dr. Allen, rector of Stowting, had demanded tithe wood in kind instead of according to the customary payment of 8d. in the noble.¹ Moreover, Robert Barrell, parson of Boughton Malherbe, was said to have:

"violated the custom of that parish touching the manner of paying for tithe wood."

by demanding its payment in kind in 1626 instead of according to the customary rate of the parish.² Dr. Slater amongst other clergymen, preferred the payment of tithes in kind arguing that:

"if tithes be not duly paid in kind according to the meaning and words of the law it had need every ten or twenty years to have new rate and survey of them, or to continue to grow less and are diminished."³

In the other five Kentish cases and the one for Bedfordshire where this controversy is involved it is not clear who was the violator of the customs of the parish, although in the case of Allen *versus* Johnson of Elham in 1634 it appears to have been the defendant, for a number of witnesses claimed that the tithe wood had always been paid in kind and had never been commuted.⁴

Five cases for the diocese of Canterbury and one for the archdeaconry of Bedford involved so-called "tithe-free land".⁵ This consisted of old monastic land, forest land occupied by the Crown and

1. CALC, PRC 39/42, ff.141-2, PRC 39/43, f.56.

2. CALC, X11-16, ff.177-8.

3. PRC, SP16/308/46, f.94.

4. CALC, PRC 39/46, ff.22,28.

5. CALC, PRC 39/37, ff.158-60, PRC 39/48, f.166; PRO, E134 6Car.I Mich.25.

barren land. Moreover, wasteland that had been improved upon was tithe-free for seven years.¹ Thomas Bishop, rector of Cheriton in Kent, took three of his parishioners to court in 1626 over this issue and in each case witnesses claimed that the land in question was old monastic land and consequently tithe-free.² Sir Edward Dering and Sir Anthony Dering claimed that their wood, Saracen's Wood, lay in the Weald of Kent, where woodland was tithe-free and so Mr. Copley, rector of Pluckley, was not entitled to tithes therefrom.³

A number of subterfuges were adopted by men who wished to avoid paying tithes. The first was to claim that their land was in another parish and so not titheable in the parish where tithes were claimed. Witnesses supported their minister, Robert Austen, who claimed that Stephen Mead's lands were in the parish of Harbledown and therefore titheable. It is surprising that Mead had hoped to get away with his claims for his mendacity was easily proved when the parish cesse books were consulted which gave details of lands in the parish which were liable for taxation for the repair of the parish church and the support of the poor.⁴ Moreover, Elias Arnold's claim that a piece of land in his occupation called Stockfish was not in the parish of Swalecliffe and, therefore, that the rector there, Thomas Cleybrook, was not entitled to tithes on it, was proved false by a previous occupant of the land, one Robert Saint, as well as by John Cox, the son of the previous rector of Swalecliffe.⁵ A trick to deprive a minister of his tithes on lambs and wool was to move sheep to another parish when the lambing and shearing season came round. Thomas Harmon, vicar of Hedcorn, and Daniel

1. E.Evans, The Contentious Tithe (London, 1976), p.17.

2. CALC, PRC 39/37, ff.157-60.

3. PRO, E134 6Car.I Mich.25.

4. CALC, PRC 39/46, f.194.

5. CALC, PRC 39/42, f.159.

Horsmonden, vicar of Goudhurst, were victims of this subterfuge in 1634 and 1631 respectively.¹ It was a legal requirement that tithes in kind were to be set out in the presence of the minister or his tithe collector to make sure that the former received the full tenth part, however, the farmer was not required to give notice that he was setting out his tithes. This anomaly in the law led to all kinds of problems. It was sometimes used by farmers to mask the fact that they had not set out a true tenth of their yield. They could set out a false tithe, take away the rest of their produce, so that nothing could be proved and, if challenged, they could claim that the tithe collectors should have been there on time to collect the tithes when they were first set out. Moreover, if the tithes were left in their respective fields for days they ran the risk of being stolen, weather damaged or eaten by animals and this would further prevent their initial dishonesty from being detected. This kind of trick was played on Francis Fotherby, vicar of St. Clement's, Sandwich, by one Mr. File, for the tithe beans that the latter left out were partly stolen and partly "spoiled with hogs".² Thomas Harmon's tithes of fruit were left out for hogs to eat them by William and John Fullager of the parish of Hedcorn in Kent.³

In two cases for the diocese of Canterbury and one for Bedfordshire the incumbents of the benefices took their respective impropiators to court, claiming that the latter had deprived them of their right to a share in the great tithes. Dr. Clark, vicar of Minster in Thanet, Francis Fotherby, vicar of Linsted, and Samuel Hopkins, vicar of Pulloxhill in Bedfordshire, were all involved in this kind of case

1. PRO, E112 189 85 (Hil.1629), E112 190 149 (Mich.1634), E134 7Car.I Mich.36, E134 7 and 8Car.I Hil.2, E134 11Car.I Mich.28.

2. CALC, PRC 39/46, ff.1-2,13.

3. PRO, E112 190 149 (Mich.1634).

and, according to the testimony of witnesses, their claims were justified.¹

Some historians have claimed that there were serious attempts to increase the value of the *modi* in the 1630's, in order to obtain a true tenth of the wealth produced by the laity and that these attempts were backed by the ecclesiastical hierarchy.² The number of these attempts should not be exaggerated, for in only three instances reported in the petitions to parliament from Kent in 1640 is there evidence that ministers had attempted to enhance the value of the customary *modi* and only twelve per cent of the Kentish ministers in our study, those involved in sixteen per cent of our tithe cases, and one Bedfordshire minister had attempted either to replace the *modi* with payment of tithe in kind or had sought to obtain tithes from lands which were tithe-free.³ Moreover, it has also been suggested that those ministers who actively supported Archbishop Laud's policy of ceremonial innovation, the Laudian clergy, have been said to have been most aggressive in the defence of their rights to tithes.⁴ This might appear to have been the case if one relies entirely upon evidence in the petitions of 1640, where the "offending" ministers, Robert Barrell, curate of Maidstone, Robert Carter, rector of Stourmouth, and Meric Casaubon were said to have taken Laud's policy of ceremonial innovation further than was required by the letter of the law.⁵ However, the hypothesis cannot be adhered to when one looks at the evidence in the tithe cases; for only one out of the four Kentish ministers who had attempted to enhance the value of their

1. CALC, PRC 39/42, f.195, PRC 39/46, ff.113-14,128-9; BRO, ABCP 21.

2. Hill, *Economic*, pp.119-20,327; Clark, p.369.

3. CALC, PRC 39/37, ff.157-8,160, PRC 39/42, ff.141-2, X11-16, ff.177-8; BRO, J1224; Larking, pp.105,107,109-10,196-7,204.

4. Clark, p.369.

5. Larking, pp.104-10,196-8,202-4.

tithes, Robert Barrell, as rector of Boughton Malherbe, as well as John Pocklington of Yelden in Bedfordshire, could be termed Laudian. Moreover, only six per cent of the Kentish ministers in our study, who were involved in ten per cent of the tithe cases, were Laudian.¹ Puritan ministers were as likely to have defended their rights to tithes in the courts as were their Laudian colleagues.² Thomas Warren, rector of St. Peter's, Sandwich, provides us with a case in point. In 1629, he took eight of his parishioners to court for refusing to pay their tithes to him and for attempting to pay him a form of voluntary maintenance.³ The Puritan minister, Samuel Keame, also resorted to tithe litigation in 1636.⁴

There is no evidence in our sample of cases to suggest that opposition to the payment of tithes was of an ideological nature. The case from St. Peter's, Sandwich, might have been an exception. Moreover, there is no evidence to suggest a correlation between tithe disputes and disharmony in matters of worship, except, perhaps, in St. Peter's, Sandwich. It is only in this case that there is evidence that a group of parishioners got together to refuse to pay tithes and attempted to dissuade others from paying tithes also. However, nothing else is known of these defendants and their beliefs. An analysis of church court material for the diocese of Canterbury reveals that none of the defendants in the tithe cases in our sample had ever been presented

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1. Robert Barrell, Daniel Horsmonden, John Pocklington. CALC, PRC 39/42, f.11, PRC 39/48, f.12, X11-16, f.77; BRO, J 1224; PRO, E112 189 85 (Hil.1629), E134 7Car.I Mich.36, E134 7 and 8Car.I Hil.2; Walker Revised, p.219.
 2. O'Day, Clergy, p.95.
 3. Warren was presented in 1628 for not making the sign of the cross in baptism, for refusing to wear his surplice and for administering the communion to those who did not kneel. CALC, X5-7, pt.II, f.151; PRO, E112 189 69 (Mich.1629).
 4. Samuel Keame had been presented in 1634 for participating in conventicles. CALC, PRC 39/52, f.29; LPL, VG4/22, f.202.

for non-conformity in matters of religion or for taking part in illegal conventicles, although evidence of conventicles in about nineteen per cent of the parishes in our study has been found, including St. Peter's, Sandwich.¹ Only twelve per cent of the defendants in our sample were presented in the church courts on other occasions for other kinds of offence. One File of St. Clement's, Sandwich, was presented in 1624, ten years before his involvement in a tithe case, for not paying his contribution to the cesse or church rate on his deceased brother's lands; moreover, William, John and Christopher Fullager of Hedcorn were presented in 1628 for not paying their contributions to the church rate six years before they had been cited in court for tithes; and, furthermore, in 1629, Ralph Grove was presented for not paying his contribution for the repair of the church bell of St. Peter's, Canterbury, five years before he was taken to court with his brother for tithes.² John Aymes, perpetual curate of Loose, who had the right to collect small tithes in his parish, took his churchwarden, Mr. Crisp, to court in 1630 for not paying all his tithes. Aymes and Crisp were involved in feud with each other, for in 1627 Aymes presented Crisp for entertaining company in his house on the Sabbath and in that year Crisp presented Aymes for brawling in church. In the following year, Crisp presented Aymes again for brawling in church, this time with the parish clerk, and for not catechising the young people of the parish; moreover, in 1629, Crisp took Aymes to court on a charge of defamation. In 1630, Aymes retaliated by taking Crisp to court for tithes, but, unfortunately, the details of this case are unknown.³ There appears to have been an

1. Acheson, pp.12-13.

2. CALC, X5-7,pt.II, f.127, X6-7, ff.263,272, X6-8, ff.33-5,70, X6-10, f.115, X6-11, f.140, PRC 39/39, f.164, PRC 39/46, ff.1-2; PRO, E112 190 149(Mich.1634), E134 11Car.I Mich.28.

3. CALC, Z4-4, ff.22,214, Z4-5, ff.11,25,94, PRC 39/39, ff.80,202.

element of retaliation on the part of Barnabus Pownoll in his case against Mr. Owen of Charlton in 1633 for not paying enough tithes on the rent of his property in that parish, for, four years earlier Owen had taken Pownoll to court on a charge of defamation of character, claiming that the latter had accused him of not paying enough tithes and:

"in hot and angry manner and with an intention.... to defame the said plaintiff said and affirmed that the said plaintiff had lived incontinently and that he was a whoremaster and that he would prove him a whoremaster."

In conclusion, it has been established that the extent of the tithe problem between 1625 and 1640 should not be exaggerated, that few clergymen are known to have attempted to increase the value of their tithes in order that their incomes might have kept up with rising prices and that most people accepted that tithes had to be paid in one form or another. Most of those who neglected to pay all or some part of their tithes probably did so for economic rather than ideological reasons, or, at least, that is what can be discerned.² As in the dioceses of Durham, Lincoln and York it was the more affluent, better educated clergy who were willing to, and could afford to, assert their rights to tithes in the courts.³ An important question remains to be answered - were substantial amounts of tithes withheld from the clergy? A full set of statistics cannot be compiled from the available evidence, but the general impression is that, as in the case of the diocese of York, significantly large sums were at stake for the resort to litigation to have been for more than points of principle, although one court case

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1. CALC, PRC 39/39, f.197, PRC 39/42, ff.33-4,37-8.
 2. Gransby, "Tithe Disputes in the Diocese of York 1540-1639", p.163.
 3. Freeman, p.161; Gransby, "Tithe Disputes in the Diocese of York 1540-1639", pp.132,227; Beddows, "The Church in Lincolnshire 1593-1640", p.215.

might have acted as a deterrent for other would-be offenders.' However, it is only in the small number of cases which reached the Exchequer Court where substantial amounts of tithes were involved, for in each case the ministers pleaded that they could not fulfil their financial obligations to the Crown until their tithes had been paid in full.

During the Civil War and Interregnum tithes became a controversial issue, and disputes were fought with an intensity of feeling and animosity and on a scale hitherto unprecedented. Tithes had always been unpopular but, as Margaret James has pointed out:

"What the revolution did in this as in so many other spheres was to intensify an already latent controversy and by combining it with other aspects of revolutionary activity to give it a peculiarly sharp edge."²

Moreover, the Puritan vicar of Minster in Thanet, Richard Culmer, complained bitterly in his tract entitled Lawless Tithe Robbers Discovered:

"that the evil manners, the unjust, fraudulent, oppressive practices of tithe payers are now more than ever audacious and the violence of their oppressive carriage grown to that height and excess that can no longer be endured."³

During the period from 1642 until 1659, when the work of the church courts was interrupted, a total of one hundred and four clerical tithe cases, involving five hundred and sixty three members of the laity and sixty six ministers reached the Exchequer Court from the diocese of Canterbury. In contrast, only fourteen cases involving thirty four members of the laity and twelve ministers reached this court from the archdeaconry of Bedford. By the parliamentary ordinance of 1644, tithe disputes were to have been dealt with within the parishes concerned by

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1. Gransby, "Tithe Disputes in the Diocese of York 1540-1639", p.157.
 2. M.James, "The Political Importance of the Tithes Controversy in the English Revolution 1640-60", History, vol.26 (June, 1941), p.4.
 3. Culmer, Lawless, p.1.

two Justices of the Peace and conviction would have resulted in the confiscation of goods or even imprisonment. Appeals could be made to the Court of Chancery. Only two cases are extant amongst the Quarter Sessions papers for the diocese of Canterbury, involving one minister and two defendants and no cases are extant for Bedfordshire.¹ However, the Kentish tract No Age Like Unto This Age, which is believed to have been written by the separatist John Turner, records a further twenty cases which were dealt with by the Justices of the Peace and which resulted in the defendants losing some of their goods or being imprisoned.² Only one case, that of *Kidner versus Prudden* from Streatley in Bedfordshire in 1647, can be found in the Court of Chancery.³ There may have been many instances where the mere threat of court action might have compelled the offending party to pay his tithes or to come to some form of amicable agreement with his minister. Perhaps some Justices of the Peace dealt with disputes in an informal manner. However, it is possible that some J.P.'s refused to help their ministers to regain their tithes, as Richard Culmer reported, they might:

"judge the settled ministers of the Church of England to be no ministers or antichristian ones, or they are against tithes and settled maintenance of ministers as antichristian and unlawful."⁴

The cases which reached the Exchequer Court were concerned with government revenue, for each minister claimed that he was a "debtor" to the Keeper of the Liberties of England or to the Protector for tenths. In fact, those who took their cases to this court had no means of redress elsewhere, for these cases could not have been dealt with at common law because the ministers in question had no evidence or proof concerning

1. KAO, Q/SB3/4 (1652), Q/SB6/25 (1655).

2. Acheson, pp.123-4,142.

3. PRO, C3 450 32 (1647).

4. Culmer, Lawless, p.8.

amounts due, for the defendants concealed the value of their goods and the extent of their lands and the clergy had no legal rights of investigation. Only the Exchequer could try such cases, but it was a long and expensive process. Just how many ministers endured disobedience and, for the sake of peace and quiet, had to be contented with anything that their parishioners were willing to give them, is unknown.

At first sight, the tithe problem appears to have been spread out over a wide area in the diocese of Canterbury, for almost a third of the parishes in that diocese were involved. However, closer examination reveals that there was a concentration of cases in the south-west of the diocese, for approximately fifty per cent of the cases came from the deaneries of Charing and Lympne in the Weald and Romney Marsh and a number of cases came from the marshland area of Thanet. Between 1625 and 1642, there tended to have been more cases in these pasture farming areas, where most tithes had been commuted, than in other areas. However, in contrast to the period before 1642, in the later 1640's and 1650's a large number of cases involved the great tithes. In Bedfordshire, there is a perceptible concentration of cases in the pasture farming areas in the south of the county on the slopes of the Chiltern Hills, moreover, most Bedfordshire cases were concerned with the *modi*. Any attempt at analysing the intensity of opposition to tithes in certain areas of the diocese of Canterbury is complicated by the fact that the number of people involved in any one case, and the number of years that each offender refused to pay varied considerably. Unlike the disputes of the 1630's, we are not dealing with cases involving about one or two parishioners over a period of one or two years. Most cases involved at least four named defendants and many ministers noted that

there were other defendants whose names they did not know. Altogether, Richard Culmer took eighty six members of his parish of Minster in Thanet to court for tithes.¹ In 1653, Thomas Vaughan took thirty two of his parishioners from Smarden to court.² Many contenders in the diocese of Canterbury withheld their tithes for anything up to six years. The picture is further blurred by the fact that a few cases, for example, a case from Smarden in 1645, involved one or two major farmers in the parish.³ Nevertheless, certain parishes do stand out as having a particularly severe tithe problem and these include Minster in Thanet, Old Romney, Smarden, Northbourne, Shoulden and Goudhurst and the south-west of the diocese in general. In Bedfordshire, the picture is slightly different, for although defendants refused to pay their tithes for a number of years, each case usually involved one or two people. The largest number of defendants was five.⁴ In both the diocese of Canterbury and archdeaconry of Bedford, in contrast to the period before 1640, most defendants had paid their ministers nothing at all.

Before embarking upon an analysis of the reasons behind the opposition to tithes in the archdeaconry of Bedford and diocese of Canterbury, it should be pointed out that our information is based mainly on the cases in the Exchequer court; moreover, of the one hundred and four cases from the diocese of Canterbury studied, ninety four have been studied in great detail, ten being badly damaged or lost but nevertheless included in the detailed manuscript index of the Exchequer Court. Moreover, one reason why relatively few Bedfordshire cases were

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1. PRO, E112 303 288 (Mich.1649), E112 308 289 (Hil.1651), E112 308 290 (Hil.1651), E112 308 291 (Hil.1651), E112 308 292 (Hil.1654), E112 308 293 (Hil.1654), E112 308 294 (Mich.1655), E112 308 295 (Mich.1658); KAO, Q/SB3/4 (1652), Q/SB6/25 (1655).
 2. PRO, E112 305 66 (Mich.1653), E112 305 83 (Hil.1653).
 3. PRO, E112 191 256 (Mich.1645).
 4. PRO, E112 288 36 (Mich.1658).

dealt with by the Exchequer might have been because most tithe disputes were dealt with by J.P.'s in the parish concerned.

The most crucial factor involved when explaining the intensity of the resistance to tithe payment in the diocese of Canterbury was the fall of the church courts in 1642. This, added to the religious, political and economic dislocation caused by the Civil War, had disastrous results for many clergymen. Without doubt, many people took advantage of the fact that the rigid and relatively efficient system of church courts had been destroyed. Thomas Vaughan of Smarden complained in 1653 that his nineteen recalcitrant parishioners were:

"made bold in respect that the power of the ecclesiastical courts is quite abrogated and taken away,"¹

and in 1647, Richard Noke of Preston next Wingham accused the eight offenders in his parish of:

"taking advantage of the troublesome and distracted times."²

Richard Culmer painted a rather rosy picture of the ecclesiastical courts when he declared:

"before the parliament, when the ecclesiastical courts were in being tithes were justly paid. People dare not carry away their tithes or any part of them unless compounded for."³

However, it does seem that the legal process for the recovery of tithes which was set up by the ordinance of 1644 was less a deterrent for would be offenders than the ecclesiastical courts.

Another important factor which encouraged resistance to the payment of tithes was the sequestration of ministers from their benefices by parliament from 1642. Thirty four per cent of the parishes in the diocese of Canterbury and twenty seven per cent of those in the archdeaconry of Bedford were affected by sequestration. The fact that a

1. PRO, E112 305 66 (Mich.1653).
2. PRO, E112 191 274 (Hil.1647).
3. Culmer, Lawless, pp.36-7.

two Justices of the Peace and conviction would have resulted in the confiscation of goods or even imprisonment. Appeals could be made to the Court of Chancery. Only two cases are extant amongst the Quarter Sessions papers for the diocese of Canterbury, involving one minister and two defendants and no cases are extant for Bedfordshire.¹ However, the Kentish tract No Age Like Unto This Age, which is believed to have been written by the separatist John Turner, records a further twenty cases which were dealt with by the Justices of the Peace and which resulted in the defendants losing some of their goods or being imprisoned.² Only one case, that of *Kidner versus Prudden* from Streatley in Bedfordshire in 1647, can be found in the Court of Chancery.³ There may have been many instances where the mere threat of court action might have compelled the offending party to pay his tithes or to come to some form of amicable agreement with his minister. Perhaps some Justices of the Peace dealt with disputes in an informal manner. However, it is possible that some J.P.'s refused to help their ministers to regain their tithes, as Richard Culmer reported, they might:

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2. Acheson, pp.123-4,142.
3. PRO, C3 450 32 (1647).
4. Culmer, Lawless, p.8.

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Some ministers, like George Hawe and Thomas Osmanton, vicar of Lydd, began as they meant to go on and took legal action immediately when faced with opposition, in order to establish their rights.¹ The financial problems of new ministers were made worse by the fact that they were required to pay First Fruits and many had to pay a fifth part of the value of their benefices to the wives and families of the previously sequestered incumbents.

Why did so many people detain their tithes from their new ministers? Of the forty tithe cases concerning new ministers in the diocese of Canterbury, fourteen have answers made by the defendants, and of these, eleven contain a denial of the right of the ministers in question to their benefices and to their tithes. Dislike of committee government and anti-committee feeling of the kind which lay behind the Kentish rebellion of 1648 was one reason why these ministers were rejected.² Richard Culmer reported that some adhered to the view:

"Let them that set him on work, pay him his wages, if others provide us servants, let them pay them wages."³

Some of those who withheld their tithes did so in support of their ejected ministers and were encouraged to do so by the latter. This kind of dispute was particularly common in 1647 when, encouraged by the rumour that a settlement between the King and parliament was likely to be made, some ejected ministers made abortive attempts to regain control of their benefices.⁴ These disputes often came to the attention of the Committee for Plundered Ministers. Mr. Baker, vicar of Boughton Blean, complained that his predecessor, Samuel Smith, did:

1. PRO, E112 306 154 (Hil.1656), E112 307 197 (Mich.1656).

2. Everitt, p.185; Morrill, The Revolt of the Provinces (London, 1982), pp.125-6.

3. Culmer, Lawless, pp.29-30.

4. J.Morrill, ed. J.Morrill, Reactions to the English Civil War 1642-1649, p.112.

"interrupt and disturb the said Mr. Baker in his receipt and enjoyment of the tithes of the said vicarage, prohibiting the parishioners of the said parish to pay other tithes to the said Mr. Baker and does endeavour to gain them to himself."

In 1647, John How, rector of Marston Moretaine in Bedfordshire, reported that his predecessor, Dr. Cookson:

"by combination with Thomas Cookson his son and one Richard Sanders, did discharge the said Mr. How from receiving of the profits of the said rectory and went from house to house and forbade the parishioners of the said parish from payment of their tithes to Mr. How, and a paper being brought into the said parish and published by the same pretending the same came from the King and the Army requiring men to keep their tithes in their hands. The parishioners refuse to pay their tithes to the said Mr. How and carry them away to their own barns."

Moreover, in the same year, Mr. King of Potton in Bedfordshire, complained that his predecessor, George Sheires, had:

"intruded himself into the vicarage house, laid violent hands upon the said Mr. King's wife and servant and prohibited the parish to pay their tithes toMr. King."

Some parishioners involved in tithe disputes with new ministers might have been separatists who were in some way opposed to the concept of an established ministry which was supported by a form of enforced maintenance. The issue of separatism and tithes will be dealt with in a wider context below.

Personal dislike of the new ministers was another factor and Richard Culmer, vicar of Minster in Thanet, provides us with a case in point. His conflicts with his parishioners over tithes were very serious and the nature of the disputes quite exceptional. Culmer had been deprived of his living at Goodnestone by Archbishop Laud in 1635 for refusing to read the Book of Sports.² At the beginning of the Civil

1. BL, Add. MS.15671, ff.182,191,206,226.

2. LPL, VG4/22, f.107.

War he was said to have entered Canterbury Cathedral and:

"threshed and clashed down the windows in that promiscuous manner without any distinction of kings from saints, of military men from martyrs,"

moreover, he did:

"piss upon the sacred ashes of his ancestors."²

Culmer had a brief sojourn at the rectory of Chartham and then went on to the curacy of Harbledown. He was hounded out of that curacy by men whose personal hatred for him had led them to commit actual physical violence. The reason for his hasty despatch was his overzealous concern for the improvement of the morals of his parishioners.² His problems did not end in 1644 when he was instituted to the vicarage of Minster in Thanet, after the Laudian minister and Canon of Canterbury, Meric Casaubon, had been sequestered therefrom. From the outset Culmer was faced with refusals to pay him tithes on a large scale. Between 1644 and 1658 as many as eighty six parishioners were involved in a total of eight cases which he brought before the Exchequer court. At least thirty five people were cited twice and six were cited four times, which is evidence of recalcitrance in the extreme. Moreover, in 1658, a total of seventy six people were brought to court and all seventy six had paid him nothing at all while he had been their vicar. In 1651, he estimated that he was owed a total of £342 13s. in money payments for marshland *in lieu* of small tithes, due for the previous seven years, besides the tithes of corn.³ Even though his benefice was worth about £200 a year

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1. Anon., Antidotum Culmerianum (Oxford, 1644), p.10; Anon., Culmer's Crown Cracked With His Own Looking Glass (1657), p.4.
 2. R.Culmer the younger, A Parish Looking Glass For Persecutors of Ministers (London, 1657), p.4; Hasted, vol.VII, p.318.
 3. PRO, E112 303 288 (Mich.1649), E112 308 289 (Hil.1651), E112 308 290 (Hil.1651), E112 308 291 (Hil.1651), E112 308 292 (Hil.1654), E112 308 293 (Hil.1654), E112 308 294 (Mich.1655), E112 308 295 (Mich.1658); KAO, Q/SB3/4 (1652), Q/SB6/25 (1655).

such large scale evasion, together with the fact that he had to pay a fifth part of the value of his benefice to the wife of Meric Casaubon, meant that at the end of the day, he was left with very little income with which to support himself, his wife and seven children. In his will of 1661, he reported that:

"many sums of money are due to me from occupiers of land in the parish of Minster."

However, Culmer's poverty should not be exaggerated, for he left eight hundred acres of land in Ireland to his heirs.¹ Culmer's tithing servant had been beaten up on one occasion; and, in 1647, he reported to the Committee for Plundered Ministers that he had been:

"in a strong and riotous manner opposed and assaulted by divers turbulent and tumultuous persons and by force locked out of the parish church....and when he has endeavoured to officiate his said cure [he] had been assaulted and beaten."

Moreover, in his tract, A Parish Looking Glass for Persecutors of Ministers, his son reported that Culmer had been referred to as a "devilish, round-headed priest" and that it was often declared that, "Blue Dick should be set out of Minster."²

The reason why Culmer was persecuted in Minster was mainly because many of his parishioners thought that he had interfered too often in their lives, constantly upbraiding them when they did not meet the requirements of his strict code of behaviour. He refused to preach on Christmas Day, condemned his parishioners for setting up a maypole and refused to administer the sacraments to those who gambled, frequented alehouses or who were sexually immoral. He was accused of being "very turbulent and troublesome" and a group of defendants exclaimed that:

1. KAO, PRC 32/58, ff.377-8.

2. BL, Add. MS. 15671, ff.179,187; Culmer the younger, A Parish Looking Glass For Persecutors of Ministers, pp.10,17,21.

"the greatest part of the parishioners do not approve of him to be a fitting man to be a minister or to be a man fitting to officiate the cure in regard of his disability and for his continual incivility and cruelty to his wife and family and his evil example often given by his life and conversation."

He was said sometimes to have acted the part of a "bedlam" or "madman".¹

Moreover, in a scurrilous tract written by a parishioner, called Culmer's Crown Cracked, he was said to have been grasping:

"following his barn more than his book, his tithe on the weekday closer than his text on the Lord's."²

All in all, his troublesome, contentious and vitriolic nature and his persecution of his parishioners made him a burden to them, and they claimed that they would have paid tithes to a godly minister but not to Richard Culmer. Richard Culmer the younger related that so desperate were they to get rid of him, that a group of parishioners petitioned the Committee for Plundered Ministers, offering to pay his maintenance and provide a minister at their own charge, with the *proviso* that he left the parish.³

So embittered was Culmer with the problem of tithes in Minster that he was inspired to write two tracts on the subject of resistance to tithe payment, entitled Lawless Tithe Robbers Discovered and A Minister's Hue and Cry. The former was set out in the form of a dialogue between a fictitious minister called Paul Shepherd and members of his recalcitrant flock, but it is clear that these people represented Culmer and the people of Minster. At one point, Shepherd declared:

"but you paid tithes to popish priests, altar priests, non-resident priests in the bishop's time, and their curates were a burden to you besides and in some places lecturers were a charge besides."⁴

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1. PRO, E112 308 294 (Mich.1655).
 2. Anon., Culmer's Crown Cracked With His Own Looking Glass, p.8.
 3. Culmer the younger, A Parish Looking Glass For Persecutors of Ministers, p.20.
 4. Culmer, Lawless, pp.16-17.

This reflects Culmer's own perplexity with the fact that the people of Minster had paid tithes to his Laudian predecessor, Meric Casaubon. There is no evidence to suggest that any of those who refused to pay tithes to Culmer had been supporters of Casaubon, in fact, a number of them had signed a petition to parliament against the latter in 1640. They might have wanted to get rid of Meric Casaubon but they had not bargained for Richard Culmer.¹ An interesting fact emerges when considering Culmer's case. His son maintained that Casaubon had successfully increased the composition rate for marshland in the parish to 18d. the acre, whereas the generous Culmer had been contented to accept the old rate of 12d., but could not get even that from many of his parishioners. This is incorrect, for in each of the Exchequer court cases Culmer stated categorically that he would accept nothing less than the 18d. rate.² Culmer's case clearly reveals how parishioners took advantage of the fact that their ministers had no church courts to support them. The unpopular Meric Casaubon had been ousted from the benefice and this probably encouraged the people of Minster to take the law into their own hands, for, by starving Culmer of his livelihood, they had hoped to drive him out of the parish.

In conclusion, there were a variety of reasons, religious, political, economic and personal, why people did not pay their tithes to new ministers and in many cases a natural dislike of taxation in any shape or form must have played a part. Many of those who refused to pay their tithes perhaps felt sympathy for their ejected ministers; however, against this, one should not forget that some people refused to pay tithes to both the ejected as well as to the intruded minister. In the

1. Larking, pp.104-10.

2. Culmer the younger, A Parish Looking Glass For Persecutors of Ministers, p.23.

parish of Old Romney, three of the fifteen defendants in the cases brought before the Exchequer court by John Swinnock, who was sequestered in 1643, appeared in the cases involving both his successors, Richard Burney and Richard Barnes. Moreover, all four defendants cited by William Kingsley, who was sequestered from Ickham in 1642, appeared again in his successor William Knightley's case. Obviously, in these cases an ejection of a minister had not been the main spur to the opposition to tithe payments. No explanation was given in the cases from Ickham, but one of the three defendants in the case brought to court by John Swinnock in 1647 did answer his charges and put forward a sophisticated argument, claiming:

"that tithes or compositions or rates for tithes are the endowment or inheritance of the church....and if they be [he] humbly conceives then that the plaintiff cannot appropriate the same to himself or other clergymen, but to all believers who, as they are members of the church as the plaintiff and other clergymen are, so they have right to the Church's inheritance."

Unfortunately, nothing more is known about this defendant, a man called Robert Radford.¹

In cases involving eighteen per cent of the Kentish ministers and one Bedfordshire minister the defendants claimed that they had deprived their ministers of their tithes because they were negligent in the performance of their religious duties. Richard Stace of Chart Sutton said that his minister, John Case:

"had very seldom preached the Word of God to the people of the said parish, neither has there been any divine service or prayers used in the said parish church for the space of about seven years last past, but only once in three weeks."

Moreover, so neglectful was Henry Townley of Great Chart, that his

1. PRO, E112 191 262 (no date), E112 191 277 (Hil.1647), E112 191 278 (Easter.1648), E112 304 34 (Mich.1649), E112 305 51 (Mich.1652), E112 308 241 (Mich.1658), E112 308 255 (Mich.1658), E112 308 287 (Mich.1654), E112 308 275 (Trin.1657).

parishioners were forced to go to other churches. Furthermore, James Coleby of Patrixbourne:

"does not officiate there according to his duty...but does chiefly employ himself to farming and husbandry, the plaintiff himself keeping two ploughs going in the said parishes and many times drives or holds the plough there himself, so as the plaintiff...is not likely to be disabled in the payment of his tenths or other yearly duties in the said public Exchequer."

Daniel Urkin, rector of Millbrook in Bedfordshire, was said to have been:

"very remiss and negligent in his reading and preaching the Word of God...[he] wanders up and down all the week and seldom studies until Sunday morning for his forenoon sermon and his afternoon sermon after dinner. And [he] makes 7, 8, 9 or 10 sermons out of one text of Scripture with divers unnecessary repetitions and deviations into a great number of parts that the said plaintiff often loses himself. And for the plaintiff's administration [of] the holy sacrament he has not administered any in the said parish of Millbrook."

In addition to these cases, defendants in the case brought to court by George Smith of Chalgrave in Bedfordshire in 1652, said that they hoped:

"to prove that the plaintiff, in regard of his scandalous life and conversation is a person very unfitting to be trusted with the cure of souls, either in that parish or any other place and so is hereby incapable to receive tithes or any other duties as a godly minister ought to have."

Smith was ejected from his benefice by the Triers in 1656.¹ It is difficult to tell whether claims against ministers for negligence were true or fabrications used to add fuel to the defendant's cases. An odd incident of negligence could easily be exaggerated in court. Four of the Kentish ministers had come from parishes where sequestration had taken place, and this is further evidence to support the argument that sequestration had severely undermined the position of the clergy. It could be said that the ejection of ministers by parliamentary authority

1. PRO, E112 191 270 (Mich.1643), E112 191 278 (Easter.1648), E112 288 5 (Hil.1652), E112 288 25 (Hil.1652), E112 304 18 (Mich.1650), E112 304 25 (Easter.1651), E112 305 68 (Mich.1653), E112 305 82 (Mich.1653), E112 306 154 (Hil.1656), E112 308 255 (Mich.1658).

had encouraged other people to take the law into their own hands and to deprive their ministers of their maintenance if they did not feel that the latter were doing their jobs properly.

The extent to which ideological reasons religious, economic or social were behind resistance to paying tithes is difficult to gauge. During the Civil War and Interregnum, separatists of all kinds campaigned for the abolition of tithes and their replacement with a form of voluntary maintenance for ministers.¹ Gerard Winstanley, for example, used religious and economic arguments, declaring that:

"The burden of tithes remains still upon our estates, which was taken from us by the kings and given to the clergy to maintain them by our labours so that, though their preaching fill the minds of many with madness, contention and unsatisfied doubting, because their imaginary and ungrounded doctrines cannot be understood by them yet us we must pay them large tithes for so doing. This is oppression."²

Dr. Reay has stated that:

"in the 1650's abolition of tithes seemed to become a *raison d'etre* of the Quaker movement."

Their arguments were social and economic, rather than scriptural, for they maintained that the clerical profession was parasitic, taking goods and money from those who could ill afford it; moreover, tithes discouraged tillage, leading to a shortage of bread. In short, tithes were an oppression. They caused unrest, contention and litigation and, above all, they were popish and should have been abolished.³ The Kentish separatist, John Turner, used scriptural arguments to back up his opposition to tithes. In his tract, Tithes Proved Unlawful to be Paid To Ministers he claimed that those who preached the Gospel should, like Christ and his apostles, live on voluntary gifts made by the people

1. A.Woolrych, Commonwealth to Protectorate (Oxford, 1982), p.237.

2. Ed. C.Hill, Winstanley, The Law of Freedom and Other Writings (London, 1973), p.279.

3. B.Reay, "Quaker Opposition to Tithes 1652-1660", PP, vol.86 (1980), pp.105-9.

and he roundly condemned tithes as Jewish and Popish.¹ Similar arguments were adopted by the author of No Age Like Unto This Age. It is this similarity of argument, together with the fact that Turner and many of his followers were included amongst the list of twenty people in this tract who were fined or imprisoned for refusing to pay tithes, which makes it likely that Turner wrote this tract too.²

Using Dr. Acheson's thesis, "The Development of Religious Separatism in the Diocese of Canterbury 1590-1660" and the survey of Kentish parishes of 1663 as a guide to the incidence of separatism in the diocese of Canterbury, it emerges that over a third of the parishes involved in tithe litigation contained some form of separatism which was either Baptist, Quaker or of an unspecified nature.³ Unfortunately, the compilers of the 1663 survey gave no explanation of what they meant by the terms "sectarian" and "schismatical". Moreover, in the tract, An Abstract of the Sufferings of the People Called Quakers, members of four more Kentish parishes were involved in tithe disputes with their ministers. Separatism was particularly strong in the south-west of the diocese and in Romney Marsh where the tithe problem was most severe. In Bedfordshire, four of the twelve parishes where people were involved in tithe litigation in the Exchequer court contained Quakers.⁴

Quakerism began to spread in the diocese of Canterbury from 1655 with the visit of William Caton and John Stubbs to the area.⁵ The four Kentish Quakers mentioned in An Abstract of the Sufferings of the People Called Quakers, Bartholomew Boykin of Wingham, William Beane of

1. J.Turner, Tithes proved Unlawful to be Paid To Ministers (1645), pp.2-7.

2. Acheson, pp.123-4,142.

3. LPL, MS.1126; Acheson, *passim*.

4. Anon., An Abstract of the Sufferings of the People Called Quakers (London, 1733), pp.4-5,130-1; Godber, History of Bedfordshire, p.233.

5. Acheson, p.288; Reay, *PP*, vol.86 (1980), p.102.

parish of Old Romney, three of the fifteen defendants in the cases brought before the Exchequer court by John Swinnock, who was sequestered in 1643, appeared in the cases involving both his successors, Richard Burney and Richard Barnes. Moreover, all four defendants cited by William Kingsley, who was sequestered from Ickham in 1642, appeared again in his successor William Knightley's case. Obviously, in these cases an ejection of a minister had not been the main spur to the opposition to tithe payments. No explanation was given in the cases from Ickham, but one of the three defendants in the case brought to court by John Swinnock in 1647 did answer his charges and put forward a sophisticated argument, claiming:

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Unfortunately, nothing more is known about this defendant, a man called Robert Radford.¹

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It is difficult to determine the extent of Quaker opposition to tithes in the cases brought before the Exchequer court. There were groups of Quakers in five Kentish parishes which appear in the Exchequer court records, those of Lydd, Northbourne, Old Romney, New Romney and Tenterden. The tithe controversy in Lydd, Old Romney and Tenterden was particularly severe, for, between 1655 and 1660, twenty five people from Lydd, thirty eight from Old Romney and twenty six from Tenterden were taken to the Exchequer court for refusing to pay their tithes. Quakers encouraged their neighbours to refuse to pay their tithes and so they might have appealed to the latter's self interest. Unfortunately, not one person can be identified as a Quaker for certain. However, a number of those from Cranbrook, Northbourne, Lydd and Staplehurst who were involved in tithe cases before 1655 became Quakers at a later date. It was common for Quakers to have been involved in tithe disputes in their pre-Quaker days, after all, many of them had had a history of religious radicalism.' It is possible that they did not appear in later cases because respective ministers had given up trying to obtain tithes from them. In Cranbrook, the future Quaker, Edward Couchman was taken to court in 1652 for resistance to the payment of tithes; moreover, the future Northbourne Quakers, Thomas Wildbor and Isaac Slaughter, appeared before the Exchequer court, Wildbor twice, in 1650 and 1652, and Slaughter once, in 1653. Furthermore, in 1646, Thomas Howsegoe found himself before the Exchequer court on a charge of resistance to tithe payment. He was a Congregationalist who became a Quaker, following the visit to Kent by George Fox, Alexander Parker

1. PRO, E112 306 115 (Mich.1655), E112 306 135 (Mich.1656), E112 306 149 (Trin.1656), E112 306 154 (Hil.1656), E112 307 197 (Mich.1656), E112 307 233 (Easter.1659), E112 308 255 (Mich.1658), E112 308 275 (Trin.1657); Acheson, pp.224-5,255,260; B.Reay, The Quakers and the English Revolution (London, 1985), pp.15-17.

and Ambrose Rigge. Howsegoe's defence is not extant, but his minister, Henry Kent, claimed that he and nine other defendants had declared that:

"tithes are not due to your orator of things renewing within his said parish nor to any parson of any church whatsoever by means of....combination and practice....not only they themselves, but for the most part the generality of all the said parish do refuse to pay any tithes to your orator."

In 1654, Michael Wells, minister of the parish of Lydd, took Samuel Fisher and three other members of his parish to court, claiming that Fisher had declared tithes to be:

"Jewish and antichristian and not to be paid or received by any orthodox Christian or Gospel minister, with which doctrine the said Samuel Fisher has so far infected the minds of his auditors that few of them will pay any established maintenance to their parish minister without suit."

Fisher began his career as a lecturer at Lydd and in 1643 he became an influential Baptist minister who went on to lead the debate over infant baptism, writing such works as Baby Baptism Mere Babism. However, in 1655, following Stubbs and Caton's mission to Kent he became a Quaker minister. Both Matthew Wells' successors, John Hemmings and Thomas Osmanton, met with resistance to tithe payment, but only Robert Radford figures in cases brought before the Exchequer by all three ministers, but, unfortunately, no answer from him is recorded. It is possible that Radford and others were influenced by Fisher in their refusals to pay tithes, and in the survey of the diocese of Canterbury for 1663, the entry for Lydd reads:

"A parish very full of sectaries and schismatics which must trouble the parson and are ill paymasters of their tithes."¹

The Bedfordshire Quakers, Dorothy Neale and John Samm of Houghton Conquest and James Taylor of Aspley Guise, were all brought before the

1. PRO, E112 191 273 (Hil.1646), E112 304 27 (Mich.1650), E112 305 56 (Hil.1652), E112 305 85 (Mich.1652), E112 305 107 (Hil.1654), E112 306 154 (Hil.1656), E112 307 233 (Easter.1659); LPL, MS.1126, ff.17, 30; Acheson, pp.172,224,263.

Exchequer court in 1659 for not paying their tithes. Moreover, it is possible that Robert Bootham of Riseley, who was also brought before the Exchequer in 1659, was a Quaker as there was a group of Quakers in that parish.¹

As it has already been pointed out, it is likely that separatists were involved in tithe disputes in about a third of the Kentish parishes that are mentioned in the records of the Exchequer court, but it is difficult to prove exactly who the separatists were in most cases, particularly as many cases do not include the defendants' answers. However, it is known that a man called Thomas Moore, of Biddenham in Kent, who was charged in 1655 for refusing to pay his tithes, was a separatist of some kind, for he is mentioned in the survey of the diocese in 1663 as one of the:

"teachers and great poisoners of this parish and parts near."²

There is evidence in other cases of ideological opposition to tithes, but the specific religious and political standpoint of those concerned is unknown. At Ivychurch, for example, five parishioners were said to have proclaimed that:

"no tithes ought of right to be paid either by the law of God or man."

Moreover, Richard Culmer accused eight of his parishioners of:

"pretending that tithes are not now any longer to be paid in the time of the gospel but are to be abolished as Jewish and superstitious,"

but the defendants denied that they had expressed these opinions.

Similar opinions were said to have been given by a group of five people

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1. PRO, E112 288 23 (Easter.1659), E112 288 40 (Trin.1659), E112 288 41 (Trin.1659); Anon., An Abstract of the Sufferings of the People Called Quakers, pp.4-5; Godber, History of Bedfordshire, p.233.
 2. PRO, E112 308 283 (Hil.1655); LPL, MS.1126, f.35.

at Patrixbourne.¹

In conclusion, the extent to which separatism was a factor in the tithe controversy between 1642 and 1660 is difficult to measure, but it is possible that it was an important element in certain parishes where there was a severe tithe problem, particularly in the south-west of the diocese of Canterbury, Romney Marsh and the extreme east. Moreover, the extent to which separatists and other opponents to tithes encouraged their neighbours to withhold their tithes is difficult to establish, but the sheer volume of the anti-tithe tracts must not have gone unnoticed among the literate and those who listened to them. The Quakers, in particular, were concerned to dissuade others from paying their tithes. Many probably followed their example purely for financial gain. Bitter to the last, Richard Culmer believed that many people's objections to the payment of tithes was due to "covetousness cloaked with godliness". Many were unscrupulously stealing tithes, which were due by divine right to God's ministers for their own gain; and, he claimed:

"They justify their covetous, wilful, malicious, unjust practiceswith cavils and pretended objections against tithes and all settled maintenance of ministers with all the subtlety than be suggested to them by that old servant, who changes himself into an angel of light, that he may plausibly and powerfully... oppress the faithful ministers of the Gospel."

As for the idea of voluntary maintenance, he dismissed it with these harsh words:

"This maintenance by free contribution and alms, as it were, is in all likelihood and is found by experience an occasion for ministers to comply with carnal and wicked people in a man pleasing way for livelihood."²

There is little evidence in the Exchequer cases of the kind of social and economic arguments against tithes which were expressed by

1. PRO, E112 305 67 (Mich.1653), E112 308 198 (Trin.1649), E112 308 291 (Hil.1651).

2. Culmer, Lawless, pp.9,22.

the husbandmen of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire in their tract of 1647, entitled A Husbandman's Plea Against Tithes. These men believed that they were particularly oppressed, for, unlike the graziers and other farmers, husbandmen were tithed not merely on their profits, but also on their stock, for part of their yield had to be set aside for seed for the following year's crop; nevertheless, the whole harvest, including the part reserved for seed, was tithed. Gradually, they complained, their yields were being whittled away and a bad harvest could lead to their ruin. This state of affairs, they concluded, led ultimately to the decline of tillage and rural depopulation. Another of their complaints was that they were often tithed twice over, once on their hay and again on the animals which fed on that same produce. It would be a valuable line of investigation to test how far the refusals to set out the great tithes in the diocese of Canterbury coincided with poor harvests and bad weather. However, this is complicated by the fact that in most cases people evaded paying tithes for a number of years and also by the fact that the full extent of the tithes controversy cannot be measured merely from court cases. The bad harvests of 1648 and 1649, which resulted in the price of wheat rocketing to 85s. a quarter might have been a spur to ministers to take their recalcitrant parishioners to court. The price of wheat did not begin to recover until the harvest of 1652 when it fell to 49s. 6d. a quarter. Between 1649 and 1653 over half of the tithe cases from the diocese of Canterbury went before the Exchequer. During the harvest of 1644, William Collins, a Smarden husbandman, said that he was unable to set out his tithe wheat and oats in kind because the ground was so barren that his harvest was scarcely worth gathering in. There might have been an element of truth in this for the weather had been particularly bad in that year and the

price of wheat was fairly high, at 61s. 3d. per quarter.¹ The redoubtable Richard Culmer believed that husbandmen did not do too badly at all, for many adopted numerous ploys which prevented their ministers from receiving their full due. "It is now grown to that pass," declared Culmer, "that tithe robbing is made a sport of."² In most cases the farmers left out something for the tithe gatherer but whether it was the correct quality or quantity of tithes was quite another matter. The tithe gatherer would have found it impossible to prove whether he had been cheated or not, which might help explain why proportionately fewer cases in the Exchequer court were concerned with the tithe of grain than with all other kinds of tithes. The fundamental problem was the fact that farmers were not required by law to give notice to the tithe collectors when they were going to set out their tithes. Thus, they could gather in their grain without the tithe gatherers seeing the extent and quality of their yield and leave out the poor quality corn which amounted to much less than a true tenth of their crops. Culmer complained that one of his parishioners did "lay violent hands" on one of his servants in order to prevent him from seeing the tithes set out.³ A cunning husbandman, like Richard Makeney of Ripple in Kent, would conceal the poor quality of his tithe by leaving it in a field where it would be trampled on and eaten by cattle.⁴ A more imaginative farmer, like one from Boughton Malherbe in Kent, would set out his tithe grain without telling his minister, but usually in front of witnesses and then, in the middle of the night he would return in secret with his wagon and carry the tithe away. The following day he would complain bitterly to his minister that thieves

1. PRO, E112 191 256 (Mich.1645); J.M.Stratton and J.H.Brown, Agricultural Records A.D. 220-1977 (London, 1978), pp.49-51.

2. Culmer, Lawless, p.5.

3. PRO, E112 308 290 (Hil.1651).

4. PRO, E112 305 57 (Easter.1653).

had sneaked into his field and stolen the tithe away.' Neither the plight of the husbandman nor the practices which some adopted to trick the clergy were confined to this period. However, what was new in the diocese of Canterbury, was the extent of active opposition to tithes amongst husbandmen and the fact that many could get away with their tithing tricks due to the ignorance of new ministers of the farming activities and geography of their parishes and the difficulties of taking court action.

George Hayward of Herne, Abraham Norton of Great Mongeham and Mark Ambrose of Minster maintained that they had not paid tithes on chickens and eggs because it was the responsibility of their respective wives to attend to such matters; for, as George Hayward observed:

"he never looked so near to his wife's housewifery."²

The ravages of war do not feature much as a reason for not paying tithes, except in the case of John Adams of Shoulden who claimed that all his stock, worth £30 in all, was taken in 1649 by the King's forces who were at Sandwich and Deal castles.³

The effects which resistance to the payment of tithes had on individual ministers must have varied considerably as some were more adversely affected than others. All the ministers claimed that they were debtors to the Exchequer for tenths as a result of their tithe disputes and many claimed that for want of an adequate subsistence they were hindered in the execution of their spiritual duties. John Swinnock of

1. PRO, E112 307 78 (Mich.1653).

2. PRO, E112 304 19 (Mich.1650), E112 304 35 (Easter.1652), E112 308 289 (Hil.1651).

3. PRO, E112 308 272 (Easter.1649).

Old Romney expressed a view which was echoed by many of his fellow clergymen when he claimed that:

"tithes are the endowment of the Church which in all ages have been protected and ought to....be paid to the maintenance and encouragement of religion and learned men in their studies and pains whereby they may the better intend the faithful discharge of their duty in their several charges and not to be put to labour with their hands for the means to live or to commence suits in law for the recovery thereof, to their great trouble and hindrance and loss of time on their studies which would be very scandalous to the office of the ministry and derogatory to the honour of the Church and the laws of this Kingdom."¹

Robert Clark, rector of Frittenden, estimated that at least a quarter of his income, which was worth about £80 a year, was withheld from him in 1648 and Richard Tongue of Pluckley was owed £34 in one year out of a living worth about £100 a year.² Culmer observed that:

"Some ministers of worth have been constrained to sell their books to buy bread."³

It is impossible to give an accurate picture of the values of the tithes owed. In the cases with answers the values of tithes estimated by the ministers were often at odds with the defendants' estimates. However, the sheer numbers of defendants in most of the cases from the diocese of Canterbury suggest that many ministers were in danger of losing substantial parts of their respective incomes. This problem was much more acute in the diocese of Canterbury after 1642 than it had ever been in the 1630's; moreover, it seems to have been much less acute in Bedfordshire between 1642 and 1660. Many ministers had no alternative but to take legal action in the Exchequer court, for if offenders went unpunished others would have been encouraged to withhold their tithes too, a situation which all ministers feared. It is striking that most ministers in our study did not insist on payments of tithes in kind in

1. PRO, E112 304 24 (Mich.1649).

2. PRO, E112 191 299 (Hil.1648), E112 308 273 (Hil.1652).

3. Culmer, Lawless, p.30.

parishes where this had been the established practice, but were prepared to compromise by allowing their opponents to compound for their tithes. Many ministers, however, would have been saved from destitution by their own farming activities or the profits of personal property.

Thus, in a time of political, religious and economic dislocation, many people took the opportunity to avoid paying their tithes. What was the alternative to this unpopular form of ministerial maintenance? Oliver Cromwell said that he would replace tithes with some other form of ministerial maintenance if he could think of a viable alternative. The tithe problem destroyed the Barebones Parliament.¹ The proposal that tithes should be paid into a common treasury out of which stipends should be paid to ministers was rejected, for the problems of administering this system would have been too great and the basic problem that many were unwilling to pay tithes at all would not have been solved. The most popular suggestion was that ministers should be supported by the voluntary contributions from their parishioners. However, the political and religious implications of this proposal were radical. The whole concept of an established ministry would have been called into question and, at the very worst, this plan would have resulted in congregational independency. Parishioners would have controlled not only the purse strings but also the ministers themselves. The exceptional case of Richard Culmer gives some idea of what might have happened to an unpopular minister. Each minister would have had to comply with the political and theological outlook of the main part of his flock, for he would have been dependent upon their goodwill. The pulpit had always been an important organ of governmental control and,

1. C.Hill, God's Englishman. Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution, (London, 1973), p.178; Woolrych, Commonwealth to Protectorate, pp.40,236-7; Reay, PP, vol.86 (1980), p.99.

at a time of political and religious unrest, its control by the people would have been disastrous. Moreover, it seemed naive to expect that many who had previously withheld their tithes would have been prepared to make voluntary contributions to their minister's maintenance. Not all the tithe resisters were highly principled. If clerical tithes were abolished lay impropriations might follow and here the fundamental issue of property rights was involved. Impropriations, previously owned by the episcopacy and delinquent royalists, which were administered by the Trustees for the Maintenance of Ministers, were also at risk. If the revenue from these impropriations was lost the government would lose part of its income, as would the poor ministers who were granted augmentations. Moreover, clerical independency would lead to the loss of the patronage rights of the laity, including the Lord Protector himself. Furthermore, the association of resistance to tithes with radical groups such as the Levellers, Diggers and Quakers was likely to have discouraged many from participating in the controversy in the 1650's. Of one hundred and four tithe cases from the diocese of Canterbury only sixteen concerned gentlemen. As Dr. Reay has observed, property owners probably feared that the precept "No Bishop, no King" had been replaced by "No minister, no magistrate."¹ Many subscribed to Culmer's view that:

"These vultures that prey on tithe rent had once devowed that revenue which belongs to others they would be so fleshed thereby that they would prey on the landlord's rent also."²

Too many sensitive issues were involved in the tithe controversy for tithes to be abolished. The fundamental right of property ownership and the concept of authority as well as the idea of an established church would have been called into question, and there is much to be said for

1. Reay, *PP*, vol.86 (1980), p.116.

2. Culmer, *Lawless*, p.13.

the view that the tithe issue played an important role in the restoration of the monarchy in 1660.¹

In conclusion, the problem of tithes was severe in the diocese of Canterbury between 1642 and 1660. Moreover, it is likely that the cases in the Exchequer court, An Abstract of the Sufferings of the People Called Quakers and No Age Like Unto this Age represent only the tip of the iceberg, for it is likely that many tithe disputes were dealt with in a formal or informal way at a local level. Unfortunately, the nature of the available evidence precludes a study of the extent of tithe disputes involving lay impropiators. There is nothing in the tithe disputes of the pre-Civil War period to explain the intensity of the tithe problem in the 1640's and 1650's. The extent of the tithe controversy was unprecedented. In each parish more people were involved in tithe disputes than ever before, and there is evidence of combination and confederacy between parishioners to cheat their ministers of their tithes on an unprecedented scale. In the 1630's most defendants had paid something towards their minister's maintenance, but in the 1640's and 1650's most had paid nothing for a number of years. The *modi* baulked large in disputes in both periods as did the pasture farming areas of the Weald, Romney Marsh and the extreme east of the diocese, where tithes had mainly been commuted, but again the scale of the problem was much greater in the 1640's and 1650's. While most pre-1640 tithe cases were concerned with the small tithes a significant number of post 1640 cases were concerned with the great tithes. In contrast, in Bedfordshire, there were relatively few cases in the Exchequer and the Sufferings. These tended to include a small number of defendants and were mainly concerned with the *modi*. It is possible, however, that there were many

1. James, History, vol.26 (June 1941), p.18.

instances of tithe disputes which were settled on a local level. Even so, it is likely that the tithe problem was more severe in the diocese of Canterbury than in the archdeaconry of Bedford, which might partly reflect the unwillingness of Kentish people to cooperate with government by committee. However, in general, the tithe problem was multi-causal. Religious, political, social and economic issues together with personal greed, a natural dislike of taxation and opportunism all played a part in a controversy that was never really resolved for almost two hundred years.

CLERICAL NEGLECT AND THE VISITATION PROCESS 1625-42

The clergy were enjoined by the Canons of 1604 to observe the form of worship prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer. On each Sunday and Holy Day, morning and evening, services were to be conducted; and in the afternoons of those days the young people of the parish were to be instructed in the rudiments of the faith. James I ordered that catechising should replace preaching on Sunday afternoons so that ignorance, superstition and, above all, erroneous doctrine might be combated. This order was confirmed by Charles I in 1633. The Canons directed that every beneficed minister who was licensed to preach and who resided in his benefice should preach once every Sunday morning; whereas those who were not licensed should arrange for a sermon to be preached on one Sunday in each month; and on the other Sundays, he, or his curate, should read from the Book of Homilies.¹ In the 1630's, over eighty per cent of the clergy in the diocese of Canterbury were licensed to preach.² Archbishop Grindal's orders that prayers should be read on the eves of Sundays and Holy Days and that the Litany should be read on Wednesdays and Fridays was incorporated in the Canons of 1604. The performance of these services was not enforced strictly until Archbishop Laud's metropolitcal visitation of the diocese of Canterbury in 1634. Ministers had to make sure that each parishioner received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper at least three times a year. The clergy were also expected to solemnize marriage, baptize infants, church women, visit the

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1. Ed. J.P.Kenyon, The Stuart Constitution 1603-1688 (Cambridge, 1976), pp.137,140-1,159; R.A.Marchant, The Puritans and the Church Courts in the Diocese of York 1560-1648 (London, 1960), p.66; C.Hill, Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England (London, 1969), pp.69-70.
 2. CALC,X8-2.

sick and dying and perform burial services according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer. Moreover, once a year each minister was directed to read the Book of Canons to his congregation. Archbishop Laud revived the much neglected annual ceremony of the beating of the bounds of the parish during Rogation week. This ceremony had a dual purpose; first, to give thanks for the fruits of the earth, and second, to make sure that the boundaries of each parish were not encroached upon.¹ Ministers also acted as officials in the church courts, advisors to their parishioners, referees in disputes between neighbours; and on many occasions they were called upon to write or witness their parishioners' wills.

It is a quite straightforward exercise to determine what the hierarchy required a clergyman to do in terms of religious duties. However, it is much more problematic to ascertain just what his flock expected of him. Unfortunately, what has been written by the laity tends to represent the ideas of a godly minority - Puritan observers who have emphasised the preaching, evangelical role of the clergy. We have little direct insight into the attitudes of the mass of the people. Sometimes we learn what a minister is not expected to do from a defamation case in the ecclesiastical courts of the diocese of Canterbury; for example, Thomas Cox, haberdasher of Canterbury "thought it was scandalous....Mr. Carter being a minister" that the latter should have played cards for money.² However, defamation cases should be treated with caution in an analysis of lay attitudes to the clergy. Mistress Hill of Willesborough

1. Articles to be Enquired of in the Metropolitan Visitation of the Most Reverend Father, William...Archbishop of Canterbury...In the Year of Our Lord God 1636 (London, 1636), p.A4; Fletcher, Sussex, p.82; Marchant, The Puritans and the Church Courts in the Diocese of York 1560-1648, p.66.

2. CALC, PRC 39/39, f.36.

provides us with a case in point. She was alleged to have said that her minister, Mr. May, was:

"fitter for a bowling green than for a pulpit as also no better than a dumb dog."¹

Presumably, she wanted to hear more uplifting sermons preached on Sundays in her church, but how far her views were shared by her neighbours remains unknown, thus reminding us of the dangers of forming generalizations based upon what might have been isolated events or chance comments. A cursory glance at presentments for the diocese of Canterbury between 1625 and 1642 suggests that it is likely that most people required, at the very least, the services of their minister for the so called *rites de passage* - baptism, the solemnization of marriage and burial.² Moreover, Dr. Spufford has shown that the communion returns for the archdeaconry of Bedfordshire for 1604 suggest a high level of conformity in that county.³ Unfortunately, comparable figures for the diocese of Canterbury are not extant. It is likely that some presentments of individual ministers during ecclesiastical visitations reflected the wishes of at least some members of the congregation and this is an issue which will be investigated in this chapter. Lack of church court material for Bedfordshire renders it necessary to concentrate our attention upon the parish ministry in the diocese of Canterbury.

Not all ministers were conscientious performers of their religious duties on all occasions; for between 1625 and 1640 at least ninety ministers from ninety two parishes - representing about a third

1. CALC, X6-1, f.237.

2. CALC, X5-6, X5-7, X6-1, X6-2, X6-3, X6-4, X6-5, X6-6, X6-7, X6-8, X6-9, X6-10, X6-11, X7-1, X7-2, X7-3, X7-4, Y6-4, Z3-16, Z4-4, Z4-5, Z4-6, Z4-7.

3. M.Spufford, "Can We Count the 'Godly' and the Conformable in the Seventeenth Century?", *JEH*, vol.36, no.3 (July 1985), p.436.

of the parishes in the diocese of Canterbury, were presented for neglecting some part of their duties. Further analysis reveals that about a quarter of these ministers were pluralists and a further eight per cent were responsible for a chapel annexed to their benefices. Well over half of the pluralists would have found it very difficult to pay someone to officiate in their stead, for they held poor livings or curacies. In all, about a third of the ninety ministers in our study were unbeneficed and just over forty per cent of the beneficed ministers were incumbents of poor livings.¹ Some, like Mr. Coleby, curate of Ham, and Mr. Fellowes, curate of Staple, had to teach in order to supplement their meagre incomes, thus finding it difficult to perform weekday services.² Nevertheless, it appears that about half the ministers in our study could have afforded to pay someone to officiate in their absence. Thus, wealthy ministers such as Mr. Copley, rector of Pluckley, and William Master, rector of Rucking, both of whom possessed livings worth £100 a year, and those with high ecclesiastical office, such as Thomas Jackson, Canon of Canterbury, were just as likely to have been presented for neglect of duty as their poorer colleagues.³ Moreover, dereliction of duty does not seem to have been the preserve of the ill-educated, for ninety per cent of the beneficed ministers in our study possessed a university degree - twenty four per cent of these being Bachelors and Doctors of Divinity.⁴

Close analysis of the presentments is necessary in order to obtain a clear picture of the most common type and the extent of

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1. Those livings worth less than £40 a year are classified as poor livings in this study. BL, Lansdowne MS.958, ff.135-40.
 2. CALC, X6-5, pt.II, f.225; LPL, VG4/22, f.43.
 3. BL, Lansdowne MS.958, ff.136-7; CALC, X6-9, f.5, X6-10, ff.27,120, 173-4, Z3-16, ff.24,48-9; LPL, VG4/21, f.27.
 4. Al.Cantab.; Al.Oxon..

dereliction of duty in the diocese of Canterbury. Details of the types of negligence presented are represented in Table 9, below.

Table 9. The Presentments of Neglectful Ministers in the Diocese of Canterbury 1625-42.¹

| Types of Negligence | Percentage of Ministers |
|--|-------------------------|
| Failure to read prayers on Wednesdays and Fridays | 59 |
| Failure to read prayers on the eves of Sundays and Holy Days | 50 |
| Failure to perform divine service on Sundays | 28 |
| Failure to catechise | 22 |
| Failure to perform divine service on Holy Days | 14 |
| Failure to preach every Sunday | 11 |
| Non-residence | 10 |
| Failure to beat the bounds of the parish | 7 |
| Failure to bid Fast Days and Holy Days | 6 |
| Performing divine service at the wrong times | 3 |
| Failure to perform baptism | 2 |
| Failure to church individual women | 2 |
| Failure to perform burial service | 2 |
| Failure to provide a sermon once a month | 1 |
| Failure to visit the sick | 1 |
| Failure to visit the dying | 1 |
| Failure to give warning of communion | 1 |
| Total disappearance of a minister | 1 |
| Total number of ministers analysed | 90 |

At first sight it appears that large numbers of clergymen were not performing their religious duties properly. However, closer examination tends to leave us with a more modified picture. As in the case of the Wiltshire clergy, total dereliction of duty by Kentish ministers was uncommon. Only three ministers were presented for this. In 1631, Mr. Chennell, vicar of St. Peter's, Thanet, claimed that he dare not venture out of his house for fear of arrest - although he did procure the services of neighbouring ministers to officiate in his church in his absence, albeit in a rather haphazard way. William Langley M.A., rector of Shadoxhurst, neglected his duties in order to continue his studies at

1. This information is taken from the ex-officio court books which are housed in CALC and LPL.

Oxford in 1637. In 1642, the parishioners of St. Mary Magdalen, Canterbury, pointed out that for many Sundays they were without services, as their rector, John Marston, had been deprived of his livings and imprisoned for his adultery, with one Mistress Elizabeth Best, by the Court of High Commission.¹ Most ministers were presented for neglecting one or two particular types of service or for occasional lapses, for example, almost fifty per cent of those presented for failing to perform divine service on Sundays only neglected this duty on one or two occasions. Moreover, no minister was presented for failing to preach altogether, only for not preaching often enough. The majority agreed to mend their ways and few were presented for the same offence more than once. Furthermore, over a third of our ninety ministers were presented during William Laud's metropolitcal visitation of the diocese in 1634 only, and this was mainly for failing to perform services on Wednesdays, Fridays and the eves of Sundays and Holy Days. In fact, two thirds of all those ministers who were presented for neglecting services on Wednesdays and Fridays and three quarters of those presented for omitting services on the eves of Sundays and Holy Days between 1625 and 1640 were presented at Archbishop Laud's visitation of 1634.² It is likely that the performance of these services was not strictly enforced in the diocese before 1634, for there were no presentments concerning the eves of Sundays and Holy Days, and few concerning Wednesdays and Fridays prior to that date. These services were not strictly enforced in the diocese of York either before the archiepiscopate of Richard Neile.³

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1. It is not clear why Chennell was liable for arrest. CALC, X6-9, f.83, X7-2, f.85, Y6-4, ff.173-4; PRO, SP16/468/133, ff.241-2; M.J.Ingram, "Ecclesiastical Justice in Wiltshire 1600-1640", Oxford D.Phil., 1976, p.74.
 2. LPL, VG4/13-22.
 3. Marchant, The Puritans and the Church Courts in the Diocese of York 1560-1648, p.66.

It is likely that Mr. Cox, rector of Bonnington, spoke for many when he defended himself by saying that it was not customary to perform these services in his parish.¹ Farming communities might have objected to attending church on working days. The churchwardens of Sturry pointed out that their minister, William Jervis, would perform these services:

"if the parish, being most of them husbandmen, would conveniently come."²

Taking all the above factors into account, it appears that clerical dereliction of duty was not a particularly common occurrence. However, one is forced to ask the question: how far do the presentments for clerical negligence provide us with a fair representation of the number of ministers who did not do their jobs properly? Are we to believe that for sixteen years only eleven ministers failed to conduct divine service on the odd one or two Sundays, that only ten did not deliver a sermon every Sunday or that Mr. Bishop, rector of Chillenden, was the only clergyman who did not visit the sick or give ghostly comfort to the dying?³ Surely, there were ministers who, at least occasionally, if not regularly, left their cures unsupplied, and who went unreported. It is my intention to investigate why some ministers found themselves presented by their churchwardens while others were left alone.

Any attempt to obtain a clear picture of exactly why a particular minister was presented by his churchwardens, using the presentments themselves in the *ex officio* court books, is fraught with difficulties. For a start, no actual explanation is given in the documents - just the presentment and, in most cases, the defendants statement. As a group,

1. CALC, Z4-6, f.32.
2. LPL, VG4/21, f.25.
3. CALC, Z3-16, f.180.

the churchwardens were notoriously unreliable reporters of the extent of clerical, and lay, misdemeanour.' So many factors have to be taken into account in any analysis of why churchwardens decided either to report or not to report their ministers for negligence. There would have been many reasons why individual churchwardens acted as they did. Some would have got on so well with their ministers that they would not have dreamt of presenting them. It is likely that even the most conscientious churchwardens were put off from presenting ministers who were popular with their parishioners. Wealthy, well-educated clergy, particularly those who possessed clerical office, would have appeared to many churchwardens to be too formidable to present at a visitation. It is likely that many ministers in our study were unlucky enough to have come up against churchwardens who took their roles seriously. Some ministers' negligence would have gone unreported by uninterested churchwardens until, one day, a conscientious person was appointed to the job who, encouraged by his neighbours, decided to try to put an end to his minister's laxity. This might have been an important factor in the presentation of Richard Jaggard, vicar of Lypne in 1634, for it was reported that he seldom bade Holy Days, except on one occasion when he declared:

"next Thursday is Holy Day, the Feast of Philip and Jacob, and you must come to church because you have a severe churchwarden."²

It is likely that individual churchwardens and ecclesiastical officials were more concerned with certain kinds of neglect of duty than with others, which would partly explain both the large number of presentments for ministers' failure to perform services on Wednesdays, Fridays and

1. Collinson, Religion, p.208; Fletcher, Sussex, p.83.

2. LPL, VG4/16, f.27.

the eves of Sundays and Holy Days and the paucity of presentments of ministers, for example, for failure to visit the sick and the dying. A minister's unseemly behaviour, such as occasional or regular appearances in the local alehouse, might have been an important factor leading to his presentation, for he might have been considered a bad example to his congregation. Arthur Penven, curate of Iwade might provide us with a case in point, for in 1637, it was reported that:

"he lives disorderly and frequents taverns and tipling houses and neglects his study and the discharge of his cure and is very offensive by his intemperancy and evil example of life."

Whatever reasons lay behind the presentation of ministers it is likely that personal issues and personalities played an important part in the process. Dr. Spufford has suggested that we should be wary of taking presentments at face value, that behind presentations of parishioners for failing to attend church there might lie complex issues. It is likely that a large number of these presentments represent the campaigns of Laudian or Puritan ministers against lax members of their congregations; others might represent the protests of groups of parishioners who refused to go to church as they disagreed with the way in which their Laudian or Puritan ministers conducted divine service.² It is more than likely that some kind of local conflict lay behind some of the presentments for clerical negligence; and this would go a long way to explain why some ministers were presented and others escaped that humiliation. If ministers could use the visitation process against recalcitrant parishioners, then why could not individuals or groups of parishioners use that same process against unpopular ministers?

In order to determine whether or not an individual minister's

1. CALC, Z4-6, f.132.

2. Spufford, *JEH*, vol.36, no.3 (July 1985), pp.433-4.

presentment for neglect of his duties was at least partly the result of some kind of conflict in his parish between himself and his parishioners, one needs to look in other presentments and in the Deposition Books of the ecclesiastical courts for hints of possible conflicts. Dr. O'Day has suggested that, although church court material can never give the whole picture, nevertheless it can:

"underline some of the tensions in church and society."¹

Feuds between ministers and their churchwardens can be discovered when a close examination of presentments is made. It is likely that the relationship between a churchwarden and his minister would be soured if the latter presented the former for neglecting duties, such as the exhibition of bills of presentment at a visitation or the keeping of the church accounts up to date. A contentious minister, one who preached railing sermons, or one who argued regularly with members of his congregation, would have been an unpopular minister, as would a litigious minister, who conscientiously defended his right to tithes. Tradition was of paramount importance to many parishioners,² and so if a minister attempted to infringe what they considered to be their rights or to break their customs, he would have found himself at odds with them. Those few ministers, for example, who attempted to increase their income from tithes by demanding more than the customary rate would have been treated with a degree of suspicion and animosity.³ A minister's religious stance could make him unpopular with certain sections of his congregation. There were adverse reactions to the ceremonial practices

1. O'Day, *Clergy*, p.234.

2. A.J.Fletcher, "Factionalism in Town and Countryside: the Significance of Puritanism and Arminianism", *Studies in Church History*, vol.16(1979), p.291.

3. Larking, pp.105,107,109-10,196-7,204.

of the Laudian or the conformist ministers from two main groups of people. First, there were those educated or thinking parishioners, who were either Puritan or essentially conservative, who feared that these practices were part of a movement back to Rome; and second, there were those unthinking, less educated people who opposed changes to their established routine.¹ A Puritan minister's nonconformist practices might have alienated groups of Anglican parishioners, both educated and ill-educated, thinking and unthinking, who preferred their services to be conducted according to the form prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer. Some people were quite prepared to forsake their own churches and their Puritan ministers in order to attend churches where the Book of Common Prayer was used. In 1628, for example, nine parishioners from Shadoxhurst were presented for attending other churches. Their reply was that in their own church they had:

"not had the divine service orderly read according to the form prescribed in the Common Prayer Book."²

A nonconformist Puritan minister might find himself at odds with other Puritans in his parish, particularly if he had ever been seen in an alehouse. It is interesting to note that a small number of the nonconformist Puritans in our study were accused of scandalous behaviour, usually alehouse-haunting or drinking.³ However, many of these accusations formed part of composite presentments and it is likely that they were based upon malicious gossip or isolated incidents and were added to the cases for good measure.

It is very difficult to determine the exact nature and extent of opposition to the ministers in our study. We might find hints of Puritan

1. Green, "Careers", p.113.

2. CALC, X6-1, f.297.

3. CALC, X6-6, ff.198-9, X6-8, f.198-9, Y6-4, f.159; LPL, VG4/16, f.27.

opposition to Laudian ministers in presentments of parishioners for gadding to other parish churches to hear sermons - but this does not tell us about the strength or extent of Puritan opposition to particular ministers. What these presentments do show is that there was some kind of opposition to them which might have been an important reason why they were presented. Presentment for failure to attend church on the part of parishioners or failure to send children, apprentices and servants to be catechized are not of use to our purpose in themselves, for they might have been either signs of opposition to individual ministers or pure laziness.¹ However, they might be of relevance in parishes where there is other evidence of possible causes of conflict. Anticlericalism, hostile feelings directed towards ministers simply because they were ministers and thus figures of authority, is difficult to detect as a reason why some clergymen were presented. Personality conflicts are even more difficult to detect. A further complication to our picture is that there was often more than one possible reason why certain ministers found themselves on the wrong side of their parishioners. This will become clear during a detailed analysis of the cases of those ministers who were likely to have been in conflict with groups of parishioners. At this juncture, suffice it to say that Laudian, Anglican or nonconformist ministers were equally as likely to be presented for being contentious, litigious or scandalous.

The presentation for neglect of duty of thirty eight ministers, representing forty two per cent of the ministers in our study, is likely to have been at least partly the result of conflict in their respective parishes between themselves and individuals or groups of parishioners. About a quarter of these ministers were unbeneficed and a third of

1. Spufford, *JEH*, vol.36, no.3 (July 1985), p.343.

those ministers who were beneficed were incumbents of livings which were worth less than £40 a year. Two thirds of the thirty eight ministers were pluralists and over three quarters of the beneficed ministers had attended university.¹ An analysis of the religious standpoints of the ministers in our study reveals that over a third can be termed nonconformist Puritan - those who drew attention to themselves by refusing to conform to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England - and a quarter can be termed Laudian. The rest of the ministers in our sample cannot be classified according to their respective religious standpoints, but there is evidence to suggest that, for one reason or another, they were at odds with their churchwardens or their parishioners. Although the terms Laudian and Puritan will be used to classify certain ministers in our study, it will become clear that there were often other reasons, besides their religious standpoint, which made many of them unpopular in their respective parishes. The approach adopted in this chapter is, of necessity, illustrative.

Some of the clearest examples of ministers being presented for dereliction of duty as a result of conflict between themselves and parishioners can be found amongst the nonconformist Puritan ministers in our study. That it is possible to obtain this picture is, of course, largely due to the nature of the evidence, for nonconformity was a presentable offence. Nevertheless, these cases do give us valuable insight into the local processes which led to the presentation of some ministers at visitations.

Between 1636 and 1638, John Bishop, rector of Chillenden, provides us with a clear example of a situation where the presentation of a minister for neglecting his religious duties should be studied in

1. BL, Lansdowne MS.958, ff.135-40; CALC, X8-2; Al.Cantab.; Al.Oxon.

the context of the local situation. Conflict between Bishop and one particular churchwarden, Matthew Scot, is of particular significance; moreover, Bishop's Puritanism and contentious manner proved unacceptable to members of his congregation. Their unfriendly and uncooperative attitude led him to become embittered and even more contentious, fighting back by roundly condemning their ungodly behaviour from the pulpit and by presenting them for failing to perform their duties properly. The result of all this was a breakdown in relations between minister and congregation. Personality, religious belief and practice all played a part. The picture is complex and so a chronological study will best illustrate how a feud that was acted out on the stage of the church courts came about. John Bishop was first presented in 1631 for neglecting his religious duties - for failing to read divine service on Holy Days, Wednesdays and Fridays, for not preaching every Sunday and for failing to catechize the young people of the parish. Bishop admitted his guilt and promised to mend his ways.¹ Nothing more is heard of him until 1636, when he was presented again for not reading divine service on Wednesdays and Fridays and for not preaching enough sermons. To the latter charge he replied that he had been ill and had procured others to preach in his church in his absence. Clues that the manner in which he conducted services was not acceptable to the churchwardens, and to at least some parishioners, are to be found in the presentations of Bishop for failing to wear his surplice and for the Puritan practice of abbreviating the services prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer. Moreover, his personal behaviour was not acceptable to members of his congregation; for he was said to have called Thomas Hadman of Sandwich "blockhead" and John Taylor an "old coxcomb". More to the point, it was

1. CALC, X6-6, f.127.

reported that he had called his churchwarden, Matthew Scot, a fool, humiliating him in church one Sunday, for he:

"left reading and called him [Scot] saying, 'Thou old fellow do you nothing but stand staring in my face, what did you never see me before?'"

Furthermore, Bishop uttered:

"many unseemly and railing speeches and in particular.... speaking of and meaning one Scot, the now churchwarden.... said he was a scurvy, base, lewd fellow and that he should not be churchwarden any longer and being admonished to forbear his said violent and railing speeches he yet continued in the same."

Bishop's sour relations with his churchwarden would certainly have been an important reason why he was presented so frequently. Bishop retaliated in a spate of presentations in the same year. Scot was ordered to make sure that the ten commandments were painted clearly on the wall of the church and to mend part of the churchyard fence. Moreover, his servant, Daniel Wood, was presented twice for threshing corn for Scot in the latter's barn on Wednesdays and Fridays:

"so near, that every stroke he struck may be heard and in that time of prayers."

Furthermore, Scot's wife was accused not only of absenting herself from church on two or three Sundays but also for saying that "she knew the danger of it and slighted it". In the following year, Matthew Scot was presented again, this time for profaning the Sabbath by permitting boys to play in his barn all afternoon. Bishop had been compelled to throw them out, fearing that, if they continued, they would disturb both himself and his congregation in the celebration of divine service.' Scot presented Bishop on a number of counts, with scrupulous attention to detail: for neglecting services on Sundays, Wednesdays, Fridays, Holy

Days and the eves of Sundays and Holy Days, and for not bringing the register book of marriages, baptisms and deaths to church, even though Scot had asked for it. Bishop retaliated by presenting Scot for being:

"a wicked rogue in that when he presents me for not reading divine service on Wednesdays and Fridays, he does so little regard it as that neither himself nor anyone in his house will scarce come."

Moreover, he reminded Scot that he had encouraged his servant to thresh corn during service time on those days. Bishop was also presented for failing to visit the sick, for not offering ghostly comfort to the dying and for failing to church a woman. Moreover, he had not beaten the bounds of the parish during Rogation Week. Significantly, numbered amongst the three parishioners to whom he refused to administer the communion, was Matthew Scot. There must have been an element of malice behind this. Bishop was also presented for being a contentious minister, "given to railing and scandalous speeches" towards his parishioners. That he believed that they were responsible for presenting him for dereliction of duty can be illustrated by a speech he was reported to have made, in which he had hit out at his parishioners, angrily condemning them for their alledged hypocrisy and malice in words guaranteed to alienate them further:

"You desire preaching, you would have you know not what, you would have a calf with a white face, you are a malicious, envious people. I will brand you with a black mark; and for your houses, I will never come into them whilst you have doors to open. You present me for a few tiles lying loose in my chancel. Is this not maliciously done?"¹

Moreover, it was reported that his vitriolic sermons offended and alienated members of his congregation. On one occasion he was said to have declared:

"that in London there were sixpenny whores and tweldepenny

1. CALC, Z3-16, ff.179-80,182.

whores and inveighing very much against the parishioners' wives, said that women should be helps to their husbands, but they were helps with a pocks."

It is not surprizing, therefore, that on two Sundays in August 1637, less than a quarter of Bishop's parishioners attended church, and that on one of those Sundays only five out of twenty female parishioners turned up. Moreover, on the last Sunday in August, Bishop reported that only three or four women had come to church.¹

John Bishop blamed John Saffery for causing trouble between himself and his parishioners, saying that the latter:

"had carried tales and told me of words spoken that moved me to impatience and much discontent and made me exclaim upon my neighbours in bitter words of whom I thought well before. I say I present him as a firebrand of the devil in raising discord and dissension and causing enmity and hatred."²

Nevertheless, the feud continued between minister and parishioners. Failure to send their children to be catechized was another way in which parishioners expressed their protest against their unpopular Puritan minister. In 1638, Bishop reported that on Sunday, 1st. August, when he had wished to examine the children, only two out of fourteen had attended. He then threatened their parents, Matthew Scot being numbered amongst them, with citation in the Court of High Commission, but they remained obdurate. The Puritan John Bishop concluded his presentment with bitter words against his "ungodly" parishioners:

"I may say of these and the greater part of the parish of Chillenden that I may truly charge them with three foul sins... preached against twenty times, first devilish maliciousness in that some of them will do all mischief they can and have made trial many times against whom they do oppose themselves till they can do nothing, then they are calm and a little submit themselves. Secondly, for extreme carelessness of their children's good and salvation nor send them to church to be instructed so they are wonderfully ignorant. Thirdly, an obstinate wilfulness in a wicked course in persisting in their

1. CALC, X6-6, ff.234-5.
2. CALC, Z3-16, f.182.

wickedness without reformation and will not serve God and come to church as they ought to do, but will do their duty when they are whipped; for a while they are good but, when the smart is gone, they are as bad as ever they were. And this I can truly testify of them who have been acquainted and plagued with their base and ungodly condition these two seven years at least to my great grief, that my labours no more effect and fruit among them, and little hope of reform unless it please God to work a change, which I earnestly desire."¹

Thus John Bishop's words reveal a Puritan's harshness of attitude towards his parishioners which was more than likely the cause of their alienation from him.

Rufus Rogers, rector of St. Peter's, Canterbury, was another Puritan minister who, between 1626 and 1628, was in conflict with both his churchwardens and his parishioners. Evidence suggests that he neglected his religious duties and was presented for this as a result of his poor relations with his churchwardens and his parishioners. It is more than likely that his Puritan stance as well as his personality caused trouble in the parish. Evidence for Rufus Rogers' Puritanism is based on his failure to wear his surplice, apart from on one occasion, on the Sunday before the visitation in 1626 when he administered the communion:

"he did wear a surplice, a hood and a square cap."

Moreover, he baptized children in a basin, even though it was customary in the parish, and correct according to the Canons, to baptize them at the font. Furthermore, it was reported in 1628 that on three occasions he did not read divine service according to the form prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer. Rogers' zealous churchwarden, John Cogan, scrutinized every aspect of Rogers' life and then presented him on a number of counts. In 1626, Rogers' was said to have seldom read prayers on Wednesdays, Fridays and Holy Days; moreover, he only preached once

1. CALC, X6-6, ff.234-5.

a month, or once every twelve weeks rather than once a week. It is interesting to note that Puritan ministers, who tended as a group to stress the importance of the Word in the salvation process, could and did fail to preach regularly. Disillusionment with congregations who failed to live up to their expectations might have been an important reason why this happened. Rogers was also presented for allowing the parsonage house to decay, so that paupers had taken up residence there. Furthermore, he had kept the register book in his house so that the churchwardens could not gain access to it to bring the parish records up to date. Insight into Rogers' relations with John Cogan is given by the latter in an account of the argument over the register book. He claimed that Rogers:

"did very disorderly kick, spurn and endeavoured the best he could to trip up the churchwarden's heels, most rudely calling him slave, villain, rascal and the like unseemly names, being in the church, for that he denied the minister for carrying out of the church the book of christenings, weddings and burials."

Rogers' unsuccessful attempt to deprive Cogan of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper also contributed towards the ill-feeling between the two, and drove the latter to declare:

"Our minister is commonly noted to be malicious, contentious and uncharitable."

Rufus Rogers' poor relations with his parishioners can be illustrated by his actions on 7th. June 1626. It was reported that the parish clerk had rung the bells, the parishioners had dutifully assembled in St. Peter's Church, and they all had waited patiently for the service to begin - but there had been no sign of Mr. Rogers. After a while Alderman Hunt had sent a message to Rogers that his presence was required. However, Rogers had roundly replied:

"that he was not ready, further saying, let him read divine service that caused the bells to be rung."

The congregation had to be sent home; and the churchwardens later declared bitterly that Rogers had acted in this way "purposely to vex his parishioners". It is possible that he had been presented on so many counts, both for his neglectful behaviour and his Puritan practices, that he had felt alienated from his parishioners. On another occasion it was said that Rogers had been:

"from house to house calling on some of his parishioners ...to set their hands to a supplication which he had made,"

so that he had arrived late at church and, as a result, the first lesson, the Epistle, the Gospel and some prayers had to be missed out of the divine service. Details of this "supplication" are unknown, but there is evidence enough to suggest that he was involved in some kind of contentious issue which required the support of some of his parishioners. Moreover, Rogers had not confined his animosity to his churchwardens and parishioners, for Dr. Clerke, who accompanied the archdeacon during the latter's visitation, was said to have been the target of his vitriole. While they were viewing the ruined parsonage house, it was reported that Rogers had asked the archdeacon:

"to bring some other non-resident and not that man, meaning Dr.Clerke."

Moreover, he had asked Dr. Clerke to give him some money for his expenses:

"so that he might ride [to] see whether the said Dr. Clerke's house did not want reparations as well as his do."

In 1627, Rogers' daughters, Ann and Elizabeth, were presented for:

"taking the upper place in the pews where gentlewomen of worth and quality were placed by the churchwardens, so that they compel gentlewomen to sit beneath them."¹

1. CALC, X6-5, ff.122-3.

In the following year, Rufus Rogers was presented again on a number of counts: for not paying his church rate, for not living in his parsonage house and for not opening the church chest, so that the churchwardens could gain access to the register book. His reply to the latter charge reveals just how difficult relations had become between himself and his churchwardens; for he declared that he:

"dare not go alone into the church with the churchwardens that now are for fear they will offer violence to him,"

adding that if Cogan agreed to stay out of the church, he would enter the building and open the chest. Shortly after this, Rogers found an opportunity to retaliate by reporting the churchwardens for not delivering the accounts for 1626. Later, the churchwardens struck again, by presenting him for abbreviating church services.¹ Little of note is reported in the church court books thereafter, until, ten years later, John Cogan and Rufus Rogers were witnesses in a case against the then churchwardens, William Baldock and Thomas Pike, who were said to have been neglectful in their presentation of abuses in the parish. Cogan took this opportunity to list Rogers' failings, adding that:

"he believed that because [the churchwardens] presented not the minister Mr. Rogers....they did hope to acquire his goodwill thereby."

For his part, Rogers observed that he had found Baldock and Pike much more conscientious as churchwardens than their predecessors, Cogan and Gilbert.²

John Wells, curate of Norton, was a Puritan minister whose poor relations with his churchwardens and parish clerk and unpopularity with members of his congregation more than likely led to his presentation for dereliction of duty. Between 1631 and 1632 he was presented for a

1. CALC, X6-5, ff.168-9,192.

2. CALC, PRC 39/47, ff.79-80.

number of reasons. First, he did not appear to have a license to serve the two cures of Norton and Buckland. He replied that he had one, but:

"being in a peremptory manner demanded or rather commanded by one of the church officers of Norton, with many uncharitable terms, to show his orders, he, this rudent, refused to show it."

Second, he was presented for failing to preach every Sunday; and third, it was reported that he had not performed divine service on two Sundays.

Wells' reply to the latter charge is illuminating. He said that:

"he was there ready and gave his attendance at the church door and would have celebrated divine service in church upon the several days and times detected if he could have got into the church, but the churchwarden....locked the door of the church ...or procured the same to be locked and carried the key home to his house."

Presumably the churchwarden, Thomas May, had wanted to check Wells' license to serve two cures. When charged that he had neglected to catechize the young people of the parish, he replied that their parents and employers had not sent them to him. There is no evidence either to corroborate or dispute his reply, but it is likely that some of his parishioners did not send their children to be catechized in protest against the Puritan practices for which he was presented. First, it was reported, he did not wear his surplice at the celebration of divine service, and second, he did not read divine service:

"plainly and distinctly....according to the form prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer, but huddle's over prayers in such a manner that he can scarcely be understood by any of our parish, and [he] commonly omits to read the Ten Commandments and the Litany on Sundays and Holy Days."

When the Prayer Book was found in tatters in the church, John Wells was suspected of tearing it up.' Relations between Wells and his churchwarden reached boiling point in the church one Sunday when the former began to taunt the latter and refused to administer the sacrament

to him. In 1633, Thomas May sued Wells in the consistory court for this deed. Numerous parishioners testified against their minister. Henry Packman, for example, said that before evening prayer one Sunday, Wells:

"had stood up and said....'If I must catechize, I will begin with the best first.' Then looking towards [May] said to him, 'Sirra, let me hear you say the Lord's Prayer.' With that [May] stood up and asked him whom he meant and [Wells] answered him, 'You Sirra,' telling him that if he would not say it he should not receive, or the like words to that effect."

It is during the course of this case that we hear about John Wells' unpopularity with certain members of his congregation. William Baldock, for example, managed to endure the office of parish clerk for just six months, blaming Wells' "unquiet nature" for his resignation. Moreover, others referred to Wells' "addiction to strife". Furthermore, it was reported that he was a "frequenter of alehouses, taverns and tipling houses". However, one should treat this evidence with caution, for it seems that the witnesses were trying to think of every possible misdemeanour that Wells had committed in order that he might lose the case. An incident of five years previously, for example, was dragged before the court by one witness, who said that Wells had been engaged in a drunken brawl on the way home from a tavern in Faversham and had sustained injuries which had prevented him from officiating his cure for two or three Sundays. Moreover, it seems surprizing that only two witnesses, Susanna Goldsmith and her husband Dunkin, mentioned the occasion when Wells was supposed to have been so drunk that he "mistook....the morning for the evening prayer". More suspicion is cast over this piece of evidence when one considers the fact that Wells had never been presented for this. Unfortunately, the outcome of May's case against Wells cannot be determined.' However, in the following year

Wells was presented again for dereliction of duty, and the report that he had "sometimes" played cards and haunted alehouses seems to have been added to the presentment for good measure. John Wells does seem to have been popular with a Mr. Vincent and his family of Stone, for they were presented in 1631 for gadding to his church to hear sermons.¹

At least eleven other ministers in our study were presented for dereliction of duty at least partly because some of their parishioners did not approve of their Puritan practices. Thomas Warren, rector of St. Peter's, Sandwich, was presented in 1629 for the Puritan process of abbreviating services, and, in the previous year, he had been presented for allowing his kinsman, John Warren, to officiate in his church without a license. The latter was said to have omitted the Litany, Epistle, Gospel and most of the prayers from the service and he did not wear a surplice. Moreover, in 1631, Thomas Warren was presented for omitting services on some Fridays, for administering the sacraments to those who did not kneel, for not giving the sign of the cross in baptism and for not wearing his surplice when celebrating divine service.² It is more than likely that a group of his parishioners' refusal to pay their tithes in 1629 was a form of protest against their new Puritan minister. Warren claimed that they had paid their tithes on every house, messuage, tenement, garden and piece of land to his predecessor, Mr. White, but they had refused to pay these tithes to him, and they had taken out an injunction in the Court of Chancery at Dover against him. He, in his turn, took them to the Court of the Exchequer to recover his tithes, as he could not pay his First Fruits and Tenths.³ Tithe litigation could

1. CALC, Y6-4, f.78,159.

2. CALC, X5-7, pt.II, ff.151,153,157.

3. PRO, E112 189 69(Mich.1629).

only sour relations between minister and congregation.

Puritanism, a contentious manner and scandalous behaviour were factors which contributed to the presentment of Mr. Dale, curate of Harty, for dereliction of duty. In 1637, he was presented for omitting to conduct divine service on Wednesdays, Fridays and the eves of Sundays and Holy Days and for seldom catechizing the young people of the parish. Moreover, he was presented for giving communion to a parishioner who was not in charity with his neighbour. His Puritan practices, such as preaching afternoon sermons and failing to wear his surplice were also reported. He claimed that he had preached on Sunday afternoons because no one had turned up to be catechized.¹ It is possible that protest as well as laziness lay behind his failure to attend catechism. In fact, his relations with some of his neighbours do not appear to have been cordial, for he was presented for using "somewhat bitter invective against his neighbours".² Three years previously he had been sued for slander by a parishioner, one Mr. Jeffrey.³ Dale's unsavoury reputation must have contributed to his unpopularity in the parish. He admitted that he had sometimes played cards in the alehouse and that:

"there, happily unawares an oath might fall out of his mouth."⁴

Puritanism and contentious behaviour are factors which should be taken into account when considering the presentment of Michael Stone, vicar of Brenzet, in 1637, for neglecting to read prayers regularly on Wednesdays, Fridays and Holy Days, for failing to catechise the young people of the parish, for failing to bid Holy Days and for neglecting to beat the bounds of the parish during Rogation Week. He did not wear

1. CALC, Z3-16, ff.251-2; PRC 39/44, ff.208-9.
2. CALC, Z3-16, f.251.
3. CALC, PRC 39/44, f.208.
4. CALC, X6-6, ff.198-9.

his surplice every Sunday, nor did he read the Book of Canons in his church; moreover, he was said to have had a bitter argument with his churchwardens and groups of parishioners at the making of a church rate to raise money to repair the chancel.¹ All the other seven Puritan ministers presented for dereliction of duty were charged with not performing divine service on Wednesdays, Fridays and the eves of Sundays and Holy Days, and most were charged for failing to wear their surplices.² Richard Culmer, vicar of Goodnestone, and Thomas Hieron, vicar of Hearnehill, were both presented at the metropolitical visitation in 1634 for refusing to read the Book of Sports to their respective congregations and both were deprived of their livings for their pains.³ A defamation case which Hieron brought against one Samuel Maxted before his deprivation might throw some light onto possible division in the parish of Hearnehill. Maxted was reported to have told Mistress Grace Drewry, who had just moved into the parish from Essex, that she:

"was come to increase the number of Puritans in that parish, whereof, as he said, there were too many already and affirmed that such as followed Mr. Hieron's doctrine were a damnable case."

Moreover, he condemned those who customarily went to see Mr. Hieron to ask him to repeat his sermons.⁴

Samuel Keame, the Puritan rector of Little Chart, was most unpopular with his parishioners both for his desertion of his parish and for his beliefs. In 1631, it was reported that:

1. CALC, Z3-16, f.113.

2. Osmund Clutting, curate of Eastchurch, Richard Culmer, vicar of Goodnestone, Francis Coleby, curate of Ham, Thomas Hieron, vicar of Hearnehill, George Bonham, curate of Hucking, Mr. Baker, curate of St. Mary in the Marsh, and Theophilus White, curate of Minster in Sheppey. CALC, X5-7, pt.II, f.225, X6-3, ff.170,173, Z4-5, f.151, Z4-6, f.40; LPL, VG4/16, f.31, VG4/22, ff.24,46,107.

3. LPL, VG4/22, f.107.

4. CALC, PRC 39/42, ff.140-1.

"he neglects his own cure and charge of souls there and leaves it undischarged in the meanwhile, straggling about from place to place, putting and intruding himself into other men's cures, especially in and about Canterbury, thereby alienating the love of the flock from their own pastors and ministers."

Keame claimed that he had been absent for only five or six Sundays and had been in London. Moreover, a neighbouring minister, Mr. Case, had let him down by failing to officiate in his absence.¹ However, in the following year Keame was presented again for neglecting his cure and for organizing conventicles in Canterbury:

"tending to the disturbance of the Church's peace and the discipline therein established and to the begetting and nourishing of schism and faction in his auditors."

These meetings tended to take place mainly at the houses of William Taylor of St. Andrew's, Canterbury, and Thomas Paramour of St. Martin's, Canterbury, and they consisted mainly of the repetition of sermons preached by him in Canterbury churches, the reading of Scripture and extempore prayers. Keame emphasised the informality of these meetings, protesting that they took place after he had dined with friends and that no faction or schism had been intended. Evidence does suggest that these meetings were an extension of family worship and prayers commonly practised by Puritans in their homes on the Sabbath.² Aspersion was cast upon the relationship between Samuel Keame and one Mistress Weeks, who attended his informal meetings, but this was based on gossip and was probably added to the presentment to blacken Keame's name.³

There are twelve Laudian ministers whose relations with their churchwardens and their parishioners were important factors in their presentation for dereliction of duty. In 1626, Dr. Allen, rector of Stowting, was presented for failing to officiate at his church on only

1. LPL, VG4/13, f.77.

2. LPL, VG4/13, ff.195-200; Collinson, Religion, pp.274-5.

3. LPL, VG4/13, f.198.

one occasion, that of the fourth Sunday in Lent. He replied that he had had to attend a meeting of Convocation. It is possible that he had alienated his churchwardens by presenting them for failing to present those parishioners who had not attended church at Michaelmas and Christmas so that:

"for want of an audience, I was kept from preaching."

This full scale desertion of their parish church by parishioners does seem suspicious. Allen also presented the churchwardens for not presenting defects in the structure of the church.¹ Thomas Jackson, Canon of Canterbury, rector of St. George's, Canterbury, and rector of Milton, does not appear to have been popular with members of his congregation in either parish. Between 1637 and 1638, he was presented at St. George's for not officiating on Holy Days, Wednesdays and Fridays. He had presented the churchwardens in 1636 for failing to deliver up "certain writings", and so it is quite possible that they presented him partly out of sheer annoyance.² In 1638, Jackson presented his churchwardens for refusing to levy a church rate to finance the setting up of the communion table altarwise. Their objections could have been based purely on financial considerations, but it is possible that ideological factors also played a part. Between 1637 and 1638, Jackson was presented by the churchwardens of Milton for not reading prayers on Wednesdays and Fridays and the eves of Sundays and Holy Days and Fast Days, for not giving warning of communion, for failing to beat the bounds of the parish during Rogation Week and for officiating and preaching on one Sunday in each month only. For his part, Mr. Jackson claimed that this parish was small and that his predecessor had

1. CALC, X6-2, f.109.

2. CALC, X6-10, ff.120,173.

officiated on one Sunday in each month only.¹ However, this would not have cut any ice with Puritan members of his congregation who were presented in 1637 for gadding to other churches to hear sermons.² Ten Laudian ministers, Mr. Ewell, one of the six preachers in Canterbury Cathedral and rector of Barfreestone, Miles Barnes, vicar of Lyminge, Christopher Bachelor, vicar of Tonge, Dr. Francis Carter, rector of Stourmouth, William Jervis, vicar of Sturry, George May, vicar of Willesborough, Mr. Nokes, vicar of Preston-next-Wingham, Mr. Thomas, rector of Crundall, Edward Nicholls, vicar of Northbourne and Shoulden, and Daniel Bullen, Minor Canon of Canterbury and vicar of St. Mary Northgate, Canterbury, were presented for not reading prayers on Wednesdays, Fridays and the eves of Sundays and Holy Days.³ In the presentments of Jervis and Thomas it was reported that their parishioners did not attend church. Nicholls claimed that he tolled the bells himself, but no one came.⁴ It is likely that Nicholls was on bad terms with his churchwardens for presenting them for not having the church bell repaired.⁵ Daniel Bullen had presented his churchwardens for not exhibiting bills of marriages, christenings and burials.⁶ Five of the Laudian ministers in our sample were petitioned against to parliament in the early 1640's for Laudianism, amongst other things, and four of them were subsequently ejected from their livings.⁷ Miles Barnes was said to have spoken:

"to the justifying of the papists having images and said they

1. CALC, X6-10, ff.196-7.

2. CALC, Z3-16, ff.48-9.

3. CALC, X5-7, pt.II, f.227, X6-3, f.249, X6-6, ff.203,206,208, X7-3, ff.27-8; LPL VG4/16, f.33, VG4/19, f.21, VG4/21, f.25, VG4/22, f.67.

4. CALC, X5-7, pt.II, f.227, X6-6, f.208; LPL, VG4/21, f.25.

5. CALC, X5-7, pt.II, f.208.

6. CALC, Z4-6, f.173.

7. The four ministers who were ejected were: Miles Barnes, Francis Carter, William Jervis and Edward Nicholls. Walker Revised, pp.210,213,220,223.

worshipped not the images but had them in remembrance of saints, saying they were in a righter way than we."

William Jervis was said to have been:

"famously noted for a forward agent in superstition and popish innovation,"

one who possessed a crucifix in a frame hanging in his parlour; moreover, he had threatened the churchwardens with proceedings in the Court of High Commission if they refused to place the communion table altarwise in the chancel. Furthermore, before the second service, during the singing of the forty third Psalm, when the people sang, "then will I to the altar go", Jervis:

"did go to the said altar and bowed three times in going up to it and in coming down."

Above all, he alienated members of his congregation by compelling them to receive the communion on their knees before the altar rail. Jervis was said to have been contentious and litigious. Mr. Thomas, rector of Crundall, alienated some of his parishioners; for it was said that he habitually bowed at the name of Jesus, preached only once in fourteen days and:

"often inveighs against Puritans, saying that it will not be well until they be out of the land."

Edward Nicholls was said to have adorned his altar with a cross.' It is quite possible that these ministers' strong adherence to the practice of Laudian ceremonialism was an important contributory factor in their presentment for dereliction of duty.

It is likely that Dr. Francis Carter's Laudianism, preaching style and tithe policy contributed to his unpopularity in his parish of Stourmouth and thus made him a likely candidate for presentment. In 1640, he was presented not only for not reading prayers on Wednesdays

Fridays and the eves of Holy Days and Sundays, but also for refusing to church the wife of one John May, who would not come up to the altar to be churched, but had:

"meekly kneeled before his face in the accustomed child bed pew as it was called, where the women of the parish have ever customarily and usually presented themselves."¹

Moreover, in a petition to parliament of 1641, members of his congregation complained that he was:

"a zealous observer of all innovations as bowing and cringing to the communion table."

Furthermore, his preaching style was very often obscure; and on some occasions he railed against his parishioners from his pulpit. On one particular Sunday he declared that:

"they may all go to the devil if they would, for he would take no more care of them."

On another, after he had preached about love, he went on to threaten to sue his parishioners for the payment of the parish clerk's wages, even though he had chosen a parish clerk without asking for their consent. It was reported that he had exacted heavy tithes from his parishioners, and those who would not pay more than the customary *modus* of twelve pence an acre were sued in the church courts. Moreover, he had threatened to demand his tithes in kind, but he does not appear to have done so. His parishioners added that the reason why he had demanded heavy tithes from them was so that he could recoup his losses made at the gaming table. Although Carter was presented in 1640 for frequently playing dice and cards, this statement should be treated with caution as it was more than likely based on hearsay.² In fact, Dr. Carter had replaced the Puritan minister, George Huntley, who had been deprived of the rectory

1. CALC, X7-3, ff.20,27-8.

2. CALC, X6-6, f.266, X7-3, f.27.

of Stourmouth in 1627 for refusing to preach a visitation sermon. In 1640, a group of parishioners petitioned for the latter's re-instatement at Stourmouth.¹

A group of ten ministers in our study cannot be classified as Puritan or Laudian, but they do seem to have been involved in conflict in their parishes. It is likely that nine of these ministers had alienated their respective churchwardens by presenting them for negligence and this might have been an important reason why these ministers were presented for dereliction of duty. In 1628, John Aymes, curate of Loose, was presented for failing to catechise the young people of his parish and for failing to perform divine service on 5th. November 1628.² Poor relations with his churchwarden and parish clerk were an important factor which probably lay behind this presentment. In 1627, Aymes had presented his churchwarden, Thomas Crisp, for entertaining company in his house during divine service on 22nd. October 1626. In the same year Crisp had presented Aymes for frequenting alehouses, adding that the latter had declared belligerently that:

"he cared not how often he be presented to Canterbury for he says that it cost him about sixpence a time beside his journey."

Aymes replied that he had been at the alehouse on urgent business.³

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1. Mr. Hoard, curate of Otham, whose religious leanings are unknown, was another minister who must have found it difficult to be accepted by his new parishioners, after he had replaced their popular Puritan minister. He was sent to Otham to replace Thomas Wilson, the rector there, temporarily, after the latter had been deprived of his living in 1635 for refusing to read the Book of Sports. Hoard was said to have omitted prayers on Wednesdays, Fridays and the eves of Holy Days and Sundays. It was reported that he was lodging in an alehouse. To the latter charge he replied that a room in an alehouse was all he could afford on his meagre income of £12 a year. CALC, X6-5, pt. II, f. 15; HLRO, HLMP, 10th November 1640; Larking, p. 198; Clark, pp. 365, 370.
 2. CALC, Z4-5, f. 116.
 3. CALC, Z4-4, ff. 22, 214.

A year later Crisp sued Aymes in the consistory court. Though the actual cause at issue cannot be discerned, during the course of the case a lurid picture of Aymes' life was painted, mainly by William and John Charlton, who claimed that he had been an habitual drunkard and a player of card games.¹ However, these allegations should be treated with caution as they were uttered by witnesses for the plaintiff in order to strengthen the case against Aymes. It is likely that the evidence was based upon isolated incidents or gossip. Moreover, the Puritan William Charlton would not have been well disposed towards Aymes, for the latter had presented him and members of his family for gadding to other churches to hear sermons.² John Aymes was also on bad terms with his parish clerk, Thomas Davies, with whom, it was reported, he had brawled. In his defence, Aymes replied that Davies had called him a "dumb dog".³ In view of the evidence it is possible that an element of Puritan pressure lay behind the presentation of Aymes for neglect of duty.

Mr. Copley, rector of Pluckley, was another minister who might have been presented for neglect of duty partly because he was on bad terms with his churchwardens. In 1637, it was reported that he did not read prayers on Wednesdays, Fridays or on Candlemas Day; moreover, his parsonage house needed repair. He, in his turn, had presented his churchwardens for not exhibiting their bills of presentment. Their reply is illuminating. They said that they had originally made presentments with Copley, but they could not justify the content of these presentments and so they had made new ones. Copley's reputation for being "choleric" and for resorting to tithe litigation might also have

1. CALC, PRC 39/39, f.80.

2. CALC, Z4-6, ff.224,250.

3. Aymes did, in fact, possess a Master of Arts degree. CALC, Z4 5, f.94; Al.Cantab., vol.I, p.27.

made him unpopular. On Sunday, 29th. December 1634, in his church:

"he did say before God that Sir Edward Dering and his brother Henry Dering did disturb him in his sermon with loud talking, he then also did loudly charge the said Sir Edward Dering with want of obedience and duty to him. He then also scorned at the degrees of Sir Edward Dering, scoffing at his knighthood, at his baronetship, he then also charged the said Sir Edward Dering with wrong and injustice done to him; and the said Sir Edward Dering was ill-bred, and divers times replied that the said Sir Edward Dering had not the grace of God and that he was the proudest man in the world, he then protested that he went in fear of his life by reason of the malice and wrong done to him and derided and scornfully called Henry Dering....an illiterate fellow. All this was done with great heat and passion."

Copley's insulting behaviour directed towards the Kentish M.P. and his brother would most certainly have been remembered by the people of Pluckley. The "wrong done to him" refers to a tithe case which Copley brought against the Derings and their tenants in the Exchequer court. Briefly, Copley claimed that the Derings were occupying land which rightfully belonged to the rectory of Pevington, which had been united to the rectory of Pluckley in the thirtieth year of Henry VIII's reign. The Derings denied that this land belonged to the rectory of Pevington, and further denied that the two churches had been united, adding that the rectory of Pevington was disused and deserted. Moreover, they affirmed that Copley's claim to tithes for both rectories was fraudulent and that the latter had sought to increase his tithe yield by breaking with custom.² In 1636, Copley petitioned the archbishop for redress; at the same time, Sir Edward Dering wrote to Laud about this matter, maintaining that:

"he never did nor shall find Mr. Copley a friend nor can, unless the leopard change his spots."³

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1. Sir Edward Dering's pride and conceitedness have been noted by A.J.Fletcher in Outbreak of the English Civil War, pp.38,256; LPL, VG4/15, f.25.
 2. PRO, E112 190 139 (Easter.1634).
 3. F.Haslewood, "The Rectors of Pluckley, Kent, for Upwards of Six Hundred Years", Archaeologia Cantiana, vol.22 (1897), p.90.

The outcome of this case is unknown; but Copley's stand in this issue would have caused ill-feeling in the parish.

William Lawse, rector of Brooke, Mr. Bower, vicar of Petham, William Master, rector of Rucking, Mr. Langley, rector of Shadoxhurst, Mr. Cotymer, rector of Burmarsh, and John Stone, curate of Tenham, were all presented for occasional neglect of religious duties and each had presented their churchwardens for dereliction of duty, which might help explain why they were presented themselves.' Two ministers, Dr. James Cleyland, rector of Old Romney, and Henry Cuffin, curate of Rucking, so far remain unclassified in our study. Cleyland was presented in 1626 for non-residence and for not providing a curate to officiate in his absence. In his defence, he said that he had been unaware of the fact that his curate had left the parish. It is likely that Cleyland was an unpopular minister for it was reported that:

"he had often reviled and is wont to vilify his parishioners... by contumacious and reproachful words and unseemly terms and appellations, seconded with envious and execrable cursings, swearings and evil intreating."²

In 1629, Cuffin's behaviour was also considered unacceptable by his parishioners, for not only had he neglected his cure when children needed to be baptized and the dead buried, but also on:

"many Sundays and Sabbath days last summer, after he had read divine service at evening prayer in the afternoon, did immediately go and play at cricket in very unseemly manner with boys and other very mean and base persons, to the great scandal of his ministry and the offence of such as saw him play at the same game."

His reply, that his fellow cricket players were, in fact, persons "of repute and fashion", would not have impressed the Puritan members of his congregation.³

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1. CALC, X6-6, ff.12,28,30,37, X6-7, f.168, X6-9, ff.4,5,83,138,147, 153-4, X7-1, ff.39,246, Z4-6, f.172.
 2. CALC, Z4-4, f.172.
 3. CALC, X6-1, f.331.

In conclusion, it is likely that the ninety ministers in our study do not represent the sum total of those ministers in the diocese of Canterbury who were guilty of dereliction of duty between 1625 and 1642. This is because, first, the system of presentation was so haphazard and, second, a number of the ministers in our study were guilty of neglect on only a few occasions. Few ministers were guilty of complete negligence. There must have been other ministers who erred on occasion, but who were left undisturbed in their parishes. As it has been demonstrated, there were many reasons why ministers found themselves presented at visitations; and it is more than likely that their relations with their churchwardens and parishioners played a vital part in this process. It is likely that behind many presentations for dereliction of duty there lurked disputes between ministers and their respective churchwardens and groups of parishioners.' This would go a long way to explain why some ministers escaped presentment and others did not. Puritan ministers were just as likely to have been involved in local disputes as their Laudian colleagues. It is likely that churchwardens added an accusation of negligence to composite presentments against some ministers in order to add weight to the cases against those ministers, even though the latter had erred on only a few occasions. In the last analysis, it is true to say that churchwardens, often with the backing of certain sections of their respective congregations could, and did, bring the visitation process to bear against unpopular ministers.

1. It is interesting to note that about a quarter of the thirty ministers in our study, whose presentment for dereliction of duty is likely to have been at least partly the result of conflict in their respective parishes, suffered the ultimate humiliation of being ejected from their benefices in the 1640's. Walker Revised, pp.210-13,219-20,223,227.

THE EJECTION OF MINISTERS 1640-59

A.G. Matthews has calculated that during the 1640's and 1650's about two thousand four hundred and twenty five benefices in England and Wales were sequestered from approximately two thousand one hundred and twenty ministers.¹ Moreover, Walker had included a further one hundred and eighty ejected ministers in his calculations and these were perpetual curates, assistant curates, wardens of hospitals, preachers and lecturers. Walker also took into account those ministers who lost their respective cures due to old age, pluralism or the fact that they lived in a war zone and those who managed to cling to their livings, but who were:

"imprisoned, fined, molested, hauled before a committee [and] lost their personal estate or office such as [that of] prebend."

This, according to Dr. Green, brings the total figure to two thousand, seven hundred and eighty men.² As my own study is concerned mainly with beneficed ministers and perpetual curates, I shall be using A.G. Matthews definition of persecuted ministers, with two exceptions: I shall include in my calculations those ministers who were ejected due to old age and pluralism, as well as perpetual curates. Between 1641 and 1660 a total of seventy eight ministers were ejected from eighty seven livings in the diocese of Canterbury and this represents thirty four per cent of all parishes in this area. This is above the national average which was twenty eight per cent, but well below the average in London, which was eighty six per cent. The figures for Bedfordshire are closer to the national average, for, there, thirty two ministers were ejected from

1. Walker Revised, pp.xiv-xv.

2. Green, "Scandal", p.508.

thirty two parishes and this represents twenty seven per cent of the total number of parishes in that county.¹ Two successive ministers were ejected from each of the Bedfordshire parishes of Flitton, Haynes and Melchbourne.² Two Kentish ministers, Isaac Bargrave, Dean of Canterbury and rector of Chartham and William Dunkin, Canon of Canterbury and vicar of St. Lawrence, Thanet, died in the 1640's; and it is likely that they would have lost their benefices had they lived. The same might be said of Christopher Slater, vicar of Leighton Buzzard in Bedfordshire.³ Moreover, Henry Crispe, rector of Newchurch in Kent, was "plundered of all [his] goods and threatened with hanging", but he managed to hold on to his benefice. Articles against Edward Gonneston, vicar of Seasalter, and James Lambe, Minor Canon of Canterbury and vicar of Holy Cross, Westgate, Canterbury, and Thomas Judkin, rector of Turvey in Bedfordshire, were referred to the Committee for Plundered Ministers in the mid-1640's, but there is no evidence to suggest that ejection took place. John Bankes was granted the vicarage of Ivychurch in 1646 on condition that he resigned his preachingship at Canterbury Cathedral.⁴ In 1643, William Pedder resigned from his perpetual curacy of Dunstable in Bedfordshire shortly after a rota of lecturers was appointed to that

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1. BL, Add. MSS.15669-71; Walker Revised, pp.64-7,84-5,208-28; Green, "Scandal", p.523.
 2. William Ramsey and John Gardner were ejected from Flitton in 1647 and 1655 respectively; Thomas Joyce and John Bird were ejected from Haynes in 1643 and 1645 respectively and John Ailmer and John Warren were ejected from Melchbourne in 1644 and 1656 respectively. Walker Revised, pp.64-7.
 3. Isaac Bargrave was imprisoned in the Fleet in 1642 and he died in the following year, shortly after he was released. William Dunkin was charged on many counts including, frequenting alehouses and drinking Prince Rupert's health, bowing before the church altar, reading the Book of Sports and declaring that "the Scots coming was as dangerous as the Spanish invasion". He died in 1644. Christopher Slater was said to have "promoted superstitious innovation" and to have lived a scandalous life. He died in 1642. Walker Revised, pp.66,210,215-6.
 4. BL, Add. MS.15669, f.233; HLRO, HLMP 10th. September 1642; Walker Revised, pp.210,215,221.

town by the House of Commons.¹ It is my intention to investigate why so many ministers were ejected from their livings in the diocese of Canterbury and archdeaconry of Bedford. Moreover, I shall test Dr. Green's theory that:

"cooperation between determined members of the county committee and discontented elements in parishes under their control was a crucial factor in the ejection of the parish ministry."

One important difficulty has been encountered, and that is, how far can one believe all the charges brought against ministers, particularly when they are expressed in a set or common form? This will be taken into account as far as possible during our investigation. But first, in order to understand the full significance of clerical ejections one should investigate the religious and political climate in the areas of our study during the 1630's, 1640's and 1650's.

The general picture in the diocese of Canterbury in the 1630's and 1640's was one of insularity and moderation in religion and politics. Dr. Everitt has concluded this from his study of the natural rulers of the county - the thirty or so old Kentish families who were all related in some way and who dominated Kentish society. These families, together with the majority of the clergy in the diocese can be termed Anglican; and if they desired reform, they wanted it to be achieved gradually, without civil disorder.² In 1640 and 1641, nineteen petitions against eighteen ministers were received by the Long Parliament's Committee for Religion which was chaired by the Kentish M.P., Sir Edward Dering. These petitions had been organized by local gentry, including the Rouths of Boughton Blean and Edward Alchorne of Bredhurst, and were signed by groups of parishioners which varied in

1. BRO, ABCP 45-6; Walker Revised, p.65.

2. Fletcher, The Outbreak of the English Civil War, pp.288-9,291; Everitt, pp.14,52,54,56.

size from parish to parish. Most petitions contained a number of articles of complaint and, although one should treat these petitions with caution, it is clear that they were moderate in character. The main causes of discontent were pluralism and its accompanying abuse, absenteeism, as well as litigious and contentious behaviour on the part of the clergy. Only six ministers were accused of implementing Laudian innovations; and there is only one case of Arminian doctrine. Accusations of scandalous life feature in only six petitions.¹ These petitions provided evidence for thirteen ejections between 1642 and 1647.² It is interesting to note that five of the ministers cited in the petitions were not ejected from their livings even though their crimes did not differ from those of the other thirteen.³ The strength of Anglicanism in the diocese of Canterbury can be illustrated by the Kentish petition of 1642, organized by the gentry, including Sir Edward Dering. It has been called a:

"statement of the religious and political convictions of the community of Kent."

Support was declared for the Anglican liturgy and the episcopacy and it was suggested that a synod of "pious and judicious divines" should be chosen by all the clergy to settle religious matters.⁴ Radical Puritanism and separatism tended to be particularly strong in the Weald, Romney Marsh and towards the extreme east of the diocese around Dover and Sandwich. A petition of 1640, which demanded the abolition of episcopacy

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1. The petition from Lidsing and Bredhurst against Richard Tray should be treated with caution, as evidence suggests that this petition grew out of Alchorne's personal animosity against Tray. Larking, pp.104-7,113-17,121-3,133-4,145-6,157-62,174-7,185-8,196-200,202-5, 229-32,236-9.
 2. Walker Revised, pp.210-13,220,222-3,225-7.
 3. Larking, pp.113-14,121-2,158-60,190,236-9.
 4. This petition was rejected by parliament as subversive. Everitt, pp.96-7,127.

and which was based on a petition sent down from London, was signed by two thousand five hundred people living in the Wealden, cloth-producing parishes. When this petition was modified by Sir Edward Dering, many of these radicals turned their attention towards the Anglican Prayer Book, much to the sorrow of the Anglican vicar of Cranbrook, Robert Abbot.¹ Another petition organized by parliamentarians, which attacked the episcopacy, inspired the moderate gentry to organize the county petition of 1642.²

In 1642, a small parliamentary clique of gentry took control of Kent. In fact, this group of parliamentarians consisted mainly of new Kentish gentry whose roots were not in the county. They found the county almost impossible to control. In the early 1640's the county was becoming increasingly alienated from parliament because of the latter's religious, military and fiscal policies. Moreover, the people of Kent were antagonized particularly by parliament's rejection of the county petition of 1642, which included a cry for an understanding between the King and that body and also by the expulsion of Sir Edward Dering from the House of Commons. A rift grew in the county committee between the moderate gentry and the dominant group of extremist parliamentarians which was led by the committee's chairman, Sir Anthony Weldon. In fact, Weldon's group was becoming increasingly isolated from moderate opinion in Kent. There were three armed uprisings in the county, the first against the Covenant in 1643, the second in 1645, against the religious, political and fiscal consequences of parliamentary rule, and the final rebellion of 1648, which began with a riot in Canterbury in defence of the

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1. BL, Stowe MS.184, ff.27-9,43-4; Everitt, pp.86-7; Collinson, ed. Brook, Reformation Principle and Practice: Essays in Honour of A.G. Dickens, pp.201-2; Fletcher, The Outbreak of the English Civil War, p.96.
 2. Everitt, p.96.

celebration of Christmas Day, and which was participated in by an enormous number of Kentish people of all political shades. A clue to parliament's difficulties in controlling this county might be found in the social and political structure of the county. The natural rulers of Kentish society were the group of thirty or so interrelated gentry families already mentioned. They were insular in outlook and primarily concerned with county matters, such as the management of their estates, law and order and the maintenance of local custom, rather than with national issues. Many, such as the Derings, Twysdens and Oxindens, were moderate both in their political and religious views and found it difficult to make an outright decision between King and parliament. The Cavaliers on the one hand and the extreme parliamentarians on the other, could not command the substantial support of the Kentish people, whose loyalty lay with the moderates. The moderates were Anglicans, who blenched at the extremist religious policies of parliament. The Covenant and the abolition of the use of the Book of Common Prayer could not be strictly enforced in Kent.' The moderates on the county committee:

"resolutely opposed both the attempt by the Weldonians to sequestrate the Anglican clergy and the efforts of parliament to set on foot a presbyterian classis....under the aegis of the committee itself, Anglican ministers remained unmolested in hundreds of Kentish parishes."²

The archdeaconry of Bedford was also within the parliamentary sphere of influence and this was due mainly to its proximity to London. There were only a few members of the gentry who were enthusiastic supporters of the parliamentary cause, and these included Sir Samuel Luke, who was Member of Parliament for the town of Bedford, Scoutmaster General to the Earl of Essex and Governor General of the parliamentary

1. Everitt, pp.107,128,190,200,215-16,225; Morrill, The Revolt of the Provinces (London, 1982), pp.94-5,104-5,127-8.
2. Everitt, p.225.

garrison at Newport Pagnell. Most Bedfordshire people of all political shades tended to be rather apathetic, although, in December 1642, the county sent petitions to Parliament and the King respectively, asking them to negotiate with each other. Like their contemporaries in Kent, the people of Bedfordshire became increasingly alienated by the policies of parliament. The presence of armies and the demands for free quarter and supplies was felt more severely in Bedfordshire than in Kent. The economic effects of civil war and the disturbance to the routine of Bedfordshire life that war entailed was felt to be intolerable.¹ The general religious atmosphere in the county prior to the outbreak of the Civil War is difficult to gauge due to the paucity of documentary evidence. Following his visitation of the diocese of Lincoln in 1634, Archbishop Laud referred to the archdeaconry of Bedford as "the most tainted part of the diocese".² Moreover, he declared that:

"Divers ministers in Bedford...are suspected for nonconformity," but nothing could be proved.³ Only one Bedfordshire minister, Peter Buckley, rector of Odell, was deprived as a result of that visitation.⁴ In the 1630's and early 1640's, it is likely that most ministers in Bedfordshire were Anglican in sympathy. This can also be said of most members of the local gentry, including parliamentarians such as Sir Samuel Luke.⁵ However, in spite of the strength of Anglicanism in both areas of our study, seventy eight Kentish ministers and thirty two

1. Godber, History of Bedfordshire, p.250; H.G. Tibbutt, "Bedfordshire and the First Civil War", Moot Hall Leaflet no.3 (1973), pp.3-4, 6,7,9-10,13-14,19-20.

2. Laud, Works, vol.V, p.325.

3. PRO, SP16/274/12, f.23.

4. Peter Buckley was deprived for failing to conform to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England in the conduct of divine service by refusing to wear a surplice and make the sign of the cross in baptism. Buckley went to New England in 1635. PRO, SP16/308/27; Laud, Works, vol.V, p.325; VCH Bedford, vol.I, p.337.

5. Godber, History of Bedford, p.230.

Bedfordshire ministers were deprived of their livings and it is to the important question of why this happened that we must now turn.

Before any attempt at an analysis of the specific reasons why these ministers can be ejected can be made, it must be stated that the reason why twenty eight Kentish ministers and sixteen Bedfordshire ministers were ejected is unknown.¹ Therefore, in order to find clues as to why so many lost their livings a study must be made of the dates of ejection of all the ministers, the actual ministers themselves and their livings. Did these ministers have anything in common? Are there any patterns in the dates of ejection?

Table 10. The Dates of Ejection of Ministers in the Diocese of Canterbury and Archdeaconry of Bedford 1641-58.²

| Date | Diocese of Canterbury | Archdeaconry of Bedford |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1642 | 3 | 3 |
| 1643 | 18 | 5 |
| 1644 | 10 | 4 |
| 1645 | 26 | 6 |
| 1646 | 7 | 3 |
| 1647 | 3 | 4 |
| 1648 | - | - |
| 1649 | 2 | - |
| 1650 | 1 | - |
| 1651 | - | - |
| 1652 | 1 | - |
| 1653 | - | - |
| 1654 | - | - |
| 1655 | 2 | 1 |
| 1656 | - | 4 |
| 1657 | 2 | - |
| 1658 | 1 | - |
| Date Unknown | 2 | 2 |
| TOTALS | 78 | 32 |

1. Petitions against only five Bedfordshire ministers are extant; those against John Gwin, vicar of Cople, John Pocklington, rector of Yelden, Hugh Reeve, rector of Ampthill, Edward Savadge, rector of Tilbrook and Giles Thorne, rector of St. Mary's, Bedford. HLRO, HLMP, 16th. Jan. 1640-41, 27th. Aug. 1642; PRO, SP/16/499/90, vol.V, p.332, vol.VI, p.171; The Petition of I. Harveyl of Cardington... gentleman (London, 1641); Articles...Against John Gwin, Vicar of Cople (London, 1641).
2. BL, Add. MSS.15669-71; Walker Revised, pp.64-7,84-5,208-28.

Table 10 reveals that three quarters of the ministers in our study from the diocese of Canterbury and sixty per cent of those from the archdeaconry of Bedford had been ejected by the end of 1645. No obvious patterns can be detected from the figures for Bedfordshire; but it is likely that the spate of ejections in Kent between 1643 and 1645 had some connection with the two Kentish risings of those years, but no direct connection can be made between the ministers themselves and the events of these years. In the diocese of Canterbury the Laudian ministers were not necessarily deprived first. Of the three ministers ejected in 1642, only Humphrey Peake, Canon of Canterbury, rector of Acrise and vicar of Tenterden can be termed a Laudian minister. The other fourteen Laudians were deprived between 1643 and 1646. William Kingsley, the Archdeacon of Canterbury, for example, was not deprived of all his preferments until 1644. Furthermore, the Arminian vicar of Woodchurch, Edward Boughen, was not ejected from his benefice until 1645. The Laudian ministers, Samuel Smith, vicar of Boughton Blean, and Daniel Bullen, rector of St. Mary Northgate, Canterbury, were each deprived in 1646. In Bedfordshire, the ejection of Laudian ministers was a little more prompt, for John Pocklington, rector of Yelden, Giles Thorne, rector of St. Mary's, Bedford, and Hugh Reeve, rector of Ampthill, were all deprived of their livings by the end of 1642.¹ However, the other two ministers in our study who can be termed Laudian, Edward Martin, rector of Houghton Conquest, and Edward Savadge, rector of Tilbrook, were ejected in 1644 and 1646 respectively.² Those Kentish ministers who were reported to the Committee for Religion in 1640 and 1641, and who were subsequently ejected, were not ejected at a

1. Hugh Reeve was also an Arminian.

2. BL, Add. MS.15670, f.55; Walker Revised, pp.66,84-5,208,210-18, 219-20,223,225.

particularly early date. Of these thirteen ministers one was ejected in 1642, two in 1643, one in 1644, six in 1645, two in 1646 and Richard Tray did not lose Lidsing and Bredhurst until 1647.¹ In both the diocese of Canterbury and archdeaconry of Bedford pluralists do not seem to have been strong candidates for early ejection. Details of the ejection of pluralists in the diocese of Canterbury is shown on Table 11, below.

Table 11. Ejection of Pluralists in the Diocese of Canterbury.²

| Categories | 1642 | 1643 | 1644 | 1645 | Later |
|--|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Those who lost one of their two livings | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 |
| Those who lost all their livings | 0 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 0 |
| Those who lost one and cathedral office ³ | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Those who lost all livings and cathedral office | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| TOTALS | 1 | 7 | 4 | 9 | 3 |

So far it has been difficult to detect definite patterns in the ejection of ministers. However, one can say with confidence that Laudian ministers were deprived by the end of 1646 and thereafter the nature of what was termed scandalous religious practice changed.⁴

The ejection of ministers in the diocese of Canterbury cannot be successfully linked with the fact that this was William Laud's diocese, for the proportion of livings sequestered there was not larger than either the national average or the proportion of livings sequestered in the archdeaconry of Bedford, which was in the moderate Bishop Williams' diocese of Lincoln. In fact, there was a relatively high number of ejections in this latter diocese. Moreover, in Neile's diocese of York the number of ejections was relatively small; and in Wren's diocese, there was a smaller number of ejections in Norfolk than there were in the two

1. Larking, pp.160-73; Walker Revised, pp.210-3,220-2,225-6.

2. Walker Revised, pp.209-28.

3. That is: those who possessed only one living.

4. Below, p.192.

adjacent counties.¹ A close investigation of ejection in Laud's diocese reveals that there were regional variations, for the number of ejections varied greatly between deaneries. The number of sequestered livings varied from fourteen per cent in the deanery of Ospringe and fifteen per cent in the deanery of Bridge, which was well below the national average, to sixty per cent in the deanery of Charing, followed by fifty per cent in Westbere deanery and forty six per cent in the deanery of Sutton, which was well above the national average of twenty eight per cent.² It is interesting to note that the deaneries of Charing and Sutton lie within the Weald and that, together with the deanery of Westbere on the east coast, they were the areas where religious radicalism was strongest in the diocese of Canterbury. One is therefore led to suggest that local conditions and the attitude of parishioners to individual ministers is crucial in any explanation of the ejection of ministers from their benefices. In the archdeaconry of Bedford the number of sequestered livings are spread out fairly evenly across the county, apart from the deanery of Bedford where thirty eight per cent of the benefices suffered sequestration. This area is known for its religious radicalism.³

Dr. Green has claimed that by no means all those ministers who

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1. Green, "Scandal", p.524.
 2. The full statistics for the diocese of Canterbury are:- Bridge deanery:fifteen per cent, Canterbury deanery:thirty five per cent, Charing deanery:sixty per cent, Dover deanery:thirty five per cent, Elham deanery:thirty eight per cent, Lympne deanery:twenty per cent, Ospringe deanery:fourteen per cent, Sandwich deanery:nineteen per cent, Sittingbourne deanery:thirty eight per cent, Sutton deanery: forty six per cent and Westbere deanery:fifty per cent. BL, Add. MSS.15669-71; Walker Revised, pp.209-28.
 3. The statistics for Bedfordshire are:- Bedford deanery:thirty eight per cent, Clapham deanery:twenty two per cent, Dunstable deanery: twenty six per cent, Eaton deanery:twenty eight per cent, Fleete deanery:twenty six per cent and Shefford deanery:twenty six per cent. BL, Add. MS.15669-71; Walker Revised, pp.64-7,84-5.

were appointed by royalist patrons were ejected from their livings.¹ This is certainly borne out by the evidence from the two areas of our study. In the diocese of Canterbury only four livings were in the gift of known royalist gentry and in the archdeaconry of Bedford the corresponding figure was two. Moreover, Richard Parker, patron of the sequestered rectory of Wickhambreux in Kent and Oliver St. John, Earl of Bolingbroke, patron of the sequestered livings of Melchbourne and Bletsoe in Bedfordshire, were staunch parliamentarians.² Furthermore, although the archbishop was the patron of at least thirty eight per cent of the livings sequestered in his diocese, this only represents just over half of the total number of livings in the gift of the archbishop. It might be objected that the ejected incumbents had been presented by Laud rather than Abbot. However, ten per cent of the subsequently sequestered livings in the gift of the archbishop had been granted to nine ministers by Archbishop Abbot before the late 1620's. Three of these ministers, Robert Barrell, rector of Boughton Malherbe and perpetual curate of Maidstone, Thomas Jackson, vicar of Ivychurch, and William Jervis, vicar of Sturry, can be termed Laudian, thus revealing that appointment by Archbishop Abbot is not necessarily a gauge of religious leanings. A further ten of the sequestered livings were presented by the archdeacon or dean and chapter of Canterbury, but this figure only represents just over a third of the livings in their gift.³ There is probably a connection between ejection and the possession of cathedral office.

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1. Green, "Scandal", p.524.
 2. Sir John Tufton for Hothfield, Lady Elizabeth Finch for Eastling, Anthony St. Leger for Ulcombe and Richard Hardres for St. Mary Bredin, Canterbury. The two Bedfordshire royalists were Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Cleveland for Toddington and Tingrith and Richard Conquest for Houghton Conquest. Everitt, pp.107,118,153, 257,275n,311; Tibbutt, Moot Hall Leaflet no.3(1973), pp.3-5.
 3. BL, Lansdowne MS.958, ff.135-40.

Apart from William Kingsley, the Archdeacon of Canterbury, nine deprived clergymen had been canons or preachers in Canterbury Cathedral and a further three possessed cathedral office at Lincoln, Llandaff and St. David's, respectively.' A total of five ejected ministers from Bedfordshire possessed high offices in the Church.² Walker's view that the authorities tended to sequester richer livings so that they could give them to their favourite preachers cannot be supported by evidence from the diocese of Canterbury. More than fifty per cent of the seventy three sequestered livings for which values can be given were worth £50 a year or less. Moreover, as many as a third of the livings in the diocese worth £40 a year or less and only fifty four per cent of the livings worth £80 a year or more were sequestered in the diocese of Canterbury.³

Were those who were ejected from their livings amongst the least educated members of the clerical profession? A study of the educational background of these ministers who were deprived of their benefices reveals that this was not the case; in fact, these ministers were amongst the most educated in their respective areas. Just over ninety per cent of both Kentish and Bedfordshire ministers in our study had attended university. This is a similar proportion to the average number

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1. Canons of Canterbury: Thomas Blechinden, Daniel Bullen, Meric Casaubon, Thomas Jackson, John Jeffreys, William Jordan, Humphrey Peake and John Reading, Preacher: James Burville, Prebend of Lincoln: Edward Simpson, Prebend of St. David's and Treasurer of Llandaff: Francis Mansell, Treasurer of St. David's: William Slater. *AL Cantab.*, vol.I, pp.166,174,269, vol.II, pp.458,465,489, vol.III, p.327, vol.IV, p.79; *AL Oxon.*, pp.248,967,1242,1364.
 2. Prebend of Westminster: Gabriel Moore, Prebend of Peterborough and Canon of Canterbury: John Pocklington, Archdeacon of Buckinghamshire (collated, but not installed until 1660): Giles Thorne, Archdeacon of Coventry: Francis Walsall, Archdeacon of Norfolk and Canon of Worcester: Robert White. *AL Oxon.*, p.1023; *AL Cantab.*, vol.III, pp.375,389, vol.IV, p.325; F.A. Blaydes, "Giles Thorne, D.D., rector of St. Peter De Dunstable", *BNQ*, vol.2(1889), pp.240-1.
 3. BL, Lansdowne MS.958, ff.135-40; Green, "Scandal", p.524.

of ministers in the 1630's from these two areas who attended university in the 1630's.' The best illustration that the ejected ministers of the diocese of Canterbury and archdeaconry of Bedford were amongst the most highly educated in the diocese is that over ninety per cent of those who had attended university had achieved the degree of Master of Arts or above and of these, at least a quarter were Doctors of Divinity. Altogether, only three Kentish ministers, William Axon, rector of Great Chart, Meric Casaubon, vicar of Monkton and Minster, and John Gough, vicar of Hackington, and two Bedfordshire ministers, Nathaniel Hill, vicar of Renhold, and Giles Thorne, rector of St. Mary's, Bedford, were at the University of Oxford at the time when William Laud was Chancellor there. Of these, however, only Casaubon and Thorne can be termed Laudian and John Gough attended the Puritan Magdalen College. Only one deprived minister attended Laud's old college of St. John's, Oxford, and that was George Wilde, rector of Biddenden in Kent. He was Fellow of the college between 1631 and 1648 and in 1635 he achieved the degree of Bachelor of Canon Law.² It is interesting to note that a few deprived ministers from the diocese of Canterbury had attended the traditionally Puritan colleges of Oxford and Cambridge. John Gough, John Marston, minister of St. Mary Magdalen and St. Mary Bredin, Canterbury, Richard Jaggard, vicar of Lympne, and John Wood, vicar of Marden, had attended Magdalen College, Oxford, and Henry Dering, vicar of Newington and Lower Halstow, Henry Hannington, vicar of Hougham, William Kingsley, rector of Saltwood, and John Reading, vicar of St. Mary's, Dover, had all attended Magdalen Hall, Oxford. Moreover, the Puritan college of Emmanuel, Cambridge, had been attended by five more Kentish ministers, John Aymes, curate of Loose,

1. Al.Cantab.; Al.Oxon..

2. Al.Oxon., pp.47,248,1479,1631; Al.Cantab., vol.II, p.372.

Edward Barbette, vicar of Chislet, Phineas Cosby, vicar of Hollingbourne, Walter Drewry, rector of Sandhurst, and Thomas Jackson, rector of Ivychurch. Just to complicate matters further Dering and Jackson were Laudian ministers and William Kingsley became the Archdeacon of Canterbury.¹ Thus, the patterns of college attendance do not appear to throw light upon the religious leanings of the deprived clergy.

In conclusion, no one characteristic can be found that sets the deprived ministers apart and made them more likely to have been ejected from their livings than their colleagues. So we shall turn to the fifty Kentish and sixteen Bedfordshire ministers for whom the reasons for ejection are known.² Of these, fifteen Kentish and ten Bedfordshire ministers are known to have been charged with one misdemeanour only and the rest faced anything up to five charges.³ Dr. Green has suggested that:

"the attack on the parish clergy sprang from a variety of motives, the nature and relative importance of which

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1. Al.Cantab., vol.I, pp.27,82,400, vol.II, pp.69,244,458; Al.Oxon., pp.69,244,458.
 2. These ministers shall form our sample in the analysis of causes of ejection.
 3. Information as to why Kentish ministers lost their livings is taken from parishioners' petitions to the Committee for Religion in 1640 and 1641 which are principally in Larking, but also amongst the House of Lords Main Papers and the State Papers. Information for deprived Bedfordshire ministers is partly based on the petitions of the early 1640's. BL, Add. MSS.15669-71; White and Walker Revised are used for both areas of our study. The petitions of 1640 were referred to the Committee for Scandalous Ministers set up in Dec. 1640 but its work was constantly interrupted, rendering this body ineffective. In 1642 the Committee for Plundered Ministers was set up but this body had twice as much work as its predecessor, concerning itself not only with ejections but also with replacements to livings and so it worked too slowly. Therefore, in 1643, it was decided that the cases against suspected ministers should be heard locally by members of the county committee, and transcripts of the cases referred to the C.P.M. in London, where the final decision was made. Unfortunately, local records of the sort available for Suffolk do not exist for the areas of our study and so evidence has to be gleaned from a variety of sources. Green, "Scandal", p.515; ed. C. Holmes, "The Suffolk Committees for Scandalous Ministers 1644-46", SRS, vol.13(1970).

changed markedly as the troubles dragged on."

This is borne out by the evidence for the diocese of Canterbury and archdeaconry of Bedford. Moreover, parliament was concerned mainly with what constituted acceptable doctrine and behaviour and active parliamentarians on the county committee, more interested in the security of the county, removed ministers whose support for the parliamentary cause was thought to have been suspect. Parishioners, understandably, were concerned with local issues - the minister himself, the performance of his duty and their relations with him.¹

It is true to say that terms such as "Laudian" or "High Church" cannot be applied to the deprived ministers as a group.² Only less than a third of Kentish and Bedfordshire ministers can be termed Laudian. Most of these ministers were accused of actively supporting the placing of the communion table altarwise at the east end of the chancel. But this was not all. Robert Carter, rector of Stourmouth in Kent, was accused of "bowing and cringing to the communion table".³ Seven other Kentish ministers were said to have adopted this practice. Hugh Reeve, rector of Ampthill in Bedfordshire, was accused of:

"crossing himself, cringing and ducking and kneeling at the rails before the altar."⁴

Moreover, the description of the behaviour of Edward Martin, rector of Houghton Conquest, is more precise. He was said to have been:

"most unreasonable in adoring the altar, making five low curtsies in his going to it and two at it and then falling down upon his knees before it with his eyes on a crucifix, being in the east window over it."⁵

Edward Nicholls, vicar of Northbourne with Sholden in Kent, adorned his

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1. Green, "Scandal", pp.509,514.
 2. Green, "Scandal", p.509.
 3. Larking, p.196.
 4. HLRO, HLMP, 16th. Jan. 1640-41.
 5. White, pp.41-2.

altar "with a carving and a wooden cross".¹ In his book Altare Christianum, John Pocklington, rector of Yelden in Bedfordshire, wrote a detailed justification of Archbishop Laud's altar policy, claiming that the Laudians were merely restoring the altar to:

"the ancient and true place it had in the primitive Church."

To a critic who argued that altars had "crept into" the Church, Pocklington replied that, if this was so:

"then bishops had crept in much more (for no bishop was enthroned before his altar was consecrated) and if bishops crept in, then I am sure he himself crept in and, if he crept in, the sextons might do well to show him the way out."

Moreover, Pocklington explained that it was only right and proper that the altar, as a sanctified object, should be placed in the Holy of Holies, namely the chancel of a church. Furthermore, it should be railed in to keep it from profanation and to:

"strike minds of all beholders with reverence and respect to keep their true distance."²

John Pocklington's attitude to the altar was complained about by I. Harvey, gentleman of Cardington, in 1641 who called him:

"a chief author and ringleader in all those innovations which have of late flowed into the Church of England."³

Copies of Altare Christianum and Pocklington's other treatise, Sunday no Sabbath, were publicly burnt at the beginning of the Civil War.⁴

At least two Kentish Laudians had met with fierce opposition from their parishioners when they directed their respective churchwardens to set the communion table altarwise. In 1638, the churchwarden at Thomas Jackson's parish of St. George's, Canterbury, complained to the church court that:

1. BL, Add. MS.15669, f.37.

2. Pocklington, Altare Christianum, pp.11,13,145,175.

3. The Petition of I. H[arvey] of Cardington...gentleman, pp.1-3,9-10.

4. Walker Revised, p.208.

"the parish...will neither let him...have a cesse granted for the same purpose, nor let him do it."

Moreover, in 1637, Miles Barnes of Lyminge reported that:

"the parish will not allow [me] to have the communion table railed in, whereby it must needs be subjected to profane uses."¹

Furthermore, it was reported that Samuel Smith, vicar of Boughton Blean, threatened his churchwardens with citation in the ecclesiastical courts if they did not move the communion table to the east end of the chancel and rail it in.² Groups of parishioners became alienated not only by the ceremonial innovation itself, but also by the way in which their ministers insisted that they should observe the new ceremonies. John Kidde, curate of Egerton, was said to have called his parishioners:

"irreverent puppies that passed by [the communion table] without such bowing."³

Robert Carter, rector of Stourmouth, and Robert Barrell, curate of Maidstone, were reported to have refused to administer the sacrament to those who did not kneel at the altar rail; moreover, the latter was said to have:

"broken out into such a rage and passion against such as have forborne to come to receive the communion at the said rail that many whose consciences are weak and tender have refrained to come to the sacrament, and others, he has cited to the ecclesiastical court for not coming."⁴

Those who refused to receive the communion kneeling at the rail in Sturry church were cited in the church court for their pains by their vicar, William Jervis. Two such parishioners, Henry Harrison and Michael Terry, were amongst those who petitioned against Jervis in 1641.⁵ Two other Kentish, Laudian ministers, Edward Boughen, rector of Woodchurch,

1. CALC, X6-10, ff.196-7, Z4-6, f.149.

2. Larking, p.175.

3. White, p.12.

4. Larking, pp.196,204.

5. CALC, X7-2, f.36; Larking, p.187.

and Thomas Jackson, rector of St. George's, Canterbury, were not averse to citing recalcitrant members of their flock in the church courts.¹

Two Kentish ministers, Edward Boughen and Henry Dering, vicar of Newington and Lower Halstow, and Edward Savadge, rector of Tilbrook in Bedfordshire, were said to have bowed at the name of Jesus. Furthermore, in a sermon at Archbishop Laud's visitation of 1634, Edward Boughen had defended this practice, using Calvin's Institutes and Philemon, chapter two, verse ten, in its support.² Both Miles Barnes, rector of Lyminge and Thomas Blechinden, Canon of Canterbury and vicar of Eastry and Kingston, were said to have defended the use of "popish" images. It was reported that Blechinden's wife was in the cathedral on 16th. December 1643:

"when she saw a man strike at the image of Christ lying in a manger, she shouted out and ran to her husband, who came into the cathedral and pleaded for the images, and objected the cherubims that covered the ark, that they were commanded to be made by God."³

"A large crucifix, painted in a frame" was said to have hung on the wall in William Jervis' parlour.⁴ I. Harvey, gentleman of Cardington in Bedfordshire, complained bitterly that John Pocklington, rector of Yelden, had maintained that:

"pictures in a chapel cannot but strike the beholders with thoughts of piety and devotion at entering so holy a place."⁵

Other so called obnoxious practices which were high on the lists of parishioners' grievances included Edward Boughen of Woodchurch's habit of:

"walking the parish round in his surplice and hood, reading prayers and psalms at divers cross ways and digging crosses in the earth at divers places of the outbounds of the same."

1. CALC, X6-10, f.199, Z4-6, f.108.

2. BL, Add. MS.15669, f.16; BRG, TW 926, f.101; E. Boughen, Two Sermons (London, 1635), pp.9-10; Larking, p.123.

3. Walker Revised, pp.210-12.

4. Larking, p.185.

5. The Petition of I. Harveyl of Cardington...gentleman, p.18.

Moreover, Samuel Smith, vicar of Boughton Blean, required women who came to be churched to wear a veil. Not only did Richard Jervis read the Canons of 1640 to his congregation, it was reported that he also:

"did speak much in commendation of them with expressions of much joy and triumph."¹

Two Laudian ministers from Bedfordshire, John Pocklington of Yelden and Hugh Reeve of Ampthill condemned the observation of the Puritan Sabbath. Pocklington defended his beliefs in his controversial treatise of 1635, Sunday no Sabbath. He roundly declared that the Puritan Sabbath was "a mystery of iniquity intended against the Church" which provided seditious and factious men with the opportunity to deliver:

"violent discourses and personal invectives against the present State and settled laws of the land."

Furthermore, he quipped:

"if Justin Martyr should be so profane as to call it Sunday he would be in danger, under their discipline, to be martyred the second time for not adoring their idol Sabbath as he was under Antonius for not worshipping Jupiter."

For his part, he could see nothing wrong with people taking part in "harmless recreations" or doing "useful chores" on Sundays; for the poor often needed to ply their trade on that day. The important thing was that they attended their parish church. Pocklington's attitude to the Puritan Sabbath was condemned by I. Harvey, gentleman of Cardington, as wicked and vile.²

Few of the ministers in our study can be termed Arminian. In their petition of 1641, a group of parishioners from Woodchurch in Kent complained that their minister, Edward Boughen:

1. Larking, pp.122-3,175,183.

2. HLRO, HLMP, 16th. Jan 1640-41; Pocklington, Sunday no Sabbath, pp.7-9,13,37; The Petition of I. Harvey of Cardington... gentleman, p.20.

"by his obscure handling of such places of scripture...seemed to imply general salvation, the doctrine of believers' assurance of salvation."¹

Moreover, only one Bedfordshire minister, Hugh Reeve, rector of Ampthill, can be referred to as an Arminian. Benjamin Rhodes, a parishioner, complained that Reeve held the erroneous belief that

"no man can be assured of his salvation in this life... St. Paul himself was not assured thereof."

Moreover, Reeve believed that a person could be in a state of grace, fall away and be damned and then:

"rise again by repentance and be in a state of grace and salvation."

In fact, Rhodes maintained that Hugh Reeve had become reconciled to Rome and that he consorted with popish recusants. Allegedly, he professed himself to be a member of the Church of England merely to hold on to his benefice. Lack of further evidence makes it difficult to corroborate this claim and it is likely that it was based on gossip and the popular belief that Laudianism and, for that matter, Arminianism led to Rome.²

There were other contentious beliefs which were held by Laudian ministers in our study. Giles Thorne, rector of St. Mary's, Bedford, was charged with blasphemy for stating in a sermon that:

"it...puzzles God to hear our prayers."

In saying this he was condemning the Puritan practice of extempore prayers, maintaining that God could not deal with so many voices at once. Moreover, he was also in trouble for declaring that:

"confession to a priest was as ancient as religion, as the scripture, yea, as ancient as God himself."³

John Pocklington also believed in the importance of confession to a

1. Larking, p.123.

2. HLRO, HLMP, 16th. Jan. 1640-41; VCH Bedford, vol.I, p.339.

3. HLRO, HLMP, 27th. August 1642.

minister. Moreover, Hugh Reeve and Edward Martin, rector of Houghton Conquest in Bedfordshire, were said to have believed in saints. Martin, it was claimed:

"prayed openly for saints and people departed this life, that they may be eased and freed from their pains in purgatory."

Pocklington affirmed his belief in the apostolic succession and when this issue was brought up at Laud's trial, the latter maintained that the fact that the Church of England could trace its bishops back to St. Peter was:

"a great stopple in the mouths of the Romanists."¹

Laud, himself, had always denied that his altar policy implied a belief in transubstantiation and had maintained that his opponents had confused this erroneous doctrine with that of the Real Presence, espoused by John Calvin himself. Thus, accusations made against a small number of Laudian ministers that they adhered to "popish" eucharistic doctrine should be handled with extreme care. John Pocklington, rector of Yelden in Bedfordshire, an apologist for Laud's altar policy, provides us with a case in point. I. Harvey, gentleman of Cardington, declared that this minister believed that Christ was truly and really present in the sacraments of bread and wine, yet Pocklington, himself, maintained that the eucharist was "a spiritual sacrifice". Moreover, he cited Bishop Montagu as saying that the sacrament of the altar was not:

"external, visible, true and proper [but] representative, commemorative and spiritual."²

1. HLRO, HLMP, 16th. Jan. 1640-41; The Petition of I. Harveyl of Cardington...gentleman, pp.8,15; White, p.41; Laud, Works, vol.VI, p.266.

2. The three ministers accused of believing in false eucharistic doctrine were: Edward Boughen, rector of Woodchurch in Kent, and Hugh Reeve and John Pocklington. HLRO, HLMP, 16th. Jan. 1640-41; The Petition of I. Harveyl of Cardington...gentleman, p.16; Pocklington, Altare Christianum, pp.128,130; Laud, Works, vol.IV, p.284; Larking, p.123.

It is likely that Harvey's accusation was based upon misunderstanding and gossip.

So far, it has been established that hardly any ministers in our study can be termed Arminian and less than a third were Laudians. By no means all those ministers accused of adhering to the policy of ceremonial innovation in the 1630's can be termed Laudian. It is more than likely that ministers such as John Hume, rector of Charlton, Barnabus Knell, rector of Reculver and Hoath, and Henry Hannington, vicar of Hougham, were simply obeying orders, either out of strong feelings of loyalty to the episcopacy or out of plain fear of the consequences should they obdurately refuse to implement the archbishop's policy.¹ However, the plea of Meric Casaubon, vicar of Minster and Monkton and Canon of Canterbury, to the Committee for Religion in 1641 that he was merely doing as he had been bidden is less than convincing. After all, Casaubon was Archbishop Laud's chaplain.² It is true to say that many ministers who had conformed to Laud's policies managed to hold onto their livings. Two such ministers, Mr. Lidham, vicar of Leysdown in Sheppey, and Thomas Higginson, vicar of Rolverden in Kent, were accused of practising Laudian ceremonies by their parishioners in petitions to the Committee for Religion in 1640. Neither minister was ejected and there is no evidence that they died before 1642. Lidham was said to have cited William Norman in the ecclesiastical court for refusing to rail in the communion table. It is significant that one of the two signatories of the petition was, in fact, William Norman and the other was Joseph Napleton, also a churchwarden at Leysdown.³ Local conditions and circumstances go a long way to explain why some conforming ministers

1. White, pp.46-7; Walker Revised, pp.200,218.

2. Larking, p.108.

3. Larking, pp.159-60,238.

were ejected whilst others remained safely in their livings. Much depended upon the strength and influence of a minister's supporters on the one hand and his opponents on the other.

As time went on the nature of scandalous or obnoxious religious practice changed to include the use of the Book of Common Prayer and the failure to observe parliamentary Fast Days - in other words, even moderate ministers came under attack. We already know that this did not happen on a wide scale in the diocese of Canterbury because the moderate gentry on the county committee tended to protect these Anglican ministers from ejection. The picture appears to have been the same in the archdeaconry of Bedford. John Reading, minister of St. Mary's, Dover, had experienced trouble from radical members of his congregation since the early 1620's as well as his own curate, one Mr. Chantler. He was deprived of his living in 1647, ostensibly for malignancy, but here was an Anglican minister, a moderate, who, in a sermon at the Assizes in Maidstone in 1641, had declared:

"To all that hear me, I beseech you brethren, avoid them: whether innovators or separatists, the two smoking firebrands, the Scylla and Charibdis, the gulfs and chasms of our Church and State."

The Anglican vicar of Cranbrook, Robert Abbot, was assailed by religious radicals in his Wealden parish for his conformity and for his defence of the episcopacy and the Book of Common Prayer. In 1641, much to his sorrow, his parishioners planned to foist a lecturer upon him, one Edward Bright; and, in 1643, he was removed from Cranbrook and transferred to the Hampshire vicarage of Southwick. In 1641, he wrote sorrowfully to Sir Edward Dering concerning the radicals' attitude to the Prayer Book:

1. J. Reading, A Sermon [on Rom.XVI. 17.] Delivered at Maidstone (London, 1642), p.25; Acheson, p.71.

"They cry out against it under a threefold plea: some say it is stinted, compelled worship, some it is popery taken out of the Mass Book, and some it is an innovation because, since it was established, some innovations have crept into it."

Although he defended its use, he was willing to compromise and perform divine service without it. Abbot's moderation in religious matters can best be illustrated by his plea:

"I wish with all my heart that the way of the Church was so smooth in all things that every tender foot could walk comfortably over it."

Like other Anglican colleagues, Abbot's implicit loyalty to the bishops of the Church of England meant that, in the minds of the radicals, he became associated with Laudianism.¹

Like Abbot, James Wilcocks, vicar of Goudhurst, was a victim of persecution by religious radicals in his Wealden parish. He was ejected from his benefice in 1642. Wilcocks lamented that he "would fain be cleared of blasphemy" and "of leading souls to hell", adding:

"I could have borne innumerable other outrages...but God knows how much my soul has been overcharged with imputations... and others of my brethren, infinitely deserving better, have been engaged as deeply, our backs are daily ploughed upon."²

Thus, like Abbot, he sincerely believed that many ministers did not deserve such persecution. Although appointed to the rectory of Little Mongeham in 1644 and the vicarage of Northbourne in 1647, James Burville was deprived of the latter in 1655 because he defended:

"the Lord's Prayer, the Decalogue and the function of the ministry in the heat of the worst times before the face of an impudent troop who had intruded into [his] pulpit in the presence of much people [and] cried all three down."³

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1. BL, Stowe MS.184, ff.29,44,47; Abbot, A Trial of Our Church-Forsakers, passim.; Walker Revised, p.209; Collinson, ed. Brook, Reformation, Principle and Practice: Essays in Honour of A.G. Dickens, pp.201-2; Fletcher, The Outbreak of the English Civil War, pp.110-11.
 2. BL, E172, p.30, quoted in Everitt, p.86.
 3. HMC, 9th. Report, p.123.

Moreover, Benjamin Harrison, vicar of St. Clement's, Sandwich, between 1645 and 1650, was accused of ignoring public Fast Days and Thanksgivings, as was James Penny, vicar of St. Dunstan's, Canterbury, who was ejected from that living in 1646.¹ Most Anglican ministers remained undisturbed in their livings and it is more than likely that the Book of Common Prayer continued to be used in the diocese of Canterbury and archdeaconry of Bedford, for there was never any large scale use of the Directory. Most people were used to the Anglican Church and its liturgy and therefore, it is likely that they remained loyal to their ministers.² Those Anglican ministers who were deprived were often benefited in areas known for their religious extremism and were victims of powerful and vocal groups of radicals who daily made their lives a misery. As Robert Abbot astutely observed, it would require only a small group of extremists to oust their minister in spite of the fact that hundreds might petition in his favour.³

Only one minister from the diocese of Canterbury and one from the archdeaconry of Bedford were charged with religious beliefs and practices thought to have been unworthy of men in their position. According to his parishioners, Edward Barbette, vicar of Chislet:

"affirmed that marriage was a superficial ceremony and that it was but the mumbling of a priest."

Moreover, his scandalized parishioners reported that:

"touching his reading of divine service, he reads so false and with such ill-gesture and ridiculous behaviour, laughing when some women came into the church, and so careless in reading, that sometimes he reads the Ten Commandments twice over, at morning prayers, besides many other slips, mistakes and negligences."

1. Walker Revised, pp.218,223.

2. Morrill, ed. Morrill, Reactions to the English Civil War 1642-1649, pp.100,104-5,108,112.

3. BL, Stowe MS.184, f.127.

It was said that John Gwin, vicar of Cople in Bedfordshire, had altered the form and some sense of Psalms to his own purpose and pleasure. Both ministers appear to have had low moral standards in general, according to their parishioners.¹ In conclusion, at least twenty five deprived ministers in the diocese of Canterbury and six deprived ministers in the archdeaconry of Bedford were charged with some form of obnoxious religious practice or belief. This represents about fifty per cent of the deprived ministers in the diocese of Canterbury for whom the causes of ejection are known and only thirty two per cent of all deprived ministers in the diocese. The comparable figures for Bedfordshire are thirty one and nineteen per cent respectively.

A total of eighteen deprived ministers from the diocese of Canterbury, or thirty six per cent of those for whom the causes of ejection are known, were charged with being of scandalous life. This includes "tavern haunting", drunkenness, swearing, gambling and sexual incontinency. Just over a quarter of the ministers ejected from livings in Bedfordshire were condemned as scandalous. The figure for Suffolk, however, is as high as sixty point five per cent. Moreover, over two thirds of the clergy in the first hundred cases handled by the Commons Committee were said to have been "habitual drunkards". Even so, the numbers of so-called scandalous ministers in the diocese of Canterbury in particular seems quite high that one might suspect that the accusations were exaggerated, and were based upon malicious gossip and circumstantial evidence and were used to add fuel to a case against a minister.² These accusations are further called into question when one considers that they were usually part of composite petitions and were

1. Articles...Against John Gwin, Vicar of Cople, p.6; Larking, pp.176-8.
2. Ed. Holmes, SRS, vol.13(1970), pp.18,22-3; Green, "Scandal", p.510.

often simply expressed in shorthand terms such as "notorious drunkard" and "common tavern/alehouse haunter", terms which had been common usage in the church courts. The Laudian curate of Maidstone, Robert Barrell, provides us with a case in point. In a lengthy petition of 1641, a group of his parishioners accused him of being a forward promoter of Laudian ceremonialism and sacerdotalism, a non-resident who neglected his duties and who did not preach enough to satisfy the godly of the parish, an employer of scandalous curates, a litigious and contentious person and, towards the end of this impressive list of misdemeanours, he was pronounced:

"a common tavern haunter, to the great offence of some, the evil example of others and [the] great scandal of the ministry."

There is nothing in the court books to suggest that Barrell was an habitual drinker, but it is clear from that source that he had a number of opponents, for every Sunday, large numbers of his parishioners had gadded to Otham to hear the Puritan divine, Thomas Wilson, preach, until the latter was suspended from his living in 1635. Thus, it is more than likely that the accusation of scandalous behaviour made against Robert Barrell was based upon malicious gossip.¹ In some instances one indiscretion on the part of a clergyman was dragged up from the past and embroidered upon to make the minister's overall behaviour appear to have been scandalous. This indiscretion might be used to round off the case against the minister concerned; however, those who had petitioned against him were probably still sincerely shocked and amazed that he had lapsed in his behaviour. In 1645, Nicholas Humphrey of Tilbrook in Bedfordshire complained that two years previously his minister, Edward Savadge:

1. LPL, VG4/22, ff.5,7; Larking, p.204, Everitt, p.60.

"coming from his son Allen's house in the night was so drunk that he was not able to go home but as this informant led him...he often fell down and this informant helped him up again."

In fact, most of those ministers who were accused of scandalous behaviour, fourteen in the diocese of Canterbury and all five in the archdeaconry of Bedfordshire, were said to have been habitual alehouse-haunters and drunkards. Some charges, as Dr. Holmes has observed, were filled with an "embarrassing wealth of circumstantial detail".² Henry Hannington, vicar of Hougham in Kent, for example, was said to have been:

"a common and notorious drunkard, and often lying dead drunk in highways and has continued so for the space of twenty years and upwards, and used to sing in his cups in the alehouse bawdy songs which he called cathedral songs and on Easter eve... he was so drunk that he was scarce able to speak and yet did administer the communion on three Sundays for them."³

It was reported that John Gwin, vicar of Cople in Bedfordshire:

"hath been divers times so distempered and overcome therewith that he has been scarce able to stand or go, but like a drunkard has reeled up and down and, having neglected his study in Divinity, has spent his time carousing and drinking ale, beer and tobacco the most part of the week in tipling houses and upon the Lord's day has there sat until ten, eleven, or twelve o'clock at night."⁴

Moreover, John Hume, rector of Charlton in Kent, was accused of actually keeping an alehouse.⁵ Only two of the so-called fourteen "drunken ministers" in the diocese of Canterbury had ever been presented by their churchwardens in the 1630's for this kind of scandalous behaviour. John Aymes, curate of Loose, had been presented for alehouse-haunting in 1627. Moreover, in the course of a libel case brought against him by his churchwarden it was said that, on one occasion, he had been found lying

1. BRO, TW 926, f.102.

2. Ed. Holmes, *SRS*, vol.13(1970), p.22.

3. White, p.48.

4. Articles...Against John Gwin, Vicar of Cople, p.1.

5. White, pp.46-7.

in a field after he had been seen at Maidstone:

"staggering and reeling as if he had been distempered."

This latter piece of information, however, should be treated with caution as it was uttered by a witness for the plaintiff.¹ In 1634, the vicar of Lympe, Richard Jaggard, was accused of frequenting alehouses and victualling houses.² A presentation for alehouse-haunting in the 1630's is no more proof that the minister concerned was an habitual visitor of the local alehouse than was an accusation of alehouse-haunting in the 1640's. However, it does seem suspicious that only two of the fourteen so-called alehouse-haunters had ever been cited in the ecclesiastical courts for this misdemeanour and this fact further calls into question the reliability of terms such as "alehouse" or "tavern-haunting" or "drunkard" which were used in the petitions and articles against ministers in the 1640's.

Claims that a minister was an habitual gambler should also be treated with caution as it is quite possible that many were based either on hearsay or isolated instances. In all, four Kentish ministers, Robert Carter of Stourmouth, James Penny of St. Dunstan's, Canterbury, Samuel Smith of Boughton Blean and John Wood of Marden were charged with gambling by members of their respective congregations. In fact, it was said that Carter:

"for maintaining these lewd courses and recovering his losses sustained by gaming, he exacts excessively in his tithes."

It is likely, however, that this specific statement was based on little more than idle gossip.³ Robert Carter was presented by his churchwardens, for gambling, in 1640.⁴ No Bedfordshire ministers in our

1. CALC, PRC 39/39, f.79, Z4-4, f.214.

2. LPL, VG4/16, f.27.

3. BL, Add. MS.15670, f.74; Larking, p.174; Walker Revised, p.228.

4. CALC, X7-3, ff.27-8.

study were accused of gambling, neither were they charged with swearing. Seven Kentish ministers, including three charged with drunkenness, were accused of swearing. The parishioners of Chislet complained that their vicar, Edward Barbette, was:

"a common liar, a notorious swearer, a foul, obscene and bawdy speaker of ribaldry, uttering sometimes such words as are not to be spoken by any modest man, nor to be heard by any Christian ears."

Moreover, John Woodcock, vicar of Elham, was said to have been:

"a common swearer by the wounds and blood and other execrable oaths."

Only one minister, Francis Fotherby, vicar of St. Clement's, Sandwich, had ever been accused of swearing before.² As in other forms of scandalous behaviour, one can never be sure whether or not the evidence is exaggerated for there are no formal answers from the ministers concerned.

Charges of sexual incontinency also present problems. Altogether, five Kentish ministers - Robert Bankes, vicar of Rolvenden, Edward Barbette, vicar of Chislet, John Hume, rector of Charlton, John Marston, minister of St. Mary Bredin and St. Mary Magdalen, Canterbury, and John Wood, vicar of Marden - and one Bedfordshire minister, John Gwin, vicar of Cople - were accused of this.³ Edward Barbette was said merely to have been of an incontinent life. It was reported that Robert Bankes had:

"lain hold of several maids whom he had found alone using very wanton and lascivious dalliance with them; yea, sometimes on the Lord's day."

Moreover, Hume was said to have "attempted the chastity of divers

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1. BL, Add. MS.15669, f.142; PRO, SP16/468/133, ff.241-2; White, pp.4-5,19,48; Larking, p.176; Walker Revised, p.220.
 2. CALC, Y6-4, ff.373-4.
 3. PRO, SP16/468/133, ff.241-2; Articles...Against John Gwin, Vicar of Cople; White, p.47; Larking, p.178; Walker Revised, pp.210,222,228.

women". John Wood was charged with adultery; and, in an ecclesiastical court case brought against him by one Munne in 1628, it was reported that he had committed adultery with at least three women in an unlicensed alehouse in his parish.¹ John Marston, vicar of St. Mary Bredin, Canterbury, was brought before the Court of High Commission in 1640 for his adulterous relationship with a parishioner, Mrs. Elizabeth Best. When Mrs. Best had refused to see him anymore he had threatened to kill himself:

"insomuch that one day within the time articulated [he] had...a naked knife in [his] pocket and...[he] desired to speak with the said Mrs. Best in the parlour of the house, when and where, [he] setting the knife to [his] throat, the said Mrs. Best caused...Sarah Hibbert [a servant] to call in some neighbours for fear [he] would kill [himself, as he was] so like a madman."

In the event, they were all compelled to stay up all night trying to pacify Marston, and he was told to stay away from Mrs. Best's house.

However, she was:

"forced divers times to lock herself up in a chamber for fear of [Marston] and once...[he] took a great bat to force open the door upon her; and the said Sarah Hibbert reprehending [him] for it [he] threatened her that if she spoke anymore thereof [he] would run [his] knife through her...swearing by gods wounds and blood, which was [his] common use and custom of swearing."

The final judgement upon Marston was not made as the High Commission Court was abolished; but he was one of the first ministers to be deprived of his livings in 1643, though the charge was not just one of scandalous behaviour, it was also of malignancy.² John Gwin of Cople was charged before the High Commission in 1640 with adultery with three women and with the attempted rape of another. Moreover, it was said that he had:

"heinously committed the...crime of adultery with divers women that he had got the loathsome disease of the French pox."

1. CALC, PRC 39/39, ff.70-3; White, p.47; Walker Revised, pp.210,228.
2. PRO, SP16/468/133, ff.241-2; Walker Revised, p.222.

Furthermore, it was claimed that he had boasted that he had allowed a friend of his to have carnal relations with his wife. Gwin was deprived of his living in 1645 on a charge of scandalous behaviour and malignancy.¹ In conclusion, it appears that eighteen deprived Kentish ministers and five Bedfordshire ministers were charged with some form of misbehaviour. It is interesting to note that only Robert Bankes, vicar of Rolvenden in Kent, and John Ailmer, vicar of Melchbourne and rector of Bletsoe, and William Ramsey, vicar of Flitton in Bedfordshire, were charged solely with scandalous living. As for the rest, this was only one of their alleged misdemeanours and might have been exaggerated and used by petitioners to make up a strong case. Scandalous living ceased to be a charge brought against ministers after 1646, implying that, by this date, all the so-called lewd clergymen had been removed.

When war broke out in 1642, "malignancy" became a common charge against ministers and this included speaking or acting against parliament, sending financial aid to the King and the desertion of cures to join the royal army. By no means all those accused of malignancy were loyal supporters of the King. In fact, the charge of malignancy might vary in nature from giving active support to the royalist army to merely failing to speak out enthusiastically enough for parliament. Only a few clergymen in the whole of England - approximately two hundred in number - were accused of the former misdemeanour.² A total of seventy nine per cent of the deprived ministers in Suffolk were charged with malignancy in some form or another.³ The known figure for the diocese of Canterbury appears to have been much lower, for approximately twenty six, or fifty two per cent, of the deprived ministers for whom the causes of ejection

1. Articles...Against John Gwin, Vicar of Cople; Walker Revised, p.65.
2. Green, "Scandal", pp.513-14.
3. Ed. Holmes, SRS, vol.13(1970), p.18.

are known, were charged with some form of malignancy. The figure for Bedfordshire is sixty three per cent, or twelve ministers. Only two Kentish ministers, Daniel Bullen, vicar of St. Mary Northgate, Canterbury, and Francis Mansell, rector of Elmley, deserted their cures to join the royalist forces and the latter was said to have been "active for the King in Wales". Two Bedfordshire ministers, Thomas Cookson, rector of Marston, and Nathaniel Hill, vicar of Renhold, joined the royalist army; and the former was amongst the prisoners taken at Sherborne Castle on 15th. August 1645. John Hume, rector of Charlton in Kent, fled to Oxford in 1643 to avoid imprisonment for refusing to read a parliamentary declaration. Francis Walsall, rector of Sandy in Bedfordshire, also fled to Oxford but returned to Bedfordshire, convinced the authorities of his loyalty and was reinstated in his benefice. John Reading of St. Mary's, Dover, ejected in 1643 for opposing rebellion against the King, was imprisoned in 1644 for his part in the plot to surprize Dover Castle. Not long after being ejected from his rectory of Biddenden in 1645, George Wilde was imprisoned at Sherborne Castle. He went on to become minister to a royalist congregation in London during the Commonwealth period.¹ Of the fourteen deprived Kentish ministers known to have been imprisoned by parliament, nine were charged with malignancy. All seven Bedfordshire ministers who suffered imprisonment were accused of being malignant to parliament.² In the cases of one Bedfordshire and seven

1. BL, Add. MS.15670, f.232; Walker Revised, pp.64-5,67,71-2,219,222,224.

2. Kentish ministers: John Aymes of Loose, Henry Dering of Newington and Lower Halstow, Robert Dixon of Tunstall, John Gough of Hackington, Benjamin Harrison of St.Clement's, Sandwich, Daniel Horsmonden of Ulcombe, Richard Jaggard of Lypne, John Reading of St.Mary's, Dover, George Wilde of Biddenden and Humphrey Peake of Tenterden. Bedfordshire ministers: Timothy Archer of Meppershall and Blunham, Philip Collyer of St.Peter's, Bedford, Thomas Cookson of Marston Moretaine, John Gwin of Cople, Giles King of Tempsford, Giles Thorne of St.Mary's, Bedford and Robert Gifford of Chellington. BL, Add. MS.15669, f.84, Add. MS.15671, f.189; White, p.2,37; Walker Revised, pp.64-5,71-2,215-16,218-19,223-4.

Kentish ministers the exact nature of their so-called malignancy is unknown.¹ Two deprived Kentish incumbents, John Gough, vicar of Hackington and Robert Dixon, rector of Tunstall, were found guilty of failing to read the Covenant and were deprived in 1645 and 1647 respectively. Thomas Cookson of Marston and Millbrook, and Edward Martin, rector of Houghton Conquest in Bedfordshire, refused to take the Covenant.² Moreover, John Jeffreys, vicar of Faversham, Henry Dering, vicar of Newington and Lower Halstow and William Jervis, rector of Sturry, are known to have taken part in the Kentish uprising against the Covenant in 1643.³ Although the first two were charged with malignancy, no specific mention was made of their participation in this rising and William Jervis was not actually charged with malignancy.

Forty six per cent of Kentish ministers and fifty eight per cent of Bedfordshire ministers who were accused of being malignant to parliament were charged with speaking against that body. This charge is difficult to prove, particularly if it was based on private conversations held between a minister and individual members of his flock. A few were brave enough to condemn parliament from their pulpits. Humphrey Peake, Canon of Canterbury and vicar of Tenterden, was charged with preaching a seditious sermon in 1642; unfortunately its contents are unknown.⁴ Some ministers capitalized on people's fears about parliamentary rule.⁵ Edward Martin of Houghton Conquest in Bedfordshire preached that:

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1. Kentish ministers: William Axon of Great Chart, Walter Drewry of Sandhurst, John Gough of Hackington, Richard Jaggard of Lympne, Barnabas Knell of Reculver, John Reader of Herne and John Wood of Marden. Bedfordshire minister: Gabriel Moore of Barton-in-the-Clay. BL, Add. MS.15669, ff.130,184,186; Walker Revised, pp.65,216,219, 221,228.
 2. Walker Revised, pp.64,84-5,215-16.
 3. Everitt, p.191.
 4. Walker Revised, p.223.
 5. Fletcher, The Outbreak of the English Civil War, p.292.

"parliament goes about in a factious way to erect a new religion."

Moreover, John Jeffreys of Faversham in Kent declared that Members of Parliament were "schismatical and pragmatical fellows" and wished that evil might befall those who wished to abolish episcopacy. Furthermore, in a petition of 1642 against William Kingsley, Archdeacon of Canterbury and rector of Saltwood, it was reported that he had maintained that:

"the parliament sit for nothing but to undo the kingdom."

Daniel Horsmonden, vicar of Ulcombe in Kent, had condemned the execution of Strafford, claiming that he "was sacrificed as our Saviour Christ was." Both Samuel Smith of Boughton Blean and Robert Barrell of Maidstone had very low opinions of the Scots; the former maintained that the King should not yield to them.² When he heard that there was good news from Ireland, John Marston of St. Mary Bredin and St. Mary Magdalen, Canterbury, replied that:

"the parliament did that only to cozen the country and to get their money."

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Marston was said to have exhorted his parishioners:

"to lay their hands upon their hearts and take their Bibles and see if they could find any warrant there [that] men should take [up] arms against the King."³

John Gwin, vicar of Cople in Bedfordshire, was said to have declared that:

"the scripture bid him obey the King, but there was no scripture commanding him to obey the parliament."⁴

Moreover, John Aymes, curate of Loose in Kent, was reported to have:

"affirmed the parliament to be a Round-headed parliament

1. LJ, vol.VI, p.62; White, pp.10,37; Walker Revised, pp.84-5.
2. CJ, vol.II, p.698, Larking, pp.174-5.
3. HLRO, HLMP, 6th. August 1642.
4. Tibbutt, Moot Hall Leaflet no.3(1973), p.6.

and that their heads should be all chopped off, and [he wished] that the King might grind them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

Furthermore, Robert Barrell was said to have wished that the King would set fire to London and "burn up Puritans". From the Fleet prison in 1646, Giles Thorne sent "seditious tracts" to his parishioners at St. Mary's, Bedford, urging them to oppose parliament. Some ministers, such as Francis Fotherby of St. Clement's, Sandwich, and William Pargiter of Carlton in Bedfordshire publicly condemned those who lent money to parliament - the former said that they "should be sent with ordinances to hell". Edward Martin, rector of Houghton Conquest and President of Queens College, Cambridge, actually sent the college plate to the King to aid his cause. Three ministers, John Hume of Charlton in Kent, John Gwin and William Witton of Tingrith in Bedfordshire, were charged with failing to read parliament's declarations to their respective congregations.¹ In June 1642, John Marston, of his own volition, read the King's "Answer to Parliament" to his congregation. However, when he was required to read a declaration of parliament, he warned the people that this would take five or six hours, adding that if they did not wish to stay and listen, they might leave the church. Many went home. Later, the local constable read the declaration to the people. It took him an hour and a half.² As the war progressed the nature of "malignancy" most certainly changed; for example, Benjamin Harrison, who had intruded into the vicarage of St. Clement's, Sandwich, in 1648, was ejected two years later, charged with showing disaffection to parliament by maintaining that the King's execution was a wicked act.³

Both the authorities and parishioners, themselves, were concerned

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1. BL, Add. MS.15671, f.189; White, pp.2,4-5; Walker Revised, pp.65,67, 84-5,210,219; Al.Cantab., vol.III, p.158.
 2. HLRO, HLMP, 28th. June 1642.
 3. Walker Revised, p.217.

to combat the problem of pluralism. About a quarter of the deprived ministers in the diocese of Canterbury were pluralists. A few Kentish ministers, six in all, managed to hold on to one of their benefices. Isaac Colfe and Edward Simpson resigned from one of their two benefices. John Swinnock was ejected from the rectory of Old Romney with his own consent. Moreover, William Slater was ejected from the rectory of Newchurch in 1645, charged only with non-residency and employing a drunken curate who had deserted the cure. The reason why Isaac Colfe lost the vicarage of Milton is unknown, though it is possible that he was deprived for being a pluralist. Of the five ministers, only William Jervis, who was ejected from Sturry in 1645, was charged with other misdemeanours besides absenteeism and neglect.¹ All eight Bedfordshire pluralists lost both livings; and almost all of these as well as the nineteen Kentish ministers who lost both livings were charged on a variety of counts. Pluralism was not the only reason why a minister was ejected from two benefices.

Not only did the authorities and parishioners wish to root out pluralism from the Church, they also wanted to rid it of "insufficient" ministers who neglected their religious and/or pastoral duties. Eleven Kentish ministers were charged specifically with absenteeism and thus neglect of their duties.² Nine of these ministers are known to have been

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1. Francis Cacott lost the vicarage of Boughton Monchelsea in 1649, but retained the rectory of Wouldham, Isaac Colfe lost the vicarage of Milton and retained the rectory of Chadwell in Essex, William Jervis lost Sturry in 1645 but retained Snave; Edward Simpson lost Pluckley in 1649 and retained the rectory of Eastling; William Slater lost Newchurch in 1645, but retained Otterden and John Swinnock lost Old Romney in 1645 and retained Mersham. Walker Revised, pp.220,225-6; Al.Cantab., vol.I, p.279; Al.Oxon., p.305.
 2. Robert Barrell, Edward Boughen, Meric Casaubon, William Jervis, Richard Marsh, Humphrey Peake, William Slater, John Swinnock, Richard Tray, Barnabus Knell and Henry Dering. White, p.48; Larking, pp.107,123,133-9,146,160-1,187,204,229-30.

pluralists and six were accused of not providing adequate curates in their absence.¹ While absent from Maidstone, Robert Barrell left only an "unable man" to serve in his place and he would not allow his parishioners to choose a better curate. Even though it was said that his livings were worth a total of about £500 a year, Humphrey Peake, rector of Acrise and vicar of Tenterden, would not provide a competent curate to serve the parish church of Tenterden. Occasionally, Peake was said to have employed a curate, but only:

"one that could be got at the cheapest rate - a noble or 7s. 8d. a day at most."

Moreover, William Slater was said to have employed a drunken curate at Newchurch, one Henry Cuffin, who stayed for a short while and then went away, leaving the parish unserved. Furthermore, some parishioners reported that their vicar had been absent for so long that:

"it is questioned whether the said Dr. Slater be living or not."

The case of Barnabus Knell differs from the others. Knell was vicar of Reculver and the chapelry of Hoath. The inhabitants of Hoath petitioned the Committee for Religion in 1640, complaining that Knell had refused to employ a curate to serve in their chapel on Sundays and so they were forced to walk four miles to Reculver church to hear divine service. Moreover, they declared, his predecessor had always read divine service in the chapel on one Sunday in each month and had employed a curate to conduct the service on the other three. They had petitioned the archbishop on this matter but their pleas had gone unheeded. In his defence, Knell maintained that he simply could not afford a curate as his benefice was worth only twenty four pounds a year; moreover, the parishioners of Hoath had refused to pay their tithes, and so he was:

1. Robert Barrell, Meric Casaubon, Humphrey Peake, William Slater, Richard Tray and Barnabus Knell.

"not only destitute of means to sustain himself, his wife of near sixty years of age, two sickly daughters, a poor sister aged seventy four years and an orphan grandchild of nine years ...but is daily in danger of imprisonment for debt."

The case against Giles Thorne, rector of St. Mary's, Bedford, is also singular. In 1643, he was accused by the parishioners of St. Cuthbert's in Bedford of unlawfully taking over their church and the profits of the benefice. Moreover, they complained, he neglected both his parishes and had appointed a drunken curate to officiate in his stead. This curate had recently been killed and had been replaced by one Mr. Holden, a "godly and painful minister". However, Thorne refused to pay Holden an adequate stipend and so the parishioners of St. Cuthbert's feared the latter would be forced to seek a cure elsewhere. Giles Thorne, a Laudian minister, maintained that Holden could "outdrink his profession" and that he was:

"ridiculously ignorant [and] utterly insufficient to reach others, a very stranger to good learning [and] no way able to distinguish truth from error or differentiate the tenets of one church from another."

Reading between the lines of Thorne's petition, it is possible that Holden was a Puritan minister and this was why Giles Thorne objected to him so.¹

Nine deprived Kentish ministers and two Bedfordshire clergymen were charged with preaching infrequently.² Robert Barrell, curate of Maidstone, for example was said to have been:

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1. HLRO, HLMP, 14th. Feb. 1642, HLMP, 5th. Aug. 1643.
 2. Kentish ministers: Miles Barnes, rector of Lyminge, Robert Barrell, curate of Maidstone, Edward Boughen, rector of Woodchurch, John Kidde, curate of Egerton, Daniel Horsmonden, rector of Ulcombe, John Hume, rector of Charlton, Humphrey Peake, vicar of Tenterden, Samuel Smith, vicar of Boughton Blean and William Jervis, vicar of Sturry. Bedfordshire ministers: Edward Martin, rector of Houghton Conquest and Hugh Reeve, rector of Ampthill. HLRO, HLMP, 16th. Jan. 1640-41; White, pp.11-12,37,46-7; Larking, pp.122,175,187,202,229-30.

"very careless and negligent in his place, himself not preaching amongst us above once in a month or five weeks except it be a funeral sermon."

Sometimes, John Kidde, curate of Egerton, did not preach for two months. Moreover, Edward Martin, rector of Houghton Conquest, did not preach more than five times a year. As a preacher, Edward Barbette, vicar of Chislet in Kent, was said to have been:

"unable and unfit, in respect he never studied divinity as may appear by his weak and unlearned sermons."

In fact, Barbette did have a Bachelor of Arts degree, but this did not necessarily equip him for the delivery of uplifting sermons. When he did preach, Robert Carter of Stourmouth's sermons were thought to be so obscure that:

"few or none can gain any saving knowledge or grace by him."

As it has been demonstrated in Chapter IV of this thesis, one should not always take accusations of clerical neglect at face value. Most of the ministers accused of preaching infrequently were well educated and a number were pluralists. However, eight of the nine Kentish ministers and both Bedfordshire ministers so accused were Laudians; moreover, John Hume of Charlton was derided by members of his congregation for conforming to Laudian ceremonies. Furthermore, Robert Carter of Stourmouth was also a Laudian. It is quite possible that in at least some of these cases we are dealing with Puritan opposition to Laudianism. Robert Barrell, curate of Maidstone, was said to have:

"rebuked a painful neighbouring minister for preaching twice on the Sabbath days, telling him that he had the power to crush half a dozen such as he...and that the said minister did much disgrace the clergy by preaching twice on the Sabbath days; and that preaching in the afternoon was but prating and babbling."

The neighbouring minister to whom he referred was the Puritan rector of

1. Larking, pp.176-7,197; Al.Cantab., vol.I, p.82.

Otham, Thomas Wilson. In 1634, Barrell had presented a number of his parishioners for gadding to Otham church. Moreover, the Laudian minister, Samuel Smith of Boughton Blean, presented five of his parishioners for gadding to the neighbouring church of Hernehill where the Puritan minister, Thomas Hieron, preached twice on Sundays. One of the five, one Richard Proud, was amongst those who petitioned against Smith in 1641.¹ It was said that Hugh Reeve of Ampthill in Bedfordshire, "professes himself an enemy to preaching"; moreover, he had maintained that:

"it is a greater sin for a man to go from his own parish church on the Sabbath Day, than to sit in an alehouse drinking and playing cards or dice on the Sabbath Day."²

Daniel Horsmonden of Ulcombe in Kent was reported to have declared that to hear a sermon on a weekday was "a will worship" and Edward Martin of Houghton Conquest was said to have maintained that:

"preaching is profaned when it is in a dining room or other place not hallowed by the bishop."³

Four of the Kentish, Laudian, ministers who were charged with insufficient preaching were also charged with neglect of their duties in general.⁴

When one looks closely at the cases against the eleven Kentish ministers accused of absenteeism and neglecting their duties an interesting picture emerges. Seven of these ministers were Laudians, as was Giles Thorne of St. Mary's, Bedford, who was also accused of these misdemeanours.⁵ Another Kentish minister, Barnabus Knell of Reculver and

1. CALC, Z4-7, f.4; LPL, VG4/22, ff.5,7; Larking, pp.175,187.

2. HLRO, HLMP, 16th. Jan. 1640-41.

3. White, pp.41-2; Walker Revised, p.219.

4. Robert Barrell, Edward Boughen, Humphrey Peake and William Jervis.

5. Robert Barrell, Edward Boughen, Meric Casaubon, William Jervis, Humphrey Peake, William Slater and Henry Dering.

Hoath, was condemned for his conformity.¹ Moreover, nine Kentish ministers, including six Laudians, were said to have alienated members of their congregation by being contentious and/or litigious.² Giles Thorne of St. Mary's, Bedford, was also accused of this. A minister's quarrels with his parishioners might have been a strong motive behind the latter's opposition to him and a rather more important reason for presenting him than merely his neglectful behaviour. These quarrels were ideological, economic or purely personal in nature. Knell's quarrel with the people of Hoath has already been mentioned and so have disputes over altar policy and gadding. In general, William Jervis of Sturry was said to have been "very contentious" towards his parishioners. On one occasion, his shocked parishioners reported, he presented a pregnant woman for failing to stand at the Creed. Moreover, Richard Tray was said to have vexed his parishioners with ecclesiastical suits:

"causing many of them to be excommunicated for small and frivolous matters and compelling them to make submission to him."

The Laudian curate of Egerton, John Kidde, actually assaulted one of his communicants, it was alleged, for no apparent reason at all. Three ministers were accused of exacting excessive tithes and these were Meric Casaubon of Monkton and Minster, Robert Carter of Stourmouth and Robert Barrell. Moreover, Casaubon was said to have compelled poor servants to pay sixpence for their Easter offerings, and he refused them the sacrament if they failed to do so. Humphry Peake of Tenterden was reported to have exacted "undue and unaccustomed fees" including twelve pence for ringing the great bell for burial and two or even four

1. Walker Revised, p.220.

2. Robert Barrell, Meric Casaubon, Robert Carter, William Jervis, Barnabus Knell, John Kidde, Richard Tray, Humphrey Peake and John Wood.

shillings for marriage, when it used to be only eighteen pence. Like Casaubon, he refused to give the sacrament to those who did not pay their Easter offerings.¹ Giles Thorne of St. Mary's, Bedford, had been a commissioner for Archbishop Laud at his visitation of the county in 1634 and a surrogate to Sir John Lambe. Moreover, he had been a prosecutor in the High Commission Court. In a petition from the inhabitants of Bedford he was said to have been "turbulent", causing "divisions and factions in the town". Moreover, in a petition of 1643, John Wallinger, churchwarden of St. Paul's, Bedford, maintained that:

"the said Thorne was set up by the archbishop of Canterbury... to be an instrument to vex and root out honest men (whom they styled Puritans)."

He, himself, had been involved in a lengthy and frustrating legal wrangle with Thorne. This arose after Wallinger had presented Thorne "for several foul offences" and the latter had retaliated by bringing Wallinger before him in the ecclesiastical court to answer "frivolous charges". Wallinger then petitioned Archbishop Laud a number of times and, when he was finally granted an audience, he claimed that Laud:

"fell upon [him] in a violent manner and looking frowningly upon [him] called [him] by harsh names, 'Sirra, if you were well served, you would be laid by the heels.'"

In the end, the hapless John Wallinger was imprisoned for refusing to submit to Thorne's judgement and, after eighteen weeks, he was released by parliament. Thorne had also made an implacable enemy of Sir Samuel Luke, Member of Parliament for the town of Bedford. Unfortunately, details of this are not extant.²

In conclusion, many ministers, including those who were not deprived of their livings, had at some time or another been neglectful

1. White, pp.11-2; Larking, pp.104-7,161-2,186-7,196-8,204,230-2.

2. PRO, SP16/499/90, f.276; LJ, vol.V, p.332; Walker Revised, p.66.

of their duties. Neglect of duty in most cases, however, was not enough to result in the ejection of a minister. There were usually ideological or economic disputes or personal quarrels at the root of the problems which arose between deprived ministers and groups of their parishioners. At least three ministers who were not accused of neglecting their duties were charged with being contentious or litigious. John Wood of Marden in Kent and John Gwin of Cople in Bedfordshire were said to have been quarrelsome; and Edward Savadge of Tilbrook in Bedfordshire was denounced for exacting too high a rate for his tithes.¹ In the past, two Kentish ministers, John Aymes of Loose and John Copley of Pluckley, had been termed contentious. Aymes had "brawled" with his parish clerk and was involved in a feud with a churchwarden and Copley had severely alienated Sir Edward Dering.²

It would be useful to investigate those individuals who petitioned against their ministers as they obviously had a crucial role to play in their ministers' ejections. This discussion will be based almost entirely upon evidence from Kent as few individuals are mentioned in the documents from Bedfordshire, apart from one or two gentlemen who organized petitions, such as Benjamin Rhodes of Ampthill and I. Harvey of Cardington. The case of John Wallinger against Giles Thorne has already been considered. At least three quarters of those Kentish ministers who were petitioned against in the early 1640's were deprived of their livings. One can thus ask a number of questions about those obviously influential petitioners. How many parishioners signed the

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1. BRO, TW 926, ff.103-4; Articles...Against John Gwin, Vicar of Cople, p.1; Walker Revised, p.228.
 2. In 1634, Copley was presented for insulting Sir Edward Dering and his brother Henry in the parish church. He and the Derings were at odds over a piece of land and tithes. CALC, PRC 39/39, ff.202,214, 226; Z4-5, ff.25,94,116; PRO, E112 190 139 (Easter 1634); LPL, VG4/15, f.25.

petitions? Who were they? Were any of them members of the gentry? Were any known to have had a grudge against their minister - had he, for example, sued any of them in the ecclesiastical courts? Did a rival group of parishioners petition in favour of their minister? The number of petitioners against those ministers who were later deprived of their livings varied from one, in the case of Edward Boughen, vicar of Woodchurch, and two, in the case of John Aymes, curate of Loose, to as many as eighty, in the case of Humphrey Peake of Tenterden.¹ In fact, there was, on average, a surprizingly low number of signatories to each petition, especially when one takes into account that in most petitions some of the petitioners were related. This is evident by the use of the terms "senior" and "junior". In only five of the fourteen cases investigated were the churchwardens numbered amongst the signatories.² No women appear to have petitioned against their ministers. Four of the petitions were signed by gentlemen.³ Edward Boys signed the petition against Humphrey Peake, Sir John Routh signed the petition against Samuel Smith, William Finch was the only person to have petitioned against the "popish practices of Mr. Edward Boughen" and, finally, Sir Edward Alchorne organized and signed the petition against the minister of Lidsing and Bredhurst, Richard Tray.⁴ The case of Richard Tray is of

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1. Number of petitions for each minister: Edward Boughen:1, John Aymes:2, Meric Casaubon(Monkton):4, Richard Tray:8, Samuel Smith: 11, Richard Marsh:12, Edward Nicholls:17, William Jervis:20, Barnabus Knell:20, Robert Carter:20, Meric Casaubon(Minster):33, Edward Barbette:34, Robert Barrell:53, Humphrey Peake:80. Larking, pp.105,107,123,134-5,162,165,174-5,178,188,190,198-200,205,232; LJ, vol.VI, p.37.
 2. The four cases are for: John Aymes, Barnabus Knell, Meric Casaubon (Minster), Edward Barbette and William Jervis. LJ, vol.VI, p.37; Larking, pp.106,139,178,187.
 3. Although he was ostensibly deprived for his support of the Prayer Book and for promoting the Kentish petition in its favour, it is quite possible that John Copley of Pluckley's feud with Sir Edward Dering had something to do with his ejection. PRO, E112 190 139 (Easter 1634); LPL, VG4/15, f.25.
 4. Larking, pp.123,162,175,232.

particular interest as it reveals that some parishioners were coerced by rich and powerful men into denouncing their minister. Five of eight petitioners against Richard Tray later withdrew their support for the petition against the latter, claiming that Alchorne had forced them into signing it, three of them adding that they had been drunk when they had signed it and had no knowledge of its contents. Thus, concluded Richard Tray in his own defence:

"for the other three [signatories] Mr. Alchorne and his boy are two."

However, in spite of the suspicious circumstances surrounding the drawing up of the petition against him, Richard Tray was deprived of his curacy of Lidsing and Bredhurst in 1646. Edward Nicholls pleaded with Sir Edward Dering that he might keep his vicarage of Northbourne and Shoulden, adding:

"I hear that Sir Edward Boys is made against me."

Nicholls lost Northbourne and Shoulden in 1644.¹ It has already been noted that Giles Thorne of St. Mary's, Bedford, had alienated Sir Samuel Luke, Member of Parliament for the town of Bedford.² Although John Pocklington, rector of Yelden in Bedfordshire, was deprived of his living for his ardent Laudianism, it is significant that he had alienated the future parliamentarian, Oliver St. John, Earl of Bolingbroke, by taking the latter to court in 1637 for tithes and again in 1638 for a piece of disputed land.³ Seven Kentish ministers are known to have presented or sued at least one of their future opponents before 1641. It is interesting to note that both signatories of the petition against John Aymes - John Edmead and Paul Greensmith, churchwardens of Loose - had been presented

1. Larking, pp.110-1,163-72.

2. Walker Revised, p.66.

3. PRO, C3 412 148; BRO, J 1224.

by their minister in 1639 for not receiving the sacrament at Easter.¹ Four of those who petitioned against Robert Barrell of Maidstone had been presented by the latter at a visitation - one in 1626 for drinking during divine service time and three in 1636 for being:

"contemners and violaters of authority and jurisdiction ecclesiastical."²

Moreover, four of those who signed the petition against Humphrey Peake of Tenterden had been presented for not paying their church rate contributions and another one had been presented for not receiving the communion regularly.³ As many as six of the twenty parishioners who petitioned against William Jervis of Sturry had been presented at one time or another by the latter. Three of them had been presented for refusing to come up to the altar rail to receive communion, which corroborates the claim made against him in the petition. The churchwarden of Sturry, Richard Bellamy, had been presented in 1629 for failing to repair the churchyard fence. Moreover, his pregnant wife had been presented in 1640 for failing to stand up during the Creed, thus corroborating another complaint against Jervis. Mrs. Bellamy, in fact, did not sign the petition against Jervis. Another petitioner had been presented in 1638 for unlawfully railing in a seat in the church and yet another had been presented in 1638 for refusing to pay his contribution to the church rate.⁴ In 1640, Meric Casaubon had presented one of the signatories of the petition against him from Minster for not paying his church rate.⁵ The sole petitioner against Edward Boughen, rector of Woodchurch, one William Finch, had been presented by the former in 1637

1. CALC, Z4-6, f.250.

2. CALC, Z4-4, f.159, Z4-6, f.12.

3. CALC, X6-7, f.224, X6-8, ff.50,129, Z4-6, f.307.

4. CALC, X7-7, ff.36-7, X6-10, f.194, Z3-16, f.18, Larking, p.187.

5. CALC, Z4-7, f.65.

for "wilfully absenting himself from church"; moreover, it was reported that Finch had refused to kneel at the parson's prayer or the Lord's Prayer and would not bow at the name of Jesus. Furthermore, it was reported that he went to Tenterden to hear a sermon when one was preached there.¹ Two opponents of Samuel Smith, vicar of Boughton Blean, Sir John Routh and John Spencer, had been presented for failing to pay their contributions to the church rate in 1638 and 1639 respectively. Moreover, John Spencer had also been presented in 1637 for irreverently keeping his hat on during sermon-time and for appearing to be asleep. Furthermore, he was presented in both 1638 and 1639 for failing to sign a bill of presentment.² A total of three of the twenty parishioners against Robrt Carter, rector of Stourmouth, had been presented in 1639 for failing to pay their contributions to the parish clerk's wages.³

Thus, a significant number of ministers who were deprived of their livings are known to have had powerful enemies from amongst their parishioners working against them. It is likely that the rest had either influential people working against them from behind the scenes or they simply lacked the support of the powerful to help them to withstand the onslaught of opposition against them. Some of those parishioners who signed petitions against their ministers had a particular axe to grind, or grudges against their ministers which they were prepared to act upon. It is interesting to note that a comparison of the results of the above analysis with the results of a similar analysis carried out on the signatories of the petitions against the five ministers who managed to

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1. This was before the Laudian minister, Humphrey Peake, was appointed to that vicarage.
 2. CALC, Z4-6, f.49,108,237,271, Z4-7, ff.136,244.
 3. CALC, X6-6, f.266.

cling to their livings reveals no striking differences.¹ Just why these ministers, with the exception of Samuel Keame, remained unscathed is difficult to determine, particularly as there do not appear to have been any counter-petitions in their favour.² One would suspect that they were lucky enough to have had powerful supporters from amongst the ranks of the gentry.

In the cases of at least two deprived ministers, rival groups of parishioners sent petitions in support of them to parliament, but these were to no avail. Ten parishioners of Lidsing and Bredhurst maintained that Richard Tray:

"is a man of integrity of life and conversation, free from scandal or any just exception, duly preaching every Sunday in the forenoon and catechising all summer in the afternoon; one that relieves the poor, a due observer and maintainer to his utmost power the discipline established for the peace and unity of the Church of England."

A clue to the cause of his ultimate ejection from his curacy in 1647 might lie in the last part of this quotation. A glowing report was given of him by twenty three parishioners, including Thomas Hobbes, gentleman, from his other church of St. Mary Hoo in the diocese of Rochester in 1641. In fact, Tray was ejected from that living ten years later. Both petitions revealed a quite different man from the one portrayed in Sir Edward Alchorne's petition.³ In 1642, forty eight parishioners from St. Mary Magdalen, Canterbury, asked that their minister, John Marston, might remain in his benefice undisturbed as he had suffered enough for

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1. Samuel Keame, rector of Little Chart, Edward Henshaw, vicar of Sutton Valence, Mr. Lidham, vicar of Leysdown, Thomas Higginson, vicar of Rolvenden (no court proceedings), Stephen Thomas, rector of Crundale (no court proceedings). CALC, X6-4, ff.70-1,122-3,146,191, 252-3, X6-8, ff.168,224,257, X6-11, f.125, pt.II, f.9; Larking, pp.113-14,121-2,190,158-60,236-7.
 2. The parishioners of Little Chart asked that their absent Puritan minister, Samuel Keame, be compelled to return to the parish. Larking, pp.113-14.
 3. Larking, pp.160-1,169-71.

his past misdemeanours. Moreover, they reported, since his release from imprisonment for his adultery with Mrs. Elizabeth Best:

"he has...well ordered and demeaned himself in his life and conversation and has been...diligent, painful and careful both in prayers and administration of the sacraments and preaching the true word of God."

Furthermore, they asserted, those who had petitioned against him were:

"some few of the said parish...some apprentices, boys, journeymen, tailors and some other people who seldom or never come to church."

However, this plea was ignored and John Marston was deprived of all his preferments in 1643.¹ In 1645, David Nash was ejected from the vicarage of Waltham, in spite of the fact that a group of parishioners had sent a petition to the Committee for Religion in 1641 asking that his meagre income of five pounds a year be increased. To justify their plea they reported that Nash was:

"a man of exemplary life and conversation and a most diligent preacher."²

It was said that, in the House of Commons in 1641, Sir Edward Dering declared that Ralph Abbot, vicar of Bethersden, and John Reading, vicar of St. Mary's, Dover, were "the ablest and worthiest ministers he knew". However, this expression of whole-hearted support did not prevent either of them from being ejected from their respective benefices in 1643. Reading was deprived ostensibly for opposing rebellion against the King and for upholding the authority of the Anglican Church. The reason why Abbot as ejected cannot be determined.³

Dr. Green has pointed out that there was a high level of conformity amongst the deprived clergy. Many were prepared to make their peace with parliament and to continue to serve in the Church. He

1. HLRO, HLMP, 28th. July 1642; Walker Revised, p.222.

2. Larking, p.239.

3. Walker Revised, pp.209,224.

estimates that at least one thousand, one hundred and eighty out of two thousand, seven hundred and eighty harassed ministers, which represents a total of forty per cent, were prepared to continue to serve in the Church, even after the abolition of the episcopacy and the public execution of the Church's Supreme Governor. In his calculations he includes pluralists who managed to retain one living.¹ In the diocese of Canterbury, six pluralists retained one of their livings, eleven ministers made peace with parliament and were granted livings in the diocese of Canterbury - though none received their old livings back - and a total of seven other deprived ministers were given benefices in other dioceses.² Thus, a total of twenty three, or thirty per cent, of the deprived ministers served in the Church in the 1640's and 1650's. If one adds to our calculations those ministers who were harassed in some way, yet not deprived, the sum total is twenty nine or approximately thirty seven per cent, which is not far off Dr. Green's estimated national average.³ Altogether, seven deprived ministers from Bedfordshire, or twenty per cent, made peace with parliament; of these, one minister, namely Francis Walsall, rector of Sandy, was lucky enough

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1. Green, "Scandal", p.525.
 2. Ralph Abbot received Shadoxhurst in 1646, Miles Barnes received Tenterden in 1649, William Belke received Chilham in 1645, Nicholas Brett received Eastry in 1648, Nicholas Chewney received Deale in 1646, John Gough received Norton in 1653, Edward Nicholls received St.Mary at Cliffe in 1646, John Reader received Hothfield in 1646, Mr.Woodcock received Borden in 1648, John Reading received Cheriton in 1643 and William Watts received Hope All Saints in 1646. Robert Abbot received Southwick, Hants in 1643, John Aymes received Harley, Surrey in 1648, Robert Bankes received East Bedfont, Herts in 1649, Benjamin Harrison received South Towton, Devon in 1653, John Eedes received Broad Chalk, Wilts and Hale, Hants in 1652, John Marston received Standish, Gloucs in 1653 and James Wilcocks received Wadhurst in Sussex in 1650. BL, Add. MS.15669, f.222, Add. MS.15670, ff.4,196, Add. MS.15671, f.76; LJ, vol.IX, p.92; Walker Revised, pp.210,212,214,216,222-4,228; Al.Cantab., vol.I, p.331, vol.II, p.314, vol.IV, p.405; DNB, vol.I, p.25, vol.XLVII, p.363.
 3. James Lambe, Edward Goniston, Henry Crispe, Isaac Bargrave, William Dunkin. BL, Add. MS.15669, f.223; Walker Revised, pp.210,215-16,221.

to have had his ejection quashed and four other ministers went on to receive benefices in other parts of the country.¹ If one adds to our list Thomas Judkin, the harassed rector of Turvey, almost a quarter of the harassed ministers of Bedfordshire conformed in the 1640's and 1650's.² It is striking that five of the deprived Kentish ministers who received new benefices and three of those from Bedfordshire, together with Francis Walsall, had been charged with malignancy when they had been ejected from their previous benefices.³ Moreover, two Kentish ministers and one Bedfordshire minister had been Laudians.⁴ These findings support the theory that by no means all the clergy so charged were implacable opponents of parliament or enthusiastic supporters of William Laud. One compelling reason why a minister might make peace with parliament, in order to secure a new benefice, was the need to support himself and his family. An ejected minister's wife and children were entitled to a fifth part of the profits of the sequestered living. However, a number of wives of ministers, at least eight from the diocese of Canterbury and two from Bedfordshire, found it difficult to obtain this fifth part either from the sequestrators or from the new incumbents of the benefices that they had left.⁵ Two of the eight Kentish ministers, William Watts and

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1. Robert Gifford received Ellisfield, Hants in 1648; Nathaniel Hill received Fordwich in Kent in 1657, Edward Savadge received Long Storr, Hunts in 1651 and Anthony Waters received Maidwell, Northants in 1656. Thomas Cookson took the Covenant but does not appear to have received another living until 1660 and Robert Payne's petition of 1658 for his restoration to the church of Little Barford was turned down. PRO, SP23/128/154; Walker Revised, pp.64-7.
 2. BL, Add. MS.15670, f.208.
 3. Kentish ministers: John Gough, John Reader, John Aymes, Benjamin Harrison and John Marston. Bedfordshire ministers: Robert Gifford, Nathaniel Hill, Edward Savadge. BL, Add. MS.15669, f.27, Add. MS. 15670, f.4; Walker Revised, pp.64-5,210,216,218,222; Al.Cantab., vol.II, p.314, vol.IV, p.21.
 4. Kentish ministers: Miles Barnes and Edward Nicholls. Bedfordshire minister: Edward Savadge. Walker Revised, pp.210,223; Al.Cantab., vol.IV, p.21.
 5. BL, Add. MS.15669, ff.25-6,71,76,163,191, Add. MS.15670, ff.16,21,80,82, 143,160,181,196, Add. MS.15671, ff.46,159,257; HLRO, HLMP, 23rd. June 1660.

James Wilcocks, conformed and were granted new benefices.' In a letter to parliament of the 6th. August 1642, John Marston, the ejected minister of St. Mary Bredin and St. Mary Magdalen, Canterbury, begged for mercy, claiming that he faced calamity and ruin, for he was unable to support his wife, children and aged mother.² It is thought that after he had made peace with parliament he was granted the vicarage of Henbury in Gloucestershire, but was later ejected as a former royalist. However, after he had made "a fulsome submission" to parliament he was given the vicarage of Standish in Gloucestershire in 1653.³ Many ministers might have conformed out of a "genuine concern at the number of flocks without a shepherd".⁴

What of the deprived ministers who did not manage to, or did not wish to, procure a new benefice for themselves? At least one Kentish minister, namely Samuel Smith, and two Bedfordshire ministers, namely Giles King and George Shieres, together with the later conformist, Thomas Cookson, attempted, albeit unsuccessfully, to seize back their benefices at Boughton Blean, Tempsford, Potton and Marston, respectively, in 1647, encouraged by the rumour that a settlement between the King and parliament was imminent. What happened to these ministers during the Interregnum is unknown.⁵ Thomas Blechinden, who had been ejected from Eastry and Kingston in Kent in 1645, was accused of complicity in the Kentish rising of 1648, but his case was dismissed. He then went to live on his family estate at Aldington.⁶ Meric Casaubon was asked by Oliver Cromwell to write an impartial history of the Civil War, but he declined

1. LL, vol.IX, p.92; Al.Cantab., vol.IV, p.405.

2. HLRO, HLMP, 6th. Aug. 1642.

3. Walker Revised, p.222.

4. Green, "Scandal", pp.526-7.

5. BL, Add. MS.15671, f.182,206; Walker Revised, pp.65-6; Morrill, ed. Morrill, Reactions to the English Civil War 1642-49, p.112.

6. Walker Revised, p.212.

this offer. Moreover, he refused an offer from Queen Christina of Sweden to be the governor of one, or the inspector of all universities. In fact, Casaubon got married again in 1651 to a wealthy woman and was thus able to devote his time to writing a number of religious and philosophical works, including A Treatise Concerning Enthusiasm, which was published in 1655.¹ Francis Mansell, who had left his rectory of Elmley in Kent to join the King in Wales and who is said by Matthews to have been:

"one of those whom the House of Commons wished to secure in some suitable place,"

was allowed to have his own room in Jesus College, Oxford, in 1651. Moreover, he was restored as Principal of that College in 1660.² At least six other Kentish ministers and Giles Thorne from Bedfordshire returned to university to continue their studies. Edward Boughen received his Doctorate of Divinity in 1646, William Belke and John Gough received theirs in 1660 and Giles Thorne received his in 1661. Moreover, Humphrey Peake was incorporated at Oxford in 1645 and Robert Dixon in 1653. George Wilde became a Doctor of Canon Law in 1647.³ It has been noted already that George Wilde went on to become a minister to a royalist congregation in London during the Commonwealth.⁴ John Gwin of Cople in Bedfordshire left for Virginia.⁵ A total of fourteen deprived Kentish ministers and eight Bedfordshire ministers are known to have died in

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1. Cromwell's offer reveals just how important and influential this Laudian minister was considered to have been. DNB, vol.II, pp.1170-1.
 2. Walker Revised, p.222.
 3. Al.Cantab., vol.I, p.127, vol.II, p.244, vol.III, p.327; Al.Oxon., pp.154,407,1479,1631.
 4. Walker Revised, pp.71-2.
 5. Godber, History of Bedfordshire, p.230.

the 1640's and 1650's.' Of these, John Reader and John Woodcock of Kent and Robert Gifford of Bedfordshire had conformed and had received new benefices. Two other ministers, Peter Rogers and Edward Tanner had been ejected from the curacy of Folkestone and the vicarage of St. Margaret at Cliffe, respectively, due to old age and infirmity. Presumably, they continued to live in retirement for at least a few years.< Thus, what became of at least forty five or fifty per cent of deprived Kentish ministers and fifteen, or forty seven per cent of deprived Bedfordshire ministers can be determined and a large number of these were prepared to pledge their loyalty to parliament.

The problem of why at least seventy eight ministers were ejected from up to eighty seven parishes in the diocese of Canterbury and why at least thirty two ministers were ejected from up to thirty two parishes in the archdeaconry of Bedford has been shown to have been complex. The results of our investigation reveal a quite different picture in the areas of our study from the one in Suffolk; for, there, just over sixty per cent of deprived ministers were charged with some form of immoral behaviour, compared with thirty six per cent for the diocese of Canterbury and just over a quarter for Bedfordshire. Moreover, almost seventy nine per cent of the Suffolk ministers were accused of malignancy compared with fifty two per cent for the diocese of

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1. Kentish ministers: John Brown d.1645, Isaac Colfe d.1648, Phineas Cosby d.1652, Francis Fotherby d.1646, Daniel Horsmonden d.1655, Thomas Jackson d.1646, John Jeffreys d.1655, William Kingsley d. 1647, Humphrey Peake d.1645, John Reader d.1647, William Slater d. 1647, Richard Taylor d.1651, John Willington d.1643, John Woodcock d. 1657. Bedfordshire ministers: John Ailmer d.1659, Thomas Claver d.1654, Robert Gifford d.1659, Giles King d.1658, Gabriel Moore d. 1652, John Pocklington d.1642, Hugh Reeve d.1646, Robert White whose date of death is unknown, is said to have died during the Interregnum. Walker Revised, pp.64-6,73,208,212,214,216,219,224-6, 228; Al.Cantab., vol.II, pp.411,465, vol.III, p.327, vol.IV, p.389; Al.Oxon., p.855.
 2. The dates of their deaths are unknown. Walker Revised, pp.224,226.

Canterbury and sixty three per cent for the archdeaconry of Bedford. Furthermore, as many as ninety two per cent of Suffolk clergy were charged with some form of obnoxious religious practice or holding some form of obnoxious doctrine. The figures for the diocese of Canterbury and the archdeaconry of Bedford are sixty per cent and twenty six per cent respectively.¹ The religious struggle in the county of Suffolk was much more bitter at both parish and county level than it was in the two areas of our study. Detailed analysis has revealed that most deprived ministers were neither recalcitrant royalists nor were they avid supporters of William Laud. This theory is illustrated particularly by the fact that many later conformed and were granted benefices by parliament. The majority of our ministers were not particularly scandalous either. Dr. Green is right to suggest that "scandal" and "malignancy" often existed only in the eyes of a small and rather jaundiced group of beholders. A minister could be ejected on the testimony of surprizingly few of his parishioners. Opposition shown to ministers by a vocal and often influential group of parishioners is crucial in any explanation of the deprivation of ministers. The evidence that they produced might be based only on a brief incident or chance saying. Moreover, behind their accusations there might have lurked personal animosity or a dispute between themselves and their ministers. It is likely that:

"the most important single influence upon the pattern of ejections was cooperation between the more determined members of the county committees and discontented elements in the parishes under their control."²

However, one should stress the role of the moderate gentry, particularly

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1. Dr. Holmes has included pluralism, non-residency and poor and infrequent preaching as well as ceremonialism in his definition of obnoxious practices. Ed. Holmes, *SRS*, vol.13(1970), pp.18-19.
 2. Green, "Scandal", pp.522,524.

on the Kentish committee, who exerted pressure upon their more extreme colleagues to allow many Anglican ministers to continue to function undisturbed in their parish churches.¹ One should not forget that at least one Bedfordshire and four Kentish ministers who were petitioned against in the early 1640's managed to hold on to their livings, in spite of the fact that the accusations made against three of them were not dissimilar to those made against deprived ministers.²

The ejection of ministers must have had a marked effect upon the religious and community life in many parishes in the diocese of Canterbury and archdeaconry of Bedford. Before the 1640's, ministers served in parishes for decades. Barnabus Knell, for example, had been vicar of Reculver and Hoath in Kent for forty years before he was ejected in 1646 and John Smith had served the rectory of Wickhambreux in Kent for forty years. During the Civil War and Interregnum, however, many sequestered livings were filled with a constantly changing succession of ministers. After Robert Barrell was ejected from Boughton Malherbe in Kent in 1643, for example, a total of five ministers succeeded him in that benefice before 1659.³ In at least one case in Kent and three in Bedfordshire two successive ministers were ejected from the same parish.⁴ The stability of parish life must have been disturbed; and the esteem in which the clergy were held by many people

1. Everitt, p.227.

2. Edward Henshaw, Mr.Lidham, Thomas Higginson, Stephen Thomas and Thomas Judkin. The nature of the articles against Judkin of Turvey in Bedfordshire is unknown. BL, Add. MS.15670, f.208; Larking, pp.121-2,158-60,190,236-9.

3. Everitt, p.300.

4. Francis Fotherby was ejected from St. Clement's, Sandwich, in 1643 and Benjamin Harrison was probably ejected from that living in 1650. William Ramsey and John Gardner were ejected from Flitton in 1647 and 1655 respectively, Thomas Joyce and John Bird were ejected from Haynes in 1643 and 1645 respectively and John Ailmer and John Warren were ejected from Melchbourne in 1644 and 1656 respectively. Walker Revised, pp.64-7,216,218.

must have been undermined by the apparent ease with which they were ejected. It has been demonstrated in Chapter III that the ejection of ministers was an important factor behind the tithe problem of the 1640's and 1650's, which was particularly severe in the diocese of Canterbury. Opportunism, resistance to committee rule, support for the ejected incumbent and opposition to the intruded minister all played a part in the tithe disputes. However, leaving aside the tithe problem and the turmoil which the ejection of ministers visited upon certain parts of the diocese of Canterbury and archdeaconry of Bedford, it is true to say that a large number of Anglican ministers in both areas of our study escaped or survived persecution and continued in their benefices.

CONCLUSION

In general terms, very little that we have found out about the pre-Civil War clergy of the diocese of Canterbury and archdeaconry of Bedford as a group differs significantly from what has already been discovered about their colleagues in other parts of the country. The clergy were a professional group with their own hierarchy, a rudimentary form of training, a discernible career structure and their own set of rules. We should not forget, however, to modify our picture of the parish ministry as a profession slightly by remembering that members of the laity had patronage rights in the church and that many clergymen combined their ministerial roles with other occupations, such as teaching and farming, in order to augment their incomes. Nevertheless, ministers had a strong feeling of professional identity and were linked with other members of their profession by ties of kinship and friendship. Ties of friendship were based mainly upon shared beliefs and interests and a common educational background. By the 1630's a university education was of vital importance to those considering a career in the Church; and those seeking ecclesiastical preferment without one were at a serious disadvantage.¹ Actual ignorance amongst the clerical profession was extremely rare; however, the possession of a university education did not necessarily guarantee that a minister was a suitable candidate for a career in the Church and that he would perform his tasks well. With the expansion of educational opportunities in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was far easier to achieve a well-educated ministry than it was to improve the overall quality of those who were entering the profession.²

1. O'Day, *Clergy*, pp.3,4,6,142.

2. Stone, *PP*, vol.28 (1964), pp.58-60; O'Day, *Clergy*, p.160.

The parish ministry was a popular profession in the seventeenth century. Sons followed fathers into it; and some people gave up their training for the legal profession to enter it. Although one should not overemphasise the non-spiritual reason why people joined the parish ministry, they must have felt that it was a worthwhile profession, in which they would achieve at least adequate financial returns and have a fair chance of promotion.¹ Many were drawn from other parts of the country to the diocese of Canterbury to seek preferment, possibly hoping that they stood a good chance of getting promotion if they established themselves in the archbishop's diocese and centre of his province. There are no discernible criteria behind the presentation of people to the richer benefices of the diocese. Social and family connections, friendships made at university, together with ability, religious beliefs and chance all must have played a part. However, it does appear that the possession of a higher degree and, more importantly, an enthusiastic adherence to Archbishop Laud's religious policies were a distinct advantage for a minister who wished to be considered for high ecclesiastical office in the diocese of Canterbury. Like his colleague, Bishop Montagu of Chichester, William Laud built up a party of his own followers in his own cathedral city of Canterbury.²

Another important reason why a career in the ministry was an attractive possibility for a young person was that, although there was a significant financial gulf between rich beneficed ministers on the one hand and their poorer colleagues on the other, most clergymen were able to make a reasonably comfortable living. Some rectors were positively well off. In general, clerical incomes had kept pace with rising prices

1. Green, "Careers", pp.78-9.

2. Al.Cantab., vol.I, pp.76,166; Walker Revised, pp.212,215-6; Fletcher, Sussex, p.78.

during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the profession was not overburdened with taxes.¹ Most beneficed ministers were given a house and at least a small piece of land. True, curates tended to be poor, but for a substantial number of them there was the possibility that one day they would receive benefices. Those ministers, both beneficed and unbeneficed, who were relatively poor and who wished to augment their incomes, as well as the better off who wanted to surround themselves and their families with material comforts and who wanted to make generous provision for their heirs, combined their religious and pastoral duties with other occupations such as teaching or farming. Far from being a financial burden to a minister, it is likely that his wife and older children actively contributed towards the household budget by participating in farming activities.² Holding two livings in plurality was another means by which a minister might augment his income, although this practice was frowned upon by the ecclesiastical hierarchy on the one hand, who saw it as a necessary evil in the Church and an adverse result of lay impropriation, undermining the full effectiveness of the parish ministry, and by Puritan critics on the other, who wanted a more conscientious, preaching ministry.³

Although it is impossible to gain a full picture of refusals to pay tithes from court records, it is likely that, at least until the early 1640's, most people accepted the principle that they needed to pay tithes to their respective ministers. There was no great upsurge of tithe disputes under William Laud's episcopate.⁴ Those disputes which

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1. O'Day, *Clergy*, p.175; Tyler, *SCH*, vol.4 (1967), p.91; Phelps-Brown and Hopkins, ed. Ramsey, *The Price Revolution in Sixteenth Century England*, p.22; Barratt, p.205; Freeman, p.137.
 2. Brooks, *JBAA*, vol.10 (1945-47), p.37.
 3. Laud, *Works*, vol.VII, pp.374-5; Hill, *Economic*, p.224.
 4. Potter, "The Ecclesiastical Courts in the Diocese of Canterbury 1603-1665", pp.28-30.

did occur tended to be concerned with the nature of local customs - how much should be paid and in what form - rather than outright refusals to pay anything at all. Tithes were a particularly unstable form of income at the best of times and commuted tithes depreciated in value quite severely over the years. However, it is likely that there were more ministers who managed to obtain most of their entitlement most of the time than there were ministers who did not. Few tried to enhance the value of their tithes. Moreover, Puritan ministers were as conscientious as their Laudian colleagues in their defence of their right to tithes.

In conclusion, the parish ministry can be considered to have been a distinct socio-economic group, set apart from other groups in society by their education, the nature of their work and the means by which they supported themselves. As a group they were closer to the gentry than to the yeomanry in their social standing,¹ although those ministers who were practical farmers had something in common with the yeomanry.

It has been demonstrated that the use of ecclesiastical visitation records for an analysis of whether or not individual ministers conscientiously performed their religious and pastoral duties is fraught with difficulties. Few ministers were accused of total negligence, but a significant number were presented for at least an occasional lapse. Why were they presented when it is likely that other ministers' negligence went unrecorded? This anomaly can be explained partly by the haphazard nature of the system of presentment.² However, it is likely that behind these presentments for negligence there lurked local conflicts. Churchwardens, supported by groups of parishioners, used the visitation system against those ministers of whom they disapproved,

1. Collinson, Religion, p.96.

2. Fletcher, Sussex, p.83; Collinson, Religion, p.208.

either for personal or ideological reasons - ministers who were Laudian, Puritan, contentious, litigious or scandalous, or simply those ministers whom they disliked. Puritan ministers were just as likely as their Laudian colleagues to meet with opposition from members of their respective congregations.

The extent of Puritanism amongst the pre-Civil War clergy is difficult to measure. It is likely that many Puritan ministers quietly conformed to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England without compromising themselves.¹ Those who did draw attention to themselves were those Puritans who were presented at visitations for nonconformity. The haphazard nature of the visitation system precludes a statistical analysis of clerical nonconformity. However, what can be said is that very few ministers took their nonconformity to extremes. The extent of Arminianism and Laudianism amongst the clergy is difficult to gauge. This is because our evidence in these matters is incomplete, for one is forced to rely upon miscellaneous clerical works and the testimony of groups of parishioners in the petitions to parliament of the 1640's. What of those Arminian and Laudian ministers who wrote nothing, were not petitioned against or who died in the 1630's? However, bearing in mind the limitations of the evidence, it does seem possible to conclude that Arminianism was a minority issue in the Church² and that a significant minority of ministers in the areas of our study were committed Laudians. Although much time is spent upon the significant minority of ministers who drew attention to themselves, the Arminians, the Laudians and the nonconformist Puritans, one should not forget that it is more than likely that the majority of ministers in the diocese

1. Fletcher, *Sussex*, p.73.

2. White, *PP*, vol.101 (Nov. 1983), p.50.

of Canterbury and the archdeaconry of Bedford were Anglicans, conformists who were staunch supporters of the royal supremacy, the authority of the bishops and the Anglican liturgy. Moreover, it is likely that most of their parishioners were Anglican in sympathy, too.¹

The 1640's and 1650's was a period of extreme but temporary dislocation for the clerical profession. The institutional structure of the Church was severely damaged. The ecclesiastical courts were abandoned, the episcopate abolished and the liturgy and practices of the Church were under fire from a number of quarters. Moreover, a large number of ministers in the diocese of Canterbury and archdeaconry of Bedford were deprived of their livings, having been accused of a variety of misdemeanours, including the performance of obnoxious religious practices, political malignancy, scandalous behaviour and negligence. In fact, close analysis has revealed that few of these ministers were staunch supporters of Archbishop Laud's policies, implacable enemies of parliament, habitually negligent or particularly scandalous. This is illustrated particularly by the fact that many later conformed and were granted benefices by parliament. Most deprived ministers had been victims of persecution by personal enemies or religious radicals who were in league with extremists on the county committees of Kent and Bedfordshire.² These ministers lacked powerful enough supporters to withstand the onslaught of attacks upon them. The effect of the ejection of ministers on the parishes concerned was often catastrophic. In some parishes a constant succession of intruded ministers upset the continuity of religious and community life.³ Moreover, the ease with

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1. Fletcher, The Outbreak of the English Civil War, pp.288-9,291; Collinson, Religion, p.191.
 2. Green, "Scandal", pp.522,524.
 3. Everitt, p.300.

which ministers were ejected from their benefices undermined the esteem with which the profession was held in many parishes.

After the fall of the episcopal hierarchy and the ecclesiastical courts ministers found themselves deprived of the full prospects of promotion; moreover, they had no fully effective judicial machinery at a local level to protect themselves and their rights. During the 1640's and 1650's large numbers of ministers in the diocese of Canterbury found it very difficult to collect their tithes and they were forced to resort to the Court of the Exchequer for redress. In fact, tithes were withheld from ministers on an unprecedented scale,¹ by opportunists, by those who held ideological objections to tithes, by those who were protesting against committee-rule,² by implacable enemies of the intruded ministers and by the staunch supporters of those ministers who had been ejected. Some deprived ministers openly encouraged their supporters to starve the intruded ministers of their tithes in an effort to regain control of their respective benefices.³

One should not exaggerate the adverse effects of the upheavals of the 1640's and 1650's on the parish ministry and its relations with its parishioners. During this period two major schemes for the augmentation of poor benefices and curacies were put into action and, although they were of limited value in practice, they paved the way for later reforms such as Queen Anne's Bounty and the Church Commission.⁴ Moreover, it should not be forgotten that at least thirty per cent of the seventy eight Kentish ministers who were deprived of their livings and twenty two per cent of the thirty two deprived Bedfordshire ministers

1. James, History, vol.26 (June 1941), p.4.

2. Morrill, The Revolt of the Provinces, pp.125-6.

3. BL, Add. MS.15671, ff.18,206; Walker Revised, pp.65-6.

4. Hughes and O'Day, eds. Heal and O'Day, Princes and Paupers in the English Church 1500-1800, p.189.

conformed in the 1640's and 1650's and were given new benefices. In addition to this seventeen deprived Kentish ministers and a further seven deprived Bedfordshire ministers were given benefices in the early 1660's.¹ Of these as many as eight Kentish and three Bedfordshire ministers actually got back the livings from which they had been ejected.² Moreover, at least ten Kentish and two Bedfordshire deprived ministers, who had made peace with parliament and who had been given livings in the 1640's and 1650's, survived in their livings into the Restoration period.³ Thus, about a third of the ministers from the diocese of Canterbury and just over a quarter of the ministers from the archdeaconry of Bedford who had been deprived of their livings in the 1640's and 1650's were in possession of a benefice in the early

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1. Just under twenty per cent of Kentish ministers and just under ten per cent of Bedfordshire ministers were ejected from their livings between 1660 and 1662. The following Kentish ministers were restored to the profession between 1660 and 1662: William Axon, Edward Boughen, Daniel Bullen, James Burville, Meric Casaubon, Thomas Conway, Henry Dering, Robert Dixon, Walter Drewry, Henry Hannington, William Jordan, Peter Lane, John Lynch, Richard Marsh, James Penny, Samuel Smith, George Wilde. The following Bedfordshire ministers were restored to the profession between 1660 and 1662: Timothy Archer, Thomas Cookson, Theodore Crowley, Edward Martin, William Ramsey, George Sheires and Giles Thorne. Calamy Revised, pp.23,29,31,33,41,45-6,60,74-5,86,102,135,137,153,161-2,165,167, 173,188-9,193-4,222-3,226-7,253-7,278,292,300,325,350,387,416-7, 429,522,533; LPL,MS.1126, ff.24,31,38,40,47; Walker Revised, pp.64,66; Al.Cantab., vol.I, p.269, vol.II, pp.41,47,381, vol.III, p.150, vol.IV, p.55; Al.Oxon., pp.834,1479,1631; DNB, vol.II, pp.1170-1; Green, "Scandal", p.247.
 2. William Axon, Edward Boughen, Meric Casaubon, Thomas Conway, Robert Dixon, Walter Drewry, John Lynch, James Penny, Timothy Archer, Theodore Crowley and William Ramsey.
 3. Kentish ministers: Ralph Abbot, Robert Abbot, John Aymes, William Belke, Nicholas Chewney, John Eedes, John Gough, Benjamin Harrison, John Reading and James Wilcocks. Bedfordshire ministers: Nathaniel Hill and Francis Walsall. BL, Add. MS.15669, f.222, Add. MS.15671, f.76; Walker Revised, pp.210,216,224; Al.Cantab., vol.I, p.331, vol.II, pp.314,372, vol.IV, pp.325,405; DNB, vol.I, p.25, vol.XLVII, p.36.

1660's.¹

Although much time has been spent on those ministers who were deprived of their livings in the 1640's and 1650's, it is true to say that the majority of ministers in the diocese of Canterbury and archdeaconry of Bedford escaped harassment and remained undisturbed in their benefices. This was in no small measure due to the protective influence of the Anglican gentry of Kent and Bedfordshire.² Moreover, it is more than likely that the majority of these ministers were Anglican. Furthermore, it is likely that they, with the support of their parishioners, continued to use the Anglican liturgy during the 1640's and 1650's. Old habits and old traditions die hard.³ These Anglican ministers would have provided a strong element of continuity in the Church between 1640 and 1660.

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1. The rest of the deprived ministers in our study had either died, gone abroad or they cannot be traced. A few of the ministers in our study were rewarded with high ecclesiastical office for their loyalty to the Church. Giles Thorne was finally installed as Archdeacon of Buckingham in 1660, having been collated to that post in 1643, George Wilde was made Bishop of Londonderry in 1661 and Edward Martin was made Dean of Ely in 1662. John Reading was restored as Canon of Canterbury. Walker Revised, p.66; Al.Cantab., vol.III, p.150; Al.Oxon., pp.1242,1631; Blaydes, BNQ, vol.II, pp.40-1.
 2. Everitt, p.227.
 3. Morrill, ed. Morrill, Reactions to the English Civil War, pp.100,104-5,108,112.

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Terriers

ABE 1

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P11/28/1

Wills

ABP/W1621/218, ABP/W1625/204, ABP/W1626/39,55, ABP/W1627/133,
ABP/W1628/39, ABP/W1630/56,129, ABP/W1632/69, ABP/W1633/143,178,
ABP/W1633-34/191, ABP/W1636/47, ABP/W1636-37/21,112,159,
ABP/W1637/95,131, ABP/W1638-39/77, ABP/W1639/63, ABP/W1639-40/164,
ABP/1640/86, ABP/W1641-42/96,189, ABP/W1644/121, ABP/W1645/32,
ABP/W1646/93, ABP/W1648/126, ABP/W1650/112, ABP/W1652/108, ABP/W1656/26,
ABP/W1657/1,47,196, ABP/W1662/100,121,128, ABP/W1662-63/42, ABP/W1664-
65/88, ABP/W1665-66/93, ABP/W1666/152, ABP/W1667/12,87

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Stowe MSS. 184,744

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Deposition Books and Registers

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| PRC 39/37 1623-26 | PRC 39/43 1631-37 | PRC 39/49 1639-48 |
| PRC 39/38 1625-26 | PRC 39/44 1631-37 | PRC 39/50 1639-49 |
| PRC 39/39 1626-30 | PRC 39/45 1633-36 | PRC 39/51 1638-49 |
| PRC 39/40 1626-31 | PRC 39/46 1634-38 | PRC 39/52 1636-45,1661-75 |
| PRC 39/41 1626-31 | PRC 39/47 1637-38 | X11-14 1620-26 |
| PRC 39/42 1629-33 | PRC 39/48 1639-43 | X11-16 1624-28 |

Ex-Officio Court Books (Comperta et Detecta)

X5-6 Ospringe and Westbere Deaneries 1610-27
X5-7 Sandwich Deanery 1610-37
X6-1 Lympne Deanery 1615-29
X6-2 Dover and Elham Deaneries 1619-32
X6-3 Sittingbourne Deanery 1620-36
X6-4 Sutton Deanery 1620-35
X6-5 Canterbury Deanery 1624-32
X6-6 Bridge Deanery 1624-39
X6-7 Charing Deanery 1620-27
X6-8 Charing Deanery 1620-27
X6-9 Lympne and Charing Deaneries 1631-67
X6-10 Canterbury Deanery 1632-39
X6-11 Sutton and Sittingbourne Deaneries 1636-70
X7-1 Ospringe and Westbere Deaneries 1639-81
X7-2 Canterbury Deanery 1639-82
X7-3 Bridge, Dover and Elham Deaneries 1639-86
X7-4 Sandwich Deanery 1640-41
Y6-4 Ospringe and Westbere Deaneries 1627-39
Z3-16 Archdeacon's Visitation 1637
Z4-4 1625-27
Z4-5 1627-30
Z4-6 1636-39
Z4-7 1639-43

Instance Act Books

| | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Y5-23 1623-25 | Y6-11 1639 | Z1-16 1631-32 |
| Y6-1 1625-26 | Y6-12 1640-41 | Z1-17 1632-33 |
| Y6-2 1626-27 | Y6-13 1642-48 | Z1-18 1633-35 |
| Y6-3 1627-28 | Z1-9 1624-25 | Z1-19 1633-39 |
| Y6-5 1628-30 | Z1-10 1625 | Z1-20 1635-36 |
| Y6-6 1630-32 | Z1-11 1626-27 | Z1-21 1637-38 |
| Y6-7 1632-33 | Z1-12 1627-28 | Z2-2 1636-41 |
| Y6-8 1633-35 | Z1-13 1628-29 | Z2-3 1638-39 |
| Y6-9 1635-36 | Z1-14 1629-30 | Z2-4 1641-43 |
| Y6-10 1636-38 | Z1-15 1630-31 | |

Liber Cleri

X8-2 Archbishop Laud's Visitation 1637

Terriers

D/TA2,9,13,17

D/TB3,6,9,19,30-1,33,36,41,45,51,53,57,61,70,73,76,79,82

D/TC3,6,9,12,14,17-8,20,22,25,29,33,38,42,47-8,50,52,57,60,63,66,71

D/TD1,5,7,9,15

D/TE2,5,11,13,16,19
D/TF4,10,13,15
D/TG4,7
D/TH2,5,10,12,16,22,31,33,38,41,43,47,52
D/TI2,4
D/TK2,3,5,12
D/TL3,11,14,17,20,23,30,35,39
D/TM3,11,15,19,23,26
D/TN3,6,10,14,20,23
D/TO6,9,13,16
D/TP1,3,5,10
D/TR1,3,7,9,12,15,17,20,23
D/TS2,4-5,10,17,19,32-3,35-6,38,41,44-5,48,53,56,58,61,63-4,68,70,72,
75,77,80,83,88,92
D/TT2,4,10,12,16,19
D/TU1-3
D/TW1,6,9,11-2,16-7,20,26,30,36,40,47

Visitation Call Books

V/V5 1596 V/V13 1607 V/V48 1637

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Main Papers

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 16th. January 1640-41 | 10th. September 1642 |
| 28th. June 1642 | 14th. February 1642-43 |
| 28th. July 1642 | 5th. August 1643 |
| 6th. August 1642 | 23rd. June 1660 |
| 27th. August 1642 | |

KENT ARCHIVES OFFICE

Inventories

PRC 10/62-5,68-9,71-2
PRC 11/1,3-4,7-8,10
PRC 27/5,9-10,12,19

Quarter Sessions Papers

Q/SB3/4 Q/SB6/25

Wills

PRC 16/186,193,198,201,215,217,219,230,232-4;236,238,240,243-4,247,
250,254,256,261,266-7,269,272-3
PRC 17/67-8,70
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LAMBETH PALACE LIBRARY

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VG4/13 1631-34
VG4/14 Bridge Deanery 1634
VG4/15 Charing Deanery 1634
VG4/16 Lympne Deanery 1634
VG4/17 Ospringe and Westbere Deaneries 1634
VG4/18 Sandwich Deanery 1634

VG4/19 Sittingbourne Deanery 1634
VG4/20 Sutton Deanery 1634
VG4/21 Canterbury Deanery 1634-35
VG4/22 1634-37

Presentation Deeds 1643-46, 1650-59

COMM I/15-21,35,43-7,49,58,68-9,77,81,99-100,101-4,113-9,142-3
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Minute Books of the Trustees for Maintenance of Ministers 1654-59

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COMM V/1-7

Augmentation Order Books 1650-60

COMM VIa/1-13

Augmentations Approved and Ordered by Protector and Council 1648,
1652-59

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Lists and Tables of Augmentations 1655-59

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Charities and Pensions 1651-52

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Parliamentary Surveys of Church Lands 1647-59

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Ministers 1657

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LINCOLN ARCHIVES OFFICE

Terriers

TER 1607 BUNDLE, TER 1625 BUNDLE, TER 1634 BUNDLE, TER 1635 BUNDLE,
TER 1663 BUNDLE, TER 1664 BUNDLE
TER 7/209,216,262-3,267-8,270,273,285,320-2,325-9
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TER 12/3,5,10,14,16,18,26,29,32-3,35-6,52,192,271-2,284,294
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E135 11 16 E334 17-22

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E112 158 38
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107,109-10
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E125 30-5,37,39
E126 5-6

Depositions

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| E134 6Car.I Mich.25 | E134 22Car.I Mich.1 |
| E134 7Car.I Mich.36 | E134 24Car.I Mich.2 |
| E134 7 and 8Car.I Hil.2 | E134 1652 Trin.4 |
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| E134 13Car.I Mich.36 | E134 1659-60 Mich.5 |
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E179 10 13-15,145-51
E179 41 885-91
E179 307 13-21
E179 309 9-14

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| | | |
|------------|-----------|-----------|
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| C3 431 30 | C5 586 51 | C78 235 1 |
| C3 450 32 | | |

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