

**THE LATER STUART EPISCOPATE:
THE EXAMPLE OF THE BISHOPS OF CHESTER.**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis offers a review of episcopal ministry in the Restoration period through a detailed examination of one diocese, that of Chester, and its bishops.

An introductory chapter gives a preliminary sketch of the diocese itself and of the range of material available for the study of its bishops, and briefly looks at some of the relevant recent studies of the church in the north-west and during the period being considered. The following chapter then examines the background of the six bishops who held the see during this period and the way in which they came to be appointed. The focus here is on national politics and the religious policies being pursued by the governments of Charles II and James II at different times, policies which led to different kinds of appointments being made.

The third chapter turns to the diocese itself, to look at the resources available to the bishops in carrying out their tasks. Their residences, the sources of their income and the demands made on it, their powers of patronage and the administrative and disciplinary machinery at their disposal are each examined in detail. Serious deficiencies are found in each.

The fourth chapter follows a more narrative pattern, and after assessing the state of opinion among the clergy and laity of the diocese in the months following the King's return examines at length the way each bishop in turn dealt with the central task of defending the Established Church. This is found to depend on their view of the dominant threat to it, and could lead to a wish for the terms of establishment to be made stricter or to be relaxed. Events in Chester diocese are compared with experiences elsewhere.

The following chapter then looks at the range of expectations placed on bishops in this period and at how they each used their time. The findings amplify the picture of each individual bishop that began to emerge in chapter 4, but also show that the demands were too great for a fit and active man, let alone an ill or elderly one.

The last main section reviews those aspects of their written works which sought to vindicate the institution of episcopacy or offer a critique of other forms of church polity. The understanding of a bishop's authority is also set in the context of its relation to the authority of the crown and shifting views on the role of religion in society. There was no uniformity of view on these matters, but a trend among most churchmen towards emphasising the independent nature of religious authority as other allies proved less dependable.

The conclusion provides a brief character sketch of each bishop from the evidence that has been gathered in the body of the work and emphasises the variety to be found in the Restoration bench of bishops. However, it is also clear that an individual bishop was generally struggling with demands that were too great for one man with the resources available to him, and that he had little control over the way the church in his diocese developed in an age suspicious of change or reform.

Declaration

This work is original and has not been submitted previously in support of any degree qualification or course.

(M.C. Freeman)

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CONTENTS

List of maps and figures	vi
Abbreviations	vii
Notes on dates and spellings	viii
§1 Introduction	1
§2 The bishops and their appointment	11
§3 Residences, resources and administration	45
Residences	47
Revenue	56
Patronage	76
Church courts and administration	86
§4 The Church by law established	97
The clergy and people of the diocese at the Restoration	102
Shaping the restored Church: Walton and Ferne	116
From the Act of Uniformity to the Declaration of Indulgence: Hall and Wilkins	122
The Church and the succession crisis: Pearson	167
The bishop as an agent of royal policy: Cartwright and James II	182
§5 The office and work of a bishop	205
§6 By what authority? Episopacy, Church and state	256
§7 Conclusion: the men and the task	291
Bibliography	298
Manuscript sources	298
Primary sources in print	299
Secondary sources	306

MAPS

Map 1:	Chester diocese in the seventeenth century (showing the archdeaconries and deaneries)	4
Map 2	Ejections for non-conformity in 1662	126
Map 3	Protestant Nonconformist conventicles, 1669	150
Map 4	Licensed Nonconformist places of worship, 1672	150
Map 5	Roman Catholic conventicles, 1669	151
Map 6	Quaker meetings, 1669	151

FIGURES

Fig. 1	Plan of Chester Cathedral and Abbey Court	46
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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>BCP</i>	<i>The Book of Common Prayer: 1662 Version, with an introduction by Diarmaid MacCulloch (London, 1999)</i>
<i>BIHR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research</i>
BL	British Library
<i>BLR</i>	<i>Bodleian Library Record</i>
<i>BJLR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i>
Bodl.	Bodleian Library
<i>CCRB</i>	<i>Calendar of the Correspondence of Richard Baxter</i> Edited by N.H. Keeble & Geoffrey F. Nuttall (Oxford, 1991)
<i>CCSP</i>	<i>Calendar of the Clarendon State Papers</i> Edited by F.J. Routledge (Oxford, 1932)
<i>CDG</i>	<i>Chester Diocesan Gazette</i>
<i>CH</i>	<i>Church History</i>
<i>Ch.Sh.</i>	<i>Cheshire Sheaf</i>
<i>CQR</i>	<i>Church Quarterly Review</i>
<i>CSPD</i>	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic</i>
<i>CSPV</i>	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Venetian</i>
<i>CTB</i>	<i>Calendar of Treasury Books</i>
<i>DNB</i>	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>
<i>HJ</i>	<i>Historical Journal</i>
<i>HLQ</i>	<i>Huntington Library Quarterly</i>
HMC	Historical Manuscripts Commission
<i>JCAHS</i>	<i>Journal of the Chester Archaeological and Historical Society</i>
<i>JEH</i>	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
<i>JRH</i>	<i>Journal of Religious History</i>
LCRS	Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society
<i>LJ</i>	<i>Journals of the House of Lords</i>
<i>NWCH</i>	<i>North-West Catholic History</i>
<i>P & P</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
PRO	Public Record Office
RO	Record Office
Tanner	Bodleian Library Tanner manuscripts
<i>TLCAS</i>	<i>Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society</i>
<i>THSLC</i>	<i>Transactions of the Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire</i>
<i>TAPS</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philosophical Society</i>

DATES

All dates are given 'old style', but the year is taken as beginning on 1 January. In quotations from original documents the date is transcribed as given in the source and any ambiguity about dates between 1 January and 24 March clarified in a footnote.

SPELLINGS

Quotations reproduce the spelling and punctuation of the original, except that contractions not still in common use (e.g. 'Dr' for 'Doctor') are expanded and the liberal use of italics in seventeenth-century printed sources is not followed.

§1 INTRODUCTION

When Charles II and James Duke of York returned to England in May 1660 the see of Chester had been vacant for eight years following the death of Bishop John Bridgeman, while the diocesan administration had broken down during the course of the first Civil War as much of the area fell under Parliamentary control, being replaced in Lancashire by a system of Presbyterian classes. In the twenty-eight years before James again fled into exile the royal brothers nominated six successive bishops to Chester -- Bryan Walton, Henry Ferne, George Hall, John Wilkins, John Pearson and Thomas Cartwright -- the last of whom was to follow his king to France and Ireland.

This thesis will look at these six men as representatives of the episcopate in the Restoration era. Though Chester was far from being one of the wealthier or more prestigious sees, its incumbents are a fair cross-section of the bench of bishops at that time, typical of their social background and representing the range of political and religious points of view found within the Established Church. While all were university men, Wilkins and Pearson merit special attention as being among the foremost intellects of the day. The former was prominent in the establishment of the Royal Society and the evolution of the latitudinarian tradition; the latter was an erudite defender of traditional orthodoxy whose *Exposition of the Creed* (1669) remained a set book for the theological tripos at Cambridge until the end of the nineteenth century. Ferne and Cartwright are significant for their roles in national ecclesiastical politics as the Restoration settlement was first being shaped and as James II later tried to recast it.

All but Walton and Pearson, who were Cambridge men, were the subject of short contemporaneous biographical studies by Anthony Wood in his *Athenae Oxoniensis*. In the case of Wilkins, further contemporaneous sketches are provided by John Aubrey among his *Brief Lives*, by William Lloyd in the sermon preached at Wilkins' funeral, and by the bishop's half-brother and registrar, Walter Pope, in the course of his *Life of Seth Ward*.¹ In a period rich in extant diaries, it is no surprise to find these bishops appearing in many of them, nor that one, Thomas Cartwright, kept a diary himself, of which the portion covering the first fifteen months of his episcopate has survived.² In the early eighteenth century the non-juror Nathaniel Salmon wrote lives of all the bishops of the Restoration period, though these contain little that is new.³ Walton and Pearson were the subjects of early nineteenth-century memoirs which gathered together most of the known pieces of information from their own lifetimes, though only Wilkins has been the subject of a full-length modern study.⁴

While all these sources either originally were or subsequently have been printed, various manuscript collections contain many of the bishops' letters. In the

¹ Anthony à Wood, *Athenae Oxoniensis*, ed. by P. Bliss (3rd edition, London, 1817); John Aubrey, *Brief Lives* edited by O.L. Dick (London, 1949); John Lloyd, *A Sermon Preached at the Funerals of the Right Reverend Father in God, John, late Lord Bishop of Chester*. (London, 1675); W. Pope, *The Life of Seth Ward, Bishop of Salisbury, etc. with a brief account of Bishop Wilkins* (London, 1697).

² *The Diary of Dr Thomas Cartwright, Bishop of Chester*, ed. by Joseph Hunter (Camden Society, vol. XXII, 1843). The surviving part of the diary runs from August 1686 to October 1687. It is not known whether Cartwright kept a diary for any other period, but Narcissus Marsh would provide a contemporaneous example of someone who also began a diary on receiving major advancement in the Church but continued to keep it for only a short time. Raymond Gillespie (ed.), *Scholar Bishop: The Recollections and Diary of Narcissus Marsh, 1638-1696* (Cork, 2003).

³ Nathaniel Salmon, *The Lives of the English Bishops from the Restauration to the Revolution* (London, 1733).

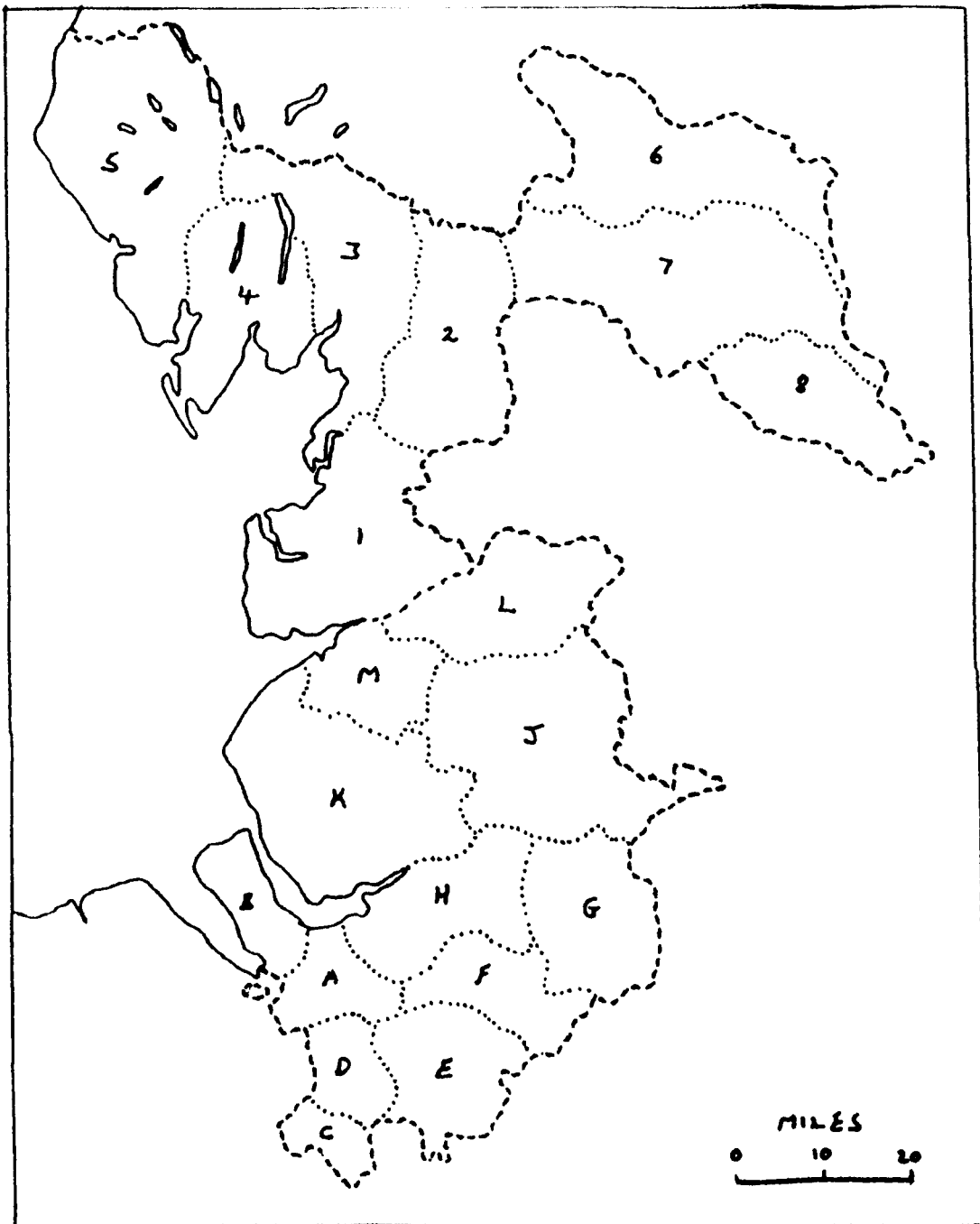
⁴ H.J. Todd, *Memoirs of Brian Walton* (London, 1821); *The Minor Theological Works of John Pearson*, ed. by E. Churton (Cambridge, 1844) with a biographical 'Memoir' by the editor; B.J. Shapiro, *John Wilkins, 1614-1672: an intellectual biography* (Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1969).

main these are by Hall, Pearson and Cartwright.⁵ The diocesan archives at the Cheshire Record Office naturally contain many of the routine administrative records of the period. These are not all complete, especially for the period before 1668 when no full list of the bishops' formal acts such as institutions of clergy to livings was kept in their Act Book. Likewise, only for a short period during Wilkins' episcopate do any subscription books to the various oaths and declarations required of the clergy survive. Although all the bishops occasionally presided in their Consistory Court in person, and the court books which summarise each day's proceedings are complete, only some of the court papers containing such things as witness statements are extant. These relate to just over half of cases of all kinds, and there is no reason to doubt that they offer a reasonably representative cross-section of the court's business. However, the value of most of these various documents is as evidence for the workings or occasional breakdowns in the bureaucratic machinery, and they throw little light on the particular attitudes or concerns of the different bishops.

All six bishops left a number of sermons and other works in print, though most of these date from before their elevation to the episcopate. While Walton's most substantial work, *The Considerator Considered*, and all of Pearson's output were reprinted in the nineteenth century, most of the others survive only in rare seventeenth-century editions. All students of the history of Chester diocese are indebted to the exhaustive collection of printed materials gathered by the Victorian historian the Rev'd F. Sanders and deposited in the cathedral library.

⁵ Most of Hall's letters are in Bodl. MS Add. C305 and those of Pearson and Cartwright in the Tanner collection.

Map 1: Chester Diocese in the seventeenth century (showing the archdeaonries and deaneries).



Key:-

Archdeaonry of Richmond

- 1 Amounderness
- 2 Lonsdale
- 3 Kendal
- 4 Furness and Cartmel
- 5 Copeland
- 6 Richmond
- 7 Catterick
- 8 Boroughbridge

Archdeaonry of Chester

- A Chester
- B Wirral
- C Bangor
- D Malpas
- E Nantwich
- F Middlewich
- G Macclesfield
- H Frodsham
- J Manchester
- K Warrington
- L Blackburn
- M Leyland

The diocese of Chester had been created in 1541 following the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The cathedral was the former Benedictine abbey of St Werburgh, and the diocese was formed by taking the archdeaconry of Chester from Lichfield diocese and the archdeaconry of Richmond from York. It had briefly been in the province of Canterbury (as Lichfield was) but within a few months had been placed under the Archbishop of York. If both of the ancient dioceses from which it was carved had been impossibly large and unwieldy, the new creation was little better. It comprised the whole of Cheshire together with a few parishes in north Wales, and the whole of Lancashire together with substantial parts of Westmorland, Cumberland, and the North Riding of Yorkshire. Over much of this huge area communications were very poor. John Addy writes in his study of cases coming before the church courts at Chester and Richmond in this period: ‘The problems of communication and travel made it most difficult for any bishop of Chester to have but a scant knowledge of conditions in the remote parishes of the Lake District and Pennine moorlands until the construction of the turnpike roads in the following century.’⁶ It appears that no bishop of the late seventeenth or early eighteenth centuries ever entered Copeland deanery (which covered the twenty-five parishes and sixteen chapelries in Cumberland) even on their triennial visitations, preferring to summon clergy, churchwardens and confirmation candidates to neighbouring Furness or Kendal.⁷ Even in the heart of the diocese, around Wigan (where the bishops between 1662 and 1707 were also rectors) travel could be difficult, as Celia Fiennes found in 1698:

Thence to Wiggon mostly in lanes and some hollow wayes, and some pretty deep stoney way so forced us up upon the high Causey many [times]; but some of the way was good which I went pretty fast, and yet by reason of the

⁶ John Addy, *Sin and Society in the seventeenth century* (London, 1989), p.6.

⁷ C.M.L. Bouch, *Prelates and People of the Lake Counties* (Kendal, 1948), pp. 330-31 & 336.

tediousness of the miles for length I was 5 hours going that 14 mile, I could have gone 30 mile about London in the time.⁸

The city of Chester was still an important seaport and the principal point of embarkation for Ireland. For this reason communications with London were reasonably good for the times, and the period saw the establishment of a regular stage-coach service.⁹ The bishop would normally, though not invariably, have travelled in his own coach, the journey commonly taking at least a week including one or more days rest *en route*.¹⁰ Chester's position as the main port in the north-west, however, was being challenged by Liverpool, the most rapidly growing urban centre in the region. The largest town in the diocese was Manchester, but this was not an incorporated borough and had no parliamentary representation. This fact was not unimportant when the Five Mile Act banished Nonconformist ministers from such places, while Liverpool's ecclesiastical status as a chapelry within the parish of Walton illustrates the way in which church as well as civil structures were increasingly out of date. Across much of the north the parochial structure had never fully developed as it had further south, and large parishes divided into several chapelries were the norm.

R.C. Richardson opened his work on Puritanism in the diocese before the Civil War with the blunt statement, 'The diocese of Chester was, from its erection in 1541, a poorly endowed, monstrously large and administratively unmanageable

⁸ *The Illustrated Journeys of Celia Fiennes, c.1682-c.1712*, ed. by Christopher Morris (Exeter, 1982), p.161.

⁹ John Spurr, *England in the 1670s: 'This Masquerading Age'* (Oxford, 2000), p.155.

¹⁰ Todd, *Memoirs of Walton*, pp.148-50; Cartwright, *Diary*, pp.40-42, 68-69 & 83.

ecclesiastical unit.’¹¹ Since the few attempts to divide large parishes made during the Interregnum were undone at the Restoration and further reforms suggested at that time, such as the introduction of suffragan bishops, also had to await the Victorian era, Richardson’s assessment remains true for the later seventeenth century.

Richardson places at the head of his first chapter a quotation from the description of Lancashire in Thomas Fuller’s *History of the Worthies of England*, which was published in 1662. ‘The people, generally devout,’ observed Fuller, ‘are, as I am informed, northward and by the west Popishly affected, which in the other parts are zealous Protestants.’¹² Part of Richardson’s purpose was to map the evidence of Puritan activity, and he indeed found it concentrated in south-east Lancashire and east Cheshire, with pockets around Liverpool and Chester. He also noted the importance of clerical leadership, and in chapter 3 below it will appear that evidence of clergy deprived for Nonconformity at the Restoration and of conventicles during the 1660s is mainly from the same areas. Elsewhere the predominant forms of dissent from the established church continued to be Roman Catholic recusancy¹³ or, on the Protestant side, the more recent Quaker movement, which repudiated any kind of clerical leadership.

Another important work on the religious situation on the eve of the Civil War is Judith Maltby’s *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart*

¹¹ R.C. Richardson, *Puritanism in north-west England: a regional study of the diocese of Chester to 1642* (Manchester, 1972), p.1.

¹² *ibid.*, p.1. The same quotation concludes C. Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire* (Cambridge, 1975), p.332.

¹³ John Miller, *Popery and Politics in England, 1660-1688* (Cambridge, 1973) is mainly focused on events in London and Westminster. Although Lancashire was home to the largest Roman Catholic community in England, the region remained relatively calm even in the Popish Plot crisis.

England.¹⁴ Much of Maltby's evidence is gathered from Cheshire and an analysis of the subscribers to the county's petitions to Parliament in 1641 in favour of episcopacy and the Book of Common Prayer. These show a widespread attachment to the traditional church at all levels of society once Laudian excesses were laid aside. Not the least valuable point she makes is that every presentment for Non-conformity is not only evidence of Puritan activity, but also of someone sufficiently upset by such activity to denounce it. This remains as true for the period after 1660 as before 1640.

No such monographs referring especially to the north-west have been written for the later seventeenth century, but the process by which the Church of England came to be restored in the form it was has produced a series of important works, beginning with that by R.S. Boshier. He sub-titled his work *The influence of the Laudians*, and argued that the narrow settlement finally imposed in 1662 was the outcome of a long-cherished plan of Sheldon and his associates, carefully put into effect through all the labyrinthine twists and turns of the various conferences and negotiations in the two years following the King's return.¹⁵ Subsequent historians have preferred less conspiratorial interpretations. G.R. Abernathy, for example, has highlighted the failings of the Presbyterians who were disunited and indecisive;¹⁶ Ian Green has drawn attention to the many different pressures to which the government had to respond, such as the flood of petitions for ecclesiastical posts which had come to be in the gift of the crown;¹⁷ Ronald Hutton has stressed the

¹⁴ Published at Cambridge, 1998.

¹⁵ R.S. Boshier, *The Making of the Restoration Settlement: the influence of the Laudians, 1649-62* (London, 1951).

¹⁶ George R. Abernathy, *The English Presbyterians and the Stuart Restoration, 1648-1663* (TAPS, n.s. 55/2, Philadelphia, 1965).

¹⁷ I.M. Green, *The Re-establishment of the Church of England, 1660-1663* (Oxford, 1978).

power of the Cavalier Parliament in demanding a more vengeful religious policy than Charles either envisaged or desired.¹⁸ All this was largely worked out in London, but though their influence was limited, bishops, other churchmen, and lay magistrates and politicians from the north-west were not uninvolved.

Overviews of the church in this period have been provided by Norman Sykes, R.A. Beddard and John Spurr.¹⁹ Sykes' main concern was with the eighteenth century, but he saw the Restoration period and its failure to embrace any significant reform as decisive for the inadequacies of the Hanoverian church. While most of Beddard's work is in short essays and focuses mainly on the conflicts in which churchmen were involved, Spurr gives greater emphasis to the common ground between them and even many Dissenters against the moral and intellectual challenges they all faced. The bishops to be considered certainly varied in their approach to the task before them, but it will be necessary to see how far this arises from different understandings of what that task was. All these writers, however, emphasise how attitudes grew out of men's experiences in the revolutionary middle decades of the century, and were concerned both to restore what had been overthrown and to set it on firmer foundations. W.M. Spellman's study of the Latitudinarians in this period (of whom Wilkins was one of the most prominent) likewise stresses that the movement was essentially conservative and is misunderstood if it is interpreted in the light of eighteenth-century developments.²⁰

¹⁸ Ronald Hutton, *The Restoration: a political and religious history of England and Wales, 1658-1667* (Oxford, 1985).

¹⁹ See, for example:- Norman Sykes, *From Sheldon to Secker: aspects of English church history, 1660-1768* (Cambridge, 1959); R.A. Beddard, 'The Restoration Church' in J.R. Jones (ed.), *The Restored Monarchy, 1660-1688* (London, 1979), pp.155-175; John Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England, 1646-1689* (London, 1991).

²⁰ W.M. Spellman, *The Latitudinarians and the Church of England, 1660-1700* (Athens, Georgia, 1993).

W.G. Simon has provided a broad-brush sketch of the episcopate under Charles II, looking at various issues surrounding their background, appointment and activities once in office.²¹ He emphasises the variety of outlook and approach that was found and the high calibre of many of the men involved, two of the six bishops he singles out for special mention in his concluding paragraph being from Chester. By looking at the occupants of just one see and drawing on both local and national sources, this thesis will be able to bring many of the topics Simon deals with into sharper focus. The chronological range is slightly longer than that covered by Simon, having been extended to include the reign of James II. It is not only that Bishop Cartwright was one of that King's staunchest supporters and his diary an invaluable source for the day-to-day activities of a Restoration prelate, but also that his death in 1689 coincided with the passing of the Toleration Act. That year therefore marks a break both in the history of Chester diocese and in that of the Church of England, since the Act changed its constitutional position from that of the only legally recognised church to that of a privileged denomination. The first two chapters will examine the process by which Chester's bishops came to be appointed, and at the resources at their command to administer a large and difficult area. Those which follow will then consider how they sought to implement the Restoration settlement, what other demands were made on their time, and how they themselves understood the role of the Church in general and of the episcopate in particular.

²¹ W.G.Simon, *The Restoration Episcopate* (New York, 1965).

§2 THE BISHOPS AND THEIR APPOINTMENT

The number of occupants of various sees between the Restoration and Revolution ranged from two (Durham, Hereford and Lichfield) to seven (Oxford) with an average of four, so Chester with six did have more different bishops than most. However, this gives more opportunities to glimpse something of how the process of appointment worked in an era when patronage was crucial and the final decision remained with the monarch himself. It has recently been claimed that in the first couple of years after the Restoration Charles's creations of peers were designed to establish a wide basis of support for his regime and thereafter reflected the changing political climate at court.²² It will be found that this was also true of his episcopal nominations. However, while a new barony or earldom could be created at will, bishops could be appointed only when death created a vacancy. On the other hand, no one became a spiritual peer as of right and without the favour of the king or someone close to him.

In his review of the social origins of the episcopate during the reign of Charles II, Simon argued that bishops in this period were commonly of higher social standing than in earlier generations since they were no longer men who had risen through the ranks of royal administration but had connections with men of influence in some other way. He reckons that just over 40% of those appointed had direct connections with the aristocracy or were from gentry families, while just under 40% came from clergy households and 10% from wealthy merchant families, with the remainder having humbler origins.²³ As a rough guide, this would mean that if

²² Andrew Swatland, *The House of Lords in the Reign of Charles II* (Cambridge, 1996), p.30.

²³ Simon, *Restoration Episcopate*, chapter 1, passim.

Charles's five appointments to Chester were typical of his appointments as a whole, then two would come from the sons of the clergy, two would come from the ranks of the gentry, and one from some other background. George Hall and John Pearson did indeed have fathers who had been among the senior clergy of Charles I's reign, Joseph Hall being successively bishop of Exeter and of Norwich and Robert Pearson being Archdeacon of Suffolk. Henry Ferne was undoubtedly of senior gentry stock, both his father and step-father being knights. Simon also places Wilkins among those whose fathers were gentlemen, but Anthony à Wood described Walter Wilkins as a 'citizen and goldsmith of Oxford'.²⁴ Bryan Walton's family background seems the most obscure – in both senses of the word – but it is known that when he first went up to Cambridge in 1614 it was as a sizar, a poor student who had to pay his way by acting as a servant to those in more fortunate circumstances. Socially, then, Chester's bishops were not unrepresentative of the episcopal bench as a whole, with no more than a slight bias towards the humbler end of the social spectrum which could be a reflection of its place towards the lower end of the scale of episcopal incomes. This bias is, however, reinforced when James II's sole appointment is considered. Cartwright's father had been a schoolmaster.

In 1660 Walton was already, for those days, an elderly man of (probably) sixty years of age. Ferne was just a couple of years younger, both having been born in the reign of Elizabeth I. The next three appointments were all men half a generation younger. In the year of the Restoration Hall was forty-eight, Wilkins forty-six, and Pearson forty-seven. A much greater leap of a whole generation came with the nomination of Cartwright, who was only twenty-six at the King's return. Five of the six bishops, then, had reached adulthood before the outbreak of the Civil

²⁴ Wood, *Athenae Oxoniensis*, Vol. III, col.967.

War and were already embarked on successful careers. Walton was a prebendary of St Paul's and held two other livings in the London diocese. His *Treatise concerning the payment of Tythes in London* had been a contribution to Laud's campaign to make the established church more financially independent, and in this he had worked closely with Juxon, Bishop of London before the Civil War and Archbishop of Canterbury at the time of Walton's own advancement to the episcopate.²⁵ Ferne and Hall were both archdeacons. Wilkins had succeeded in becoming chaplain to the King's eldest nephew, Prince Charles Lewis of the Palatinate, at that time an exile in England. Pearson, likewise, had been a private chaplain to Lord Keeper Finch in addition to being a prebendary of Salisbury Cathedral. Since all but Wilkins were active royalists during the Civil War they suffered the inevitable loss of their preferments. Wilkins, by contrast, took both the Covenant and the Engagement, became Warden of Wadham College, Oxford, in 1648 following the Parliamentary purge of the University, and Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1659 on the nomination of Richard Cromwell, having married Oliver's sister Robina three years earlier. He was, therefore, by far and away the most compromised of all Restoration bishops by his associations with Interregnum regimes.

Cartwright, of course, was only a boy when the Civil War broke out and did not go up to university until the year of the King's execution. His antecedents and upbringing might have disposed him to be sympathetic to the Puritan cause, for his grandfather and namesake was the leader of the Presbyterian movement in Elizabeth's reign, and his tutor at Queen's College was the Calvinist divine Thomas Tully. Tully was sufficiently flexible on matters other than doctrine to remain at

²⁵ Christopher Hill, *Economic Problems of the Church from Archbishop Whitgift to the Long Parliament* (Oxford, 1956), pp.276-79; Thomas A. Mason, *Serving God and Mammon: William*

Oxford and advance his career in the University through all the political and ecclesiastical changes of the Civil War, Interregnum and Restoration, but it is still a surprise to find his pupil seeking ordination at the hands of Robert Skinner, the sequestered Bishop of Oxford, at a time when, in Cartwright's own words, 'the Church of England ... was at the lowest'.²⁶ Nevertheless Cartwright thereafter, like Wilkins, conformed to the Cromwellian church. Wood relates that 'he became vicar of Walthamstow in Essex, and a very forward and confident preacher for the cause then in being.'²⁷ This, in the light of his subsequent devotion to the restored Stuarts, has been taken as evidence that he was an unprincipled sycophant. However, Wood gives no examples of his preaching to back up the statement or to explain which regime in the kaleidoscopic changes of the late 1650s he meant by 'the cause then in being'. Most probably Cartwright was convinced of the need for strong and stable government and eventually came to believe that only the legitimate royal house could provide it, a belief which may also have led him to accompany James II into exile in 1688. The pattern of his career in the church was similar to that of Samuel Pepys in government service. Pepys, who was just a few months older than Cartwright, began his career as a minor official of the later Interregnum regimes but transferred his loyalties to the restored Stuarts where they subsequently remained fixed. For young men of their generation, just embarking on their careers and without alternative sources of income, there was no alternative to accepting the *de facto* government of the time.

Juxon, 1582-1663 (Newark, 1985), pp.69-76.

²⁶ From Cartwright's will, printed in F. Sanders, 'Thomas Cartwright, D.D., Bishop of Chester, 1686-1689', *JCAHS*, n.s.4 (1892), 1-33 (Quotation from p.25).

²⁷ Wood, *Athenae Oxoniensis*, Vol. IV, col.252.

Since all these future bishops lived peacefully in England during this period, all compromised with the Commonwealth and Protectorate to some extent. Ferne, who had written royalist tracts during the war and had been a chaplain to Charles I during his imprisonment on the Isle of Wight, retired to the family estates in Yorkshire and lived on his private means while publishing a number of works in defence of the Church of England, mainly against attacks from Roman Catholic controversialists. He was also among the team of scholars recruited by Walton in the 1650s to produce the monumental Polyglot Bible. While most of those engaged on this work were sequestered royalist clergy, they did enjoy the collaboration of some Puritan divines. When the project was begun in 1652 Walton secured the approval of the Council of State for work it deemed 'very honourable and deserving of encouragement'.²⁸ Later the Protectorate government supplied the paper for printing free of duty, and in 1657 invited Walton to sit on a committee considering a revised English translation of the Scriptures. Hall and Pearson, meanwhile, were employed as lecturers in London churches. Lectureships, for so long regarded with suspicion by Laud and others because of their semi-independent position on the fringe of the established church, were as potentially useful for Anglicans in the 1650s as they had been for Puritans in the 1630s. Hall, indeed, seems ultimately to have secured the approval of Cromwell's Triers and become incumbent of St Botolph's, Aldersgate. Pearson, as lecturer at St Clement's, East Cheap, preached the series of sermons which were published in 1659 as his *Exposition of the Creed*, a sustained defence of traditional orthodoxy against both ancient heretics and contemporary sectaries.

²⁸ CSPD 1651-1652, p.328.

This, then, is something of the background of the men who would rise to become bishops of Chester. For all of them a vital rung on the ladder would be appointment as a royal chaplain. This was an honour Walton and Ferne had enjoyed in the 1640s. Hall and Pearson became chaplains to Charles II in the year of the Restoration, Wilkins in 1667, and Cartwright in 1672. Beddard, in examining the appointments made by the Commission for Ecclesiastical Promotions of 1681 to 1684, comments that ‘as an erstwhile chaplain-in-ordinary to Charles II, Sancroft was not remiss in giving encouragement to the more deserving from their ranks.’ However, throughout the two decades before the establishment of the Commission when, as he says, ‘ecclesiastical prizes continually excited the ambition of lay politicians and prelates’, being a chaplain to the king was a more-or-less essential step on the path to preferment. It meant that a clergyman already had a patron who could introduce him at court, and once there he could become known among the men of real power and influence, whoever they might be at any particular time.²⁹

Unfortunately, that was not something lesser mortals were supposed to know about. Wood relates how, on 29 October 1674, he ‘sup’d with the warden of Wadham at his lodgings.’ The Warden proceeded to condemn Wood’s recently published *History and Antiquities of Oxford*, and in particular “that every snivelling fellow should undertake to write of matters of state” (meaning that I should, forsooth, take notice of Buckingham’s commendation of Wilkins.)³⁰ At the time of this encounter the Duke of Buckingham had left the government and joined Shaftesbury in opposition, so references to his former influence over the King were impolitic; but

²⁹ R.A. Beddard, ‘The Commission for Ecclesiastical Promotions, 1681-84: an instrument of Tory reaction’, *HJ*, 10 (1967), 11-40 (Quotations from pp.13 & 31).

³⁰ *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood, antiquary, of Oxford, 1632-1695, described by Himself*, ed. by Andrew Clark (Oxford, 1891-1900), Vol.2, p.297.

there was no set procedure leading to episcopal nominations as there is today, and consequently no formal series of records that can tell the historian precisely how or why a particular cleric came to be chosen. Instead, this must be deduced from such random hints as survive in letters and diaries or from the particular circumstances prevailing at the relevant time, such as the direction of royal policy or the influence being wielded by particular noblemen or government ministers.

John Bridgeman of Chester was not, of course, the only bishop to die during the Interregnum, and merely to ensure the maintenance of the episcopal succession became an increasing concern of Charles's government in exile. Only one bishop, John Bramhall of Derry, had fled abroad. At home, many of the surviving bishops did conduct clandestine ordinations of deacons or priests (such as that of Cartwright by Skinner) but it required three to come together for the regular consecration of a new bishop, quite apart from the legal requirement for that bishop to have been elected by his cathedral chapter on the nomination of the king. Such a procedure was bound to attract the unwelcome attention of the Cromwellian authorities, and none of the bishops in England was prepared to take the risk, despite the promptings of Hyde. By 1659 only nine bishops, all elderly, remained, and in May of that year Richard Allestree, who frequently carried messages back and forth across the Channel, conveyed a letter from the King 'wherein were these names, Dr. Sheldon, Dr. Hammond, Dr. Lucy, Dr. Ferne, Dr. Walton, and one other which I have forgot, in cypher,' to Bishop Brian Duppa who was

all pretences whatsoever layed aside, without delay to cause the bishops then alive to meet together and consecrate the above named persons bishops, to secure the continuation of the Order in the Church of England. The dioceses they were to be consecrated to were also named in the paper. The

paper and message [Allestree recalled] I did deliver to the Bishop ... Dr Barwick ... going with me.³¹

Two of Chester's future bishops were therefore marked for promotion to the episcopate a full year before the Restoration. Walton and Ferne had both lived in Oxford while it was the royalist headquarters and written tracts in support of the royalist cause, while the latter had also been a participant in the Treaty of Uxbridge.³² Consequently, both of them will have been well-known to Charles's leading advisers before they went into exile. The proposed consecrations, however, never took place before the Restoration itself, and Allestree's memoir does not say for which of the various vacant sees the six candidates were nominally intended. Green, though, claims that from the lists left by Sir Edward Nicholas, the Secretary of State, 'it may be deduced that Sheldon was to be consecrated to Gloucester, Hammond to Worcester, Lucy to St David's and Ferne to Bristol,' and then comments, 'Walton's see is unclear, possibly it was Chester.' He bases this tentative suggestion on the fact that Chester was by then vacant, that Walton did eventually go there, and that no-one else is definitely known to have been put forward. On the other hand, only William Lucy did eventually go to the see proposed in 1659, and Green also notes that by the eve of the Restoration several revisions had been made to the list of names and dioceses – though Ferne was apparently still destined for Bristol.³³ In January 1660 Barwick, who had presumably seen the letter to Duppa, wrote to Hyde asking who was intended for the dioceses of Chester and Carlisle, and had clearly had no reply when he wrote again

³¹ H.O. Coxe, *Catalogue of Oxford College Manuscripts* (Oxford, 1852), Vol.2, 'Colegii Vigorniensis', p.15.

³² His tract *Episcopacy and Presbytery considered* (1644) which will be considered in chapter 6 below set out the arguments he advanced on behalf of episcopacy at the negotiations.

³³ Green, *Re-establishment of the Church of England*, pp.81-82.

in March.³⁴ On 17 September, when the King had been back for nearly four months, it seems to have been thought that Ferne was going to Chester, for Thomas Smith, who lived in the far north of the diocese, wrote to thank Joseph Williamson for the news 'of Dr Ferne's being designed for our Bishop'.³⁵ By the time Walton was finally nominated on 5 October, no fewer than nine other episcopal vacancies had already been filled, all of which makes it unlikely that Charles or Hyde had come to a definite decision some time earlier. Ferne, meanwhile, had been made Master of Trinity College, Cambridge (a position from which Wilkins, as Richard Cromwell's nominee, was ejected) and soon assumed the responsibilities of vice-chancellor of the University.

Here is a clue as to why not all those named in 1659 were immediately elevated to the episcopate, even when Charles felt secure enough to begin naming bishops at the end of the summer. In 1659 he had faced a single problem, the maintenance of the episcopal succession. After the Restoration he had to re-assert control of the entire structure of the church in parishes and cathedrals and in the closely related world of education. Able and reliable men now had to be found for a vastly wider range of posts. Thus Ferne was needed to restore religious and political orthodoxy in Cambridge, and he also played a key role in the Convocation of 1661. This, as much as the need to reward as wide a range of supporters of the restored

³⁴ CCSP, Vol.4, pp.524 & 604.

³⁵ PRO SP 29/445. Smith certainly used the phrase 'our bishop' with reference to Chester in another letter printed in J.R. Magrath (ed.), *The Flemings at Oxford*, (Oxford, 1904), Vol.1, p.189, though by the time of this letter Smith was Dean of Carlisle. See also *CSPD 1660-1661*, p.235, and *CSPD 1661-1662*, p.69 for further indications that no firm decision had yet been made. In August 1660 Walton petitioned unsuccessfully for the wealthy Lancashire living of Winwick, which would have served to augment the meagre diocesan revenues and give him a more central base within the diocese had his appointment already been decided on. These were the very grounds for granting him the reversion of Croston a year later.

monarchy as possible, explains why he and other prominent royalist churchmen did not immediately receive bishoprics.

The official grounds for Walton's appointment are given in the account of his consecration with five others on 2 December 1660:

The sixth [bishop] was that great Instrument of our Churches Honour Dr Bryan Walton, whose Learning, Prudence, and Integrity have been signally manifest, not only at Oxford in that excellent Discourse written in Defence of the Church of England, called, *An Answer to an ungodly Pamphlet, &c*, but also by that eternal Work of setting forth the Holy bible in all the Oriental Languages, which (without the least Shadow of Boasting) is the most absolute and famous Edition of the Bible, that the Christian World hath or is like to enjoy; for all which Virtues he is now most deservedly the Lord Bishop of Chester.³⁶

At a time when the shape of the final settlement remained uncertain, Walton was a man of sound opinions (from the government's point of view) and yet someone whose scholarly achievements might appeal to moderate Puritans. Baxter records him making one intervention in the proceedings of the Savoy Conference, and that was to try and mediate in a clash between Baxter himself and Bishop Morley, though it had limited success because of Baxter's determination to have the last word.³⁷

Having spent the late summer and early autumn of 1661 in his diocese, Walton returned to London in November for the meeting of Convocation. His last official act was to sign a letter along with the other bishops of the northern province asking the lower house of the northern Convocation, which was meeting in York, to approve Henry Ferne and two others as their proxies in order to expedite the revision

³⁶ White Kennet, *A Register and Chronicle Ecclesiastical and Civil* (London, 1728), p.323, quoting the *Publick Intelligence*.

³⁷ *Reliquiae Baxterianae: or Mr Richard Baxter's Narrative of the most Memorable Passages of his Life and Times*, ed. by M. Sylvester (London, 1696), Part II, p.340.

of the Book of Common Prayer.³⁸ This was on 23 November, and again illustrates the important part Ferne was playing in national church affairs even before becoming a bishop. Walton died on 29 November, and just four days later Ferne was nominated as his successor, with Pearson designated to take over at Trinity College. Such a speedy nomination shows that Ferne must already have been in mind for the next vacancy and that it may have been mere chance that this turned out to be Chester. There is, indeed, little to suggest that the talents of individual bishops and the needs of particular dioceses were ever matched up, and in this connection it is significant that, despite the strength of Presbyterianism in parts of Lancashire, Chester was not one of the dioceses offered to a Presbyterian divine in 1660 although Norwich, covering Puritan East Anglia, was. Perhaps Charles felt Presbyterians needed to be tempted with the more lucrative sees. Be that as it may, Ferne had proved himself a capable administrator, and may have been thought likely also to prove himself useful in Parliament now that bishops could resume their seats in the House of Lords. But another reason for his promotion was his association with the late King. Of those who had attended Charles I during his captivity, Sheldon, Sanderson and Morley had already been made bishops, while Juxon, who ministered to him during his final hours had been translated to Canterbury. Ferne had also been at Carisbrooke and had there delivered the last sermon preached before the royal martyr, who was moved to ask for a copy of Ferne's words for further study and meditation.³⁹

³⁸ Printed in Kennet, *Register and Chronicle*, p.564.

³⁹ Henry Ferne, 'A sermon on Habukkuk 2.3., preached before the King at Carisbroke, on the 29th of November, 1648' in John Chandos (ed.), *In God's Name: Examples of preaching in England from the Act of Supremacy to the Act of Uniformity, 1534-1662* (London, 1971), pp.447-52.

Ferne was consecrated on 9 February 1662, but died only five weeks later. Presumably no-one had anticipated this at the time; nevertheless, a new nomination was once again made remarkably swiftly. Ferne died on 16 March, and George Hall must have been nominated on or before the last day of the month, when the first reference to his promotion occurs.⁴⁰

Hall has always been the most shadowy figure among Chester's bishops in this period.⁴¹ As already noted, he represents a younger generation than Walton or Ferne, a generation that even without the disruption of civil war and revolution would not have expected to reach the summit of their careers until this decade. Also, by the time of his appointment the shape of the church settlement was becoming clear. Episcopacy was back to stay, and proposals to modify it so as to make it more acceptable to Presbyterians had been dropped. The Savoy Conference on liturgical reform had ended in deadlock; Convocation had made only minimal changes to the Prayer Book; and Parliament was pressing ahead with a new Act of Uniformity. Sheldon's was clearly the dominant voice in church affairs, but Charles had not yet given up hope of retaining some freedom to grant indulgence to Dissenters. In these circumstances Hall may have had the qualities and connections to commend him to both of them. The tone of the surviving series of letters that Hall wrote as Bishop of Chester to Sheldon as Archbishop of Canterbury (where he succeeded Juxon in 1663) suggests genuine affection and friendship rather than merely formal courtesies. Hall was concerned about Sheldon's health when the latter remained at Lambeth during the plague; his wife Gertrude was regularly mentioned, on one occasion to thank Sheldon for the gift of a book he had sent her;

⁴⁰ *CSPD 1661-1662*, p.325.

in the later letters Hall even felt able to share his sense of frustration and failure at dealing with dissent, despite his best endeavours. It is the kind of confession made to a friend and counsellor rather than a mere superior.⁴² It seems likely, then, that Hall's nomination would have had the approval and probably the active support of Sheldon, yet Charles, who would have come to know him as a royal chaplain and a canon of St George's, Windsor, may have hoped he would be someone who would not antagonise the strong Puritan element in his diocese unnecessarily. His father, Joseph, had been a moderate Calvinist and one of James I's delegates at the Synod of Dort. Though the author of a vigorous defence of *Episcopacie by Divine Right* published in 1640, the older Hall had always been treated with suspicion by Laud for a perceived laxity towards the Puritans, and he remained a respected figure for many in the puritan tradition. Henry Newcome, for instance, who was the most prominent nonconformist minister in Manchester, quoted him to justify writing an autobiography and studied his devotional works.⁴³ George seems to have inherited his father's convictions about episcopacy, but was no more of a Laudian than he had been. In his will Joseph described his sons as 'learned, judicious, and painful divines', implying he found their theology acceptable.⁴⁴ The churchwardens' accounts for Wigan, where Hall was Rector at the same time as being Bishop of Chester, include payments for moving furniture which suggest that in his time it was customary to bring the holy table into the body of the church for the celebration of the sacrament rather than leaving it altar-wise at the east end, while Roger Lowe, an

⁴¹ His entry in the *DNB* occupies only one column, compared with at least three for all the others, and he has never been the main subject of any book or article.

⁴² Bodl., MS Add. C.305, ff.50-64 & 68

⁴³ *The Autobiography of Henry Newcome, M.A.*, ed. by R. Parkinson (Chetham Society, o.s. 26 & 27; Manchester, 1852), p.1; *The Diary of Henry Newcome, from September 30, 1661, to September 29, 1663*, ed. by T. Heywood (Chetham Society, o.s. 18; Manchester, 1849), passim.

⁴⁴ F.L. Huntley, *Bishop Joseph Hall, 1574-1657* (Cambridge, 1979), p.117.

apprentice of avowed Presbyterian sympathies, made regular trips to Wigan to hear Hall preach.⁴⁵ In a sermon delivered in 1655, Hall had asked:

Why should some in the height of their zeal, for Liturgy, suppose there can be no service of God, but where that is entirely used? Why should others againe, think their piety concerned, and trespassed, if I do prefer, and in some considerations, think fit to use a set form? There must be allowances of each other, a coming down from our Punctilio's, or we shall never give up a good account unto God.⁴⁶

Since Hall spoke those words the boot had, of course, moved from the Puritan to the Anglican foot, but a man who could express such sentiments would have seemed a suitable candidate for the vacant diocese to a king who did not want to be the prisoner of a narrow faction in church affairs.

Two other possible factors in Hall's appointment need to be briefly considered. Firstly, a high proportion of the royal nominations to ecclesiastical preferments in 1660 had been of local men. This, however, was probably because men with local knowledge were best informed about the mass of benefices that had fallen vacant in the previous decade with the patronage reverting to the crown, so were able to petition for them. It does not appear to have been a factor in episcopal nominations or for longer than the first few months of Charles's effective reign. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that Hall was the one bishop of Chester in this period with a definite local connection. His brother-in-law, Sir Amos Meredith, had estates in Cheshire. Though the connection may not have positively influenced the choice of Hall as bishop, the possibility that it would enhance his influence among the local gentry will not have gone against him.

⁴⁵ G.T.O. Bridgeman, *A History of the Church and Manor of Wigan* (Chetham Society, n.s. 15-18; Manchester, 1888), p.495; *The Diary of Roger Lowe of Ashton-in-Makerfield, Lancashire: 1663-1678*, ed. by 'J.R.' (Leigh, 1877), pp.18-19 & 30-32.

⁴⁶ G. Hall, *God's Appearing for the Tribe of Levi* (London, 1655), p.27.

Secondly, Simon asserts that Hall was sponsored by the King himself and by Sir Orlando Bridgeman.⁴⁷ No evidence is cited to back the statement up, though Hall himself in one of his letters to Sheldon does refer to 'My patron, the Lord Chiefe Justice Bridgeman,'⁴⁸ but this was with reference to the rectory of Wigan. It was Bridgeman who had purchased the advowson and presented Hall to the vacant living when Charles Hotham was ejected under the Act of Uniformity, but by then Hall had been bishop for five months. It is more likely that Bridgeman may have had some influence in the next appointment, for by that time he was not only at the height of his own career having been made Lord Keeper after the fall of Clarendon, but had been actively involved with Wilkins in the scheme of comprehension which was unsuccessfully laid before Parliament in 1668. Even then, however, his role was not the crucial one, for every contemporary observer agrees with Wood in the view that so distressed the Warden of Wadham, that Wilkins' principal patron was the Duke of Buckingham.⁴⁹

Hall's death on 23 August 1668 was even more unexpected than that of Ferne, since Hall was a younger man and in good health. It came about as a result of a fall in the garden at Wigan when he wounded himself on his own pocket-knife. It is not surprising, then, to find that this was the longest of the five interregna to be considered. Thirty-four days elapsed between Hall's fatal accident and Wilkins' nomination. This is, of course, still quite swift compared to the lengthy vacancies of Elizabeth's reign, when episcopal revenues were regularly diverted into the royal

⁴⁷ Simon, *Restoration Episcopate*, p.210.

⁴⁸ Bodl. MS Add. C.305 f.58

⁴⁹ See, for example, Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, p.479; Gilbert Burnet, *History of My Own Time: part 1, the reign of Charles II*, ed. by Osmund Airy (Oxford, 1897), vol.1, p.454. John Evelyn was present at Wilkin's consecration banquet on 14 November 1668 and in his diary particularly mentions Buckingham and Bridgeman as being among the other guests: *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. by E.S. de Beer (Oxford, 1955), vol.III, pp517-18.

coffers for a couple of years or more, or even of a handful of cases in the Restoration era, but given the speed with which most vacancies were filled at this time it reflects the fact that this was one for which the government was unprepared.

There is also clear evidence that on this occasion more than one candidate was being pressed upon the King. This too may account for the longer interval before the new bishop was chosen, though it is impossible to be certain that there were no rival candidates for the earlier appointments. What is true is that in both cases where a contest for Chester can be traced in the surviving records, not only a particular appointment but the whole direction of ecclesiastical policy were at stake. According to a news-letter written from Whitehall on 29 August 'Dr Sancroft, Dean of St Paul's, and Dr Thomas, Dean of Worcester, are in nomination for the Bishoprick of Chester.'⁵⁰ Both were traditional high churchmen and staunch royalists who had lost their preferments during the Interregnum and would do so again as non-jurors after the Revolution. Five days later the same letter writer reported, 'The Dean of St Paul's has twice refused the bishopric of Chester; there are several competitors, but the Dean of Worcester stands fairest for it...'⁵¹ How reliable this court gossip was cannot be known. Sancroft did receive one of Hall's other positions, the archdeaconry of Canterbury, which was in Sheldon's gift, so he was probably the candidate backed by the Archbishop. William Thomas, on the other hand, probably had the backing of the Duke of York whose chaplain he was, even going to sea and seeing action with him in the Dutch War. By 5 September Thomas's elevation was looked on as sufficiently probable for lesser clergy to be

⁵⁰ *CSPD 1667-68*, p.560.

⁵¹ *ibid.* p.568. cf. *HMC, le Fleming*, p.59, where another letter writer reports that Sancroft has turned down Chester 'being rather desirous to serve in the great work of re-edifying St Paul's Church'.

petitioning for the preferments which would become vacant as a result and would then be the crown's to bestow. Thus one Timothy Halton wrote asking Secretary Williamson to use his influence with the King to help him become precentor of St David's Cathedral on Thomas's anticipated resignation.⁵²

A year earlier, the nomination of one of these two would have been fairly certain, but with Clarendon in exile and Sheldon out of favour at court, the situation was much more open. Even the Duke of York's influence was probably lessened by his father-in-law's fall. Charles's overriding concern seems to have been to maximise his own freedom of action. Ronald Hutton writes:

All through 1668-70 he filled sees with churchmen who represented a range of attitudes towards the problem of dissent. This ensured that the bishops were less likely to unite in forcing a particular policy upon him.⁵³

As a known advocate of comprehension and a protégé of one of his leading ministers, Wilkins would appeal to Charles as a counterweight to the more conservative churchmen who were determined to maintain the religious settlement enshrined in the Clarendon code. Though his appointment was not finally settled until 26 September when the *congé d'élire* was issued to the dean and chapter, Robert Pory, the Archdeacon of Middlesex, had written to Sancroft several days earlier in a state of considerable alarm:

I was yesterday [14 September] startled by a report that by the prevalence of the Duke of Buckingham with his Majesty, Dr Wilkins was nominated to the See of Chester; which if true doth prognostick to the Church but ill, and that our great Pastor & Patron [Sheldon] is not in so great favour & power as all good men wish him.⁵⁴

⁵² *ibid.* p.571.

⁵³ Ronald Hutton, *Charles II, King of England, Scotland, & Ireland* (Oxford, 1989), p.266.

⁵⁴ Tanner 134 f.37.

Wilkins himself, however, at first thought his appointment must have been supported by Sheldon, but on going to thank him was told to his face, 'I look upon you as a man not well affected to the church of England,' and that, 'if I could have hindered it [your appointment] I would.'⁵⁵ Wood claims that 'the great men of the church of England' such as Sheldon, Fell and Dolben 'did malign him for his wavering and unconstant mind in religion', and this is borne out by a letter of Bishop Hacket of Lichfield.⁵⁶ The hard fact remained, however, that the Supreme Governor of the Church of England was indeed supreme in the matter of appointments. As will become clear when looking at another contested vacancy, when the king was determined to pursue his own policy in ecclesiastical affairs he could make the appointments he wanted. Nevertheless, over the long term the crown could not afford to alienate its 'old friends' for in the political nation as a whole the churchmen and their lay allies -- former cavaliers and future Tories -- represented too large and entrenched a body of opinion.

By 1670 the King's need for money, an even greater prerequisite for any kind of independence than a divided bench of bishops, was compelling him to pander to the prejudices of the Cavalier Parliament and actively encourage the passing of the second Conventicle Act. According to Pope, Bishop Seth Ward 'labour'd much to get it pass, not without the Order and Direction of the greatest Authority, both Civil and Ecclesiastical.'⁵⁷ Burnet, in contrast to this, relates how Wilkins bluntly told Charles that 'he thought it an ill thing both in conscience and policy: therefore, as he

⁵⁵ Tanner 314 f.50. The writer, Michael Roberts, was recalling Wilkins' own account of this conversation. Pope states that 'he was made Bishop of Chester, not only without, but against the Consent of the Archbishop of Canterbury.' *Life of Ward*, p.57.

⁵⁶ Wood, *Athenae*, Vol.III, cols.967ff; Tanner 44 f.196. Even Burnet, who admired Wilkins, admitted, 'It was no small prejudice to him, that he was recommended by so bad a man [as Buckingham].' Burnet, *History of My Own Time*, Vol.1, pp.454-55.

⁵⁷ Pope, *Life of Ward*, p.72.

was an Englishman and a bishop, he was bound to oppose it,' and went on to insist on his right to speak and vote in opposition to the bill in the House of Lords when it was suggested that he might at least stay away. Though Burnet also claims that the King accepted this with a good grace, it cannot have made him eager to facilitate Wilkins' further advancement.⁵⁸ The nomination of a bishop was a royal prerogative, but once appointed he had all the independence of a peer of the realm unless the king felt the situation warranted the rare and drastic step of suspension, as James II did with Compton. His only alternative was, in the case of a relatively poor see like Chester, to block an independently-minded bishop's prospects of translation to a better endowed one. Rumours abounded that through Buckingham's influence Wilkins would be promoted, either in the church's hierarchy or to some government post. It does appear that Buckingham tried to secure his translation to Worcester on the death of Bishop Skinner (shortly after Wilkins' defiance of Charles over the Conventicle Act) but it went instead to the Duke of Ormonde's candidate, Walter Blandford. When Cosin died early in the following year, Wilkins was thought to be a favourite to succeed him at Durham, but Charles on this occasion kept the see vacant for two years, by which time Wilkins was dead.⁵⁹

W.G. Simon does argue that

⁵⁸ Burnet, *History of My Own Time*, pp.493-95.

⁵⁹ *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. by Robert Latham & William Matthews (London, 1970-83), vol.IX, entry for 16 March 1668/9; HMC, *7th Report*, p.531. 'Memoirs of Nathaniel, Lord Crewe' (ed. Andrew Clark) in *The Camden Miscellany, Vol.IX* (Camden Society, n.s.53, 1895), separately paginated, p.11. The memoir quotes one contemporary as reckoning that the Crewe family interest also helped secure Blandford's advancement over Wilkins so that Nathaniel could succeed to the see of Oxford, but there is no obvious reason why he should not have been equally satisfied with Chester and the subsequent enhancement of his family's influence in the county of Cheshire. *CCRB*, Vol.2, pp.89-90, quotes a letter by John Rawlet, Wilkins' curate at Wigan, written in the summer of 1670 in which he affirms, 'There is some talk & some probability of his being removed to Worcester.' Magrath (ed.), *Flemings at Oxford*, Vol.I, pp.188-89, gives a letter in which Wilkins is tipped for Durham.

Certain sees, almost from the very beginning of the reign were known as translating sees. Others were considered permanent, either because they were so splendid that no higher reward could be sought for, or because the holding was geographically so far from the scene of action and the diocesan rewards so meagre, that it was obvious that little hope of further promotions could be held.⁶⁰

Chester he reckons among those 'permanent sees', yet there is no direct evidence that this was deliberate government policy, and it was certainly not evident to contemporaries, who expected not only Wilkins but also Cartwright and Pearson to move on eventually just as some of their Tudor and early Stuart predecessors had done, and as so many of their eighteenth-century successors were to do that it became a saying 'the Bishop of Chester never dies.'⁶¹ For the moment, though, when Anthony Wood heard of the death of John Wilkins after a short illness on 19 November 1672, he noted in his journal, 'Chester is a kill-bishop.'⁶² He was not to know, of course, that the new bishop, John Pearson, would survive longer than his four predecessors put together.

Since 1668 the political and religious situation had changed considerably. In March 1672 Charles had issued his Declaration of Indulgence and had opened the third Dutch War in alliance with Louis XIV. By the autumn, however, the war was going badly from Charles's point of view, since he had failed to achieve the speedy success on which he had gambled and a meeting of Parliament could not be long delayed. Charles was to fight a long rearguard action in defence of his Declaration and its implicit assertion of the royal prerogative. This included a series of conciliatory gestures by which he hoped to allay the fears of staunch Anglicans and draw out their instinctive royalist sympathies. On 6 February 1673, as the long-

⁶⁰ Simon, *Restoration Episcopate*, p.39.

⁶¹ S.L.Ollard & Gordon Crosse, *Dictionary of English Church History* (London, 1912), p.108.

⁶² Wood, *Life and Times*, Vol.2, p.253.

awaited parliamentary session began, Sheldon was able to write to his fellow bishops conveying the King's command that they 'enjoin the use of our said catechism' (i.e. that in the Prayer Book) in the instruction of the young and allow only conformists as schoolmasters.⁶³ Pearson was consecrated three days later, and his nomination on 1 December may be seen as part of Charles's attempt at conciliation. Certainly Pearson himself, who had been tipped for a bishopric three years earlier,⁶⁴ believed he now owed his advancement to Sheldon's reviving influence with the King. He was in Cambridge at the time, and apparently learnt of his appointment in a letter from the Archbishop himself. He wrote in reply:

... I must gratefully acknowledge the greatness of your Grace's undeserved kindnesse in enclining his Majesty to that good opinion of mee, & interesting your selfe in the affaires & for the good of him who has never bin so happy or just as to be in the least serviceable to you.⁶⁵

Pearson was a scholar of formidable erudition, shown not only in his *Exposition of the Creed* mentioned earlier, but also in his *Vindiciae Epistolari S. Ignatii*, a defence of the authenticity of the letters of the early church father who had asserted the crucial rôle of the bishop in the life of the church, which he published in the year of his consecration. On a more popular level he had published in the year of the Restoration a short tract entitled *No Necessity of Reformation of the Public Doctrine of the Church of England*, and at the time of Wilkins' abortive comprehension scheme⁶⁶ he wrote a *Letter against Promiscuous* [i.e. non-episcopal] *Ordinations*. At the Savoy Conference he had conducted with Sparrow and

⁶³ E. Cardwell (ed.), *Documentary Annals of the Reformed Church of England, being a collection of injunctions, declarations, orders, articles of enquiry, &c. from the year 1546 to the year 1716* (Oxford, 1839), Vol.2, pp.286-87.

⁶⁴ HMC, *le Fleming*, p.67: Newsletter of October 1669, 'It is said that Dr Pearson, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, stands fair for the bishopric of Chichester.' Chichester did go to a high churchman, Peter Gunning, but at that time Charles would not quickly nominate another.

⁶⁵ Bodl. MS add. C.305 f.66.

⁶⁶ See above, p.25.

Gunning the final disputation against Baxter, upholding the lawfulness of the ritual requirements of the Prayer Book. It is easy to see why he was the candidate proposed to the King by Sheldon. His attitude to the Declaration of Indulgence is not recorded but is likely to have been hostile. In his *Exposition of the Creed* he had claimed, 'The same authority [is] required to abrogate or alter, which is to make a law.'⁶⁷ This was in connection with the divine authority to forgive sins, but transposed to the political sphere it would mean statute law could only be revoked by king, Lords and Commons together through an act of repeal and not by any one of them working alone. On the other hand, he had also seen it as evidence for the truth of the gospel that it had spread so rapidly in its early days although Christ and his apostles had 'made use of no force or violence to compel, no corporal menaces to affright mankind into a compliance.'⁶⁸ Charles may have hoped, therefore, that Pearson would be a moderating influence on some of his high church colleagues.

After their encounter at the Savoy, Baxter wrote of him:

Dr Pierson was their true Logician and Disputant... He disputed accurately, soberly and calmly (being but once in any passion) breeding in us a great respect for him and a perswasion that if he had been independent, he would have been for Peace, and that if all were in his power, it would have gone well: He was the strength and honour of that Cause which we doubted whether he heartily maintained.⁶⁹

There were indeed to be attempts to involve Pearson as a bishop in the consideration of further comprehension proposals, but he was also one of the group of churchmen whom Charles and Danby consulted on religious policy and who recommended the

⁶⁷ John Pearson, *An Exposition of the Creed*, ed. by Temple Chevallier & Robert Sinker (Cambridge, 1882), p.288.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p.174.

⁶⁹ *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, Part II, p.364. Kennett, *Register and Chronicle*, p.551, indicates that Pearson's view of Baxter was rather less flattering.

enforcement of the existing laws.⁷⁰ He could treat opponents with courtesy, but did not therefore think them any less mistaken or that Nonconformity was justified.

Sheldon's own death in 1677 was expected to lead to a series of translations (probably beginning with Compton moving from London to Canterbury) from which Pearson would be a beneficiary.⁷¹ When Charles made his surprise choice of William Sancroft, the Dean of St Paul's, everyone else inevitably remained where he was. It had probably been Pearson's last chance of promotion in the hierarchy, for he was then aged sixty-four and suffered increasingly from ill health. Though he did not die until July 1686, he had been unable to sign the codicil to his will made in June of the previous year, and for at least twelve months there was active speculation about who his successor would be -- and at least one candidate already in the field.

This is clear from a letter written by Archbishop Dolben of York on 9 August 1685⁷² in which he warned Sancroft that the 'D[ean] of Ripon looks hard upon Chester' and even boasts to his friends as though his eventual appointment is assured. Dolben clung to the hope that the Dean either 'misunderstands or (after his manner) misreports the King,' or else that Sancroft would be able to make James change his mind. 'Surely,' he concluded in a mood of resignation, 'if he must be a bishop, it were better to place him where he may doe lesse harme.' The Bishop of Norwich similarly hoped that Sancroft's influence could 'putt a stoppe to the carrier of ... the bold Deane of Rippon.'⁷³ The much feared Dean was Thomas Cartwright, who was indeed destined to be Pearson's successor, but only in the teeth of

⁷⁰ *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, Part III, p.157; *CSPD 1673-1675*, pp.548-50.

⁷¹ Magrath (ed.), *Flemings at Oxford*, Vol.I, pp.233-34.

⁷² Tanner 31 f.178.

⁷³ Tanner 31 f.146.

considerable opposition and, apparently, after some hesitation by King James. His particularly well-documented quest to become a bishop illustrates how even in the church rising to great place in the seventeenth century was by a winding stair.

Cartwright's career had progressed rapidly in the early years of the Restoration. 'Preferment either flowed strongly to him, or he was very dextrous in his applications,' observed Nathaniel Salmon,⁷⁴ but after the mid-1670s the stream of preferment ran dry. It appears that other leading churchmen had a low opinion of his abilities. This is implied in Dolben's remarks quoted above, while in 1680 Denis Granville, who as Archdeacon of Durham was trying to establish a weekly celebration of Holy Communion at the Cathedral there, apparently thought it might strengthen his case in the eyes of others if 'my boisterous brother C[artwright]' was known to be opposed to it. Three years later Granville was visiting London and Windsor, and on more than one occasion he and those he met 'fell into some discourse of Dr Cartwright, diverting ourselves awhile at his behaviour.'⁷⁵ Meanwhile Cartwright himself, in his attempts to win favour at court, was not above oblique criticism of his ecclesiastical superiors, as in a letter of 1679 in which he denounced Archbishop Sterne's nominations for Justices of the Peace in the Liberty of Ripon as 'prejudicial to the King and the Church'. The claim that he was 'not willing to appear forward in anything which may look like crossing my metropolitan' seems rather hollow.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Salmon, *Lives of the Bishops*, p.388.

⁷⁵ *The Remains of Denis Granville D.D.*, ed. by G. Ornesby (Surtees Society, Vol.47, 1865), pp.52-53 & 118-19. While Granville and his friends amused themselves with fairly trivial examples of Cartwright's folly, James II once had to rebuke him for 'having spoke reflecting words on the lord chancellor and lord Sunderland' while 'in a drunken humour.' This was in February 1688, but there may have been similar serious indiscretions earlier in his career. Narcissus Luttrell, *A Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs from September 1678 to April 1714* (Oxford, 1857), Vol.1, p.433.

⁷⁶ HMC, *Various Collections*, Vol.2, pp.167-68. Burnet felt Cartwright acted 'not very decently', even by the standards of the time, in trying to extract a confession from one of the Rye

When Sterne died in 1683, Cartwright was ambitious enough to hope to jump directly from the deanery of a collegiate church to a primatial see. Given that it was only five years since Sancroft had been promoted from the deanery of St Paul's to the archbishopric of Canterbury, this may not have been so absurdly over-ambitious as it at first sight appears. Moreover, Cartwright had been one of the Anglican chaplains to attend the Duke of York during his semi-exile in Scotland in 1680-82, so he may have hoped for the support of the heir presumptive. There is no evidence, however, that this was forthcoming. This was the period when Charles had entrusted crown patronage in the Church to the Commission for Ecclesiastical Promotions headed by Sancroft and dominated by Tory high-churchmen. While in Scotland, James had written to Clarendon:

Pray let the Archbishop of Canterbury and all the bishops know I never expected other from them than that they would be firm to the Crown, and put them in mind I have ever stuck to them, whatsoever my opinion is, and shall continue to do so.⁷⁷

James was careful not to do anything to upset his high Anglican political allies until he was safely on the throne and the threat from Monmouth had been crushed.

The one prominent supporter Cartwright did have in his quest for York was the Earl of Danby. A letter to Sancroft is extant in which the Earl expresses his

wishes that his Majestie and your Grace would think him [Cartwright] worthy of that Dignity, being well assured that hee would both bee very acceptable to the Loyall party in that County, and that hee would be highly serviceable to the King's Interest there.⁷⁸

As Danby had been in the Tower ever since the attempt to impeach him during the Popish Plot scare, he carried little influence. It is, indeed, arguable that he

House plotters on the scaffold, but 'expected a bishopric by this excessive zeal of his'. H.C. Foxcroft (ed.), *A Supplement to Burnet's History of My Own Time* (Oxford, 1902), p.125. The remark comes from memoirs written in 1684.

⁷⁷ Quoted in Beddard, 'The Restoration Church', p.174.

deliberately backed an outsider in the hope that, if Cartwright was successful, the new northern primate would have fewer other favours to repay. Five years later, and still in the political wilderness, Danby was one of those with relatively little to lose and much to gain who signed the invitation to William of Orange. Meanwhile, the archbishopric of York went to Dolben.

After this disappointment, Cartwright lowered his sights and tried for the poor Welsh see of St Davids -- the humble first step of several successful episcopal careers, including that of William Thomas, Wilkins' rival for Chester in 1668 and whose translation to Worcester had created the vacancy. Bishop Crewe of Durham, was so convinced that Cartwright would be successful this time that he wrote to Sancroft asking that he should not be allowed to keep his prebend at Durham *in commendam* since two other prebendaries were already bishops and there would be no-one to reside in Durham and carry on the work of the cathedral.⁷⁹ When St Davids in fact went to Lawrence Womack, the word went around that Cartwright had refused it. In a letter to Sancroft, Cartwright angrily denied this suggestion and professed the highest esteem for Womack, declaring him to be 'soe worthy a person' that if he had known he was a candidate for the vacancy he 'should never [have] had the impudence to be his Competitor.' Yet he did protest that the successful candidate should not have been expected to give up his other preferments, which he had learned he would have been required to do, and piously pleaded on Womack's behalf 'that the Person might be as well provided for as the Place.'⁸⁰ It was, though, 'a Rule they [the Commission] have made to themselves, which is that every man

⁷⁸ Tanner 34 f.63.

⁷⁹ C.E. Whiting, *Nathaniel, Lord Crewe, Bishop of Durham (1674-1721) and his Diocese* (London, 1940), p.125.

⁸⁰ Tanner 34 f.190.

should be stript of what he holds,⁸¹ and it was not a rule with which Cartwright would have willingly complied, which probably explains the rumour that he had refused an offer of the see. It is also unlikely that his enjoyment of the delights of the table, so evident from his diary, would have commended him to the austere Sancroft.

Five vacancies occurred in the first year of James II's reign. One, Sodor and Man, was the only bishopric not in the royal gift, the patron being the Earl of Derby. Of the others, Bristol went to Jonathan Trelawny, Chichester to John Lake, and Norwich to William Lloyd, who was translated from Peterborough, which in turn went to Thomas White. All four would be among the seven bishops who petitioned against being required to read the Declaration of Indulgence. Clearly James was in no hurry to promote Cartwright to the episcopal bench. A sixth vacancy arose at York when Archbishop Dolben died in the spring of 1686. The Bishop of St Asaph, also named William Lloyd, who, as Pearson's nearest episcopal neighbour, kept Sancroft informed of his failing health, now wrote:

I heartily lament the death of our good friend my Lord of York. He was very useful to the King & the Church in that Province. God direct his Majesty in the filling of that See. It is some comfort to me to hear it said that Dr Jeffreys is like to come into the Order upon occasion of this Vacancy, tho I have not heard in what see. He is a right worthy good man, & the likeliest to keep an ill man out of the Order, & therefore I cannot but wish well to his Promotion.⁸²

This is the first mention of James Jeffreys, the Lord Chancellor's brother, in connection with the episcopate. In the light of the other letters quoted above, the anonymous 'ill man' was probably Cartwright. Obviously a series of translations was anticipated when York was filled, but James kept it vacant for two and a half years, perhaps in the hope that it would tempt some established and influential

⁸¹ Sir Leoline Jenkins, quoted in Beddard, 'Commission for Promotions', p.21.

bishop to break ranks and support his policy of repealing the penal laws and Test Act.⁸³ When the next vacancy arose following the death of Womack at St Davids, the nomination went to John Lloyd.

In July, William Lloyd again wrote to Sancroft from St Asaph:

Before my Letter comes your Grace will have heard of the death of that most pious learned usefull man the Bishop of Oxford, who died on Saturday the 10th instant & of that most excellent Bishop of Chester who died as I am told the Thursday following. What wounds are these to the poor church in her sorrow & weakness? What breaches in the holy Order, & when & how to be filled up?

After expressing sympathy for Sancroft who must bear 'fresh loads of Cares' being 'so much over loaden already', he offered whatever help he could with a broad hint that he would willingly be translated to one of these better-endowed sees.⁸⁴ However, he lacked an influential backer and was never a serious contender.

The King himself was not yet determined on a complete break with the Anglican Tories, and it can be argued that he did not give up all hope of winning them over until the following year when he finally dissolved the strongly Tory parliament elected at the start of the reign. At that stage he was still prepared to consult Sancroft as to whom he should nominate to the dioceses Chester and Oxford and deanery of Christchurch, and possibly hoped that the mere threat of Cartwright's appointment would frighten the high Anglicans into a more compliant attitude. This was at some time in late July 1686, and on 26th of that month the Archbishop

⁸² Tanner 30 f.24.

⁸³ Burnet noted contemorary rumours that 'the revenue is sent over to Cardinal Howard; though others believe that the Jesuits have it put in their hands.' Foxcroft (ed.), *Supplement to Burnet's History*, p.214.

⁸⁴ Tanner 30 f.3. Evelyn was at Windsor on 11 July when the news arrived of Fell's death. There were, he noted, 'Many candidates for his Bishoprick & Deanery, Dr Parker, South, Aldrich &c: Dr Walker (now apostatizing) came to Court, & was doubtless very buisy.' Evelyn, *Diary*, vol.IV, p.519.

received a letter from Thomas Sprat, the Bishop of Rochester, which would suggest that Sancroft already intended to propose James Jeffreys as Pearson's successor:

Upon some discours with my Lord Chancellor, since I waited upon your Grace, I find his Lordship is not willing to intercede with the King for his own Brother in the business of Chester. But I know it will be very acceptable to his Lordship if your grace shall please to concern yourself in his Brother's behalf, as to move it to his Majestie. I am certain my Lord Treasurer & my Lord President will be ready to second your Grace's motion, & it cannot but be a good service to the Church at this time when there are so many sollicitors for Bishopricks, who so much less deserve it.⁸⁵

The support of the Earl of Rochester, the Lord Treasurer and Sancroft's principal ally, for Jeffreys' nomination is no surprise. That the Lord Chancellor preferred to avoid being personally involved perhaps indicates that he feared the way the wind was blowing, for the King had already ignored a suggestion that his brother go to St Davids. Part of the art of court politics was for a patron to know when quietly to drop his client's suit.⁸⁶ Moreover, judges were more easily disposed of than bishops, and though Jeffreys had been given a peerage in his own right, loss of office would make him far more insignificant than Rochester, as the King's brother-in-law and uncle of the heiress presumptive, could ever be. The expected support of Sunderland, the President of the Council, is, however, the clearest indication that whatever way he was tending, the James had not yet finally made up his mind.

Other courtiers, meanwhile, were also making their feelings known. According to the Memoirs largely compiled by Nathaniel Crewe's chaplain, John Smith, the Bishop of Durham again opposed Cartwright's advancement to a bishopric, but Cartwright had sought and won the backing of James's favourite, the

⁸⁵ Tanner 30 f.90.

⁸⁶ cf. Danby's abandonment of his cousin Compton's candidacy for Canterbury in 1678. Edward Carpenter, *Cantuar: the Archbishops in their Office* (London, 1971), p.213.

Jesuit Edward Petre.⁸⁷ Crewe may have been concerned only about the effect on his cathedral, as he had been three years earlier, but he possibly feared that Cartwright would supplant him as the Anglican bishop personally closest to the King. Petre's influence is unlikely to have been decisive, but Cartwright's diary shows that the two often consulted, and he may have strengthened the King's resolve once the decision had been made.⁸⁸

On 29 July Sancroft sent the King his recommendations. The much-amended draft of his letter survives. After dealing with the bishopric and deanery at Oxford, he wrote:

To the Bishoprick of Chester I dare recommend to your Majesty him whom I formerly commended (as your Majesty may remember) to the Diocese of S. David: for I have not a worse opinion of him than I had then. My Lord high Chancellor (were he not overgenerous) might have done this Office decently enough, as I do it; who present the person to your Majesty, as Dr Jeffreys, a very worthy Clergy-man, not as my Lord Chancellors Brother. Yet one thing (I trust) my Lord will not refuse to do for him. The Dioces is very Large, & the yearly income but narrow, without the parsonage of Wigan: and that hangs so loose from it that the Trustees may give it unto whosoever they please: But I doubt not, his Lordship's powerful hand may fix it & secure it to the Bishop.⁸⁹

The tone of this suggests that Sancroft was confident of his recommendation being accepted this time, even if he was less certain that Jeffreys would get Wigan rectory *in commendam*. By 3 August, however, the Chancellor was writing to his brother warning him to expect a disappointment, hinting that his friendship with Tillotson, the Dean of Canterbury, might be part of the reason, and claiming, not entirely honestly, that he was ever willing to promote 'that advantage that your Friends think

⁸⁷ 'Memoirs of Nathaniel, Lord Crewe', p.21.

⁸⁸ On Petre's influence with James, see Miller, *Poperly and Politics*, pp.49 & 235-36; on his relationship with Cartwright, see Cartwright's *Diary*, pp.44, 48, 53-55, 60, 62, & 84-86.

⁸⁹ Tanner 30 f.93.

you deserve'.⁹⁰ On 11 August Thomas Cartwright began a new diary with the following entry:

King James the Second, my most gracious master, called me aside in his bedchamber at Windsor this morning, and promised me the Bishoprick of Chester, and he published the same in the Cabinet Council on Sunday the 22d of August; and declared Dr Samuel Parker at the same time to be Bishop of Oxon.⁹¹

James had ignored Sancroft's advice for Oxford as well as Chester. Jeffreys failed even in his hopes of succeeding Parker as Archdeacon of Canterbury, receiving only his rectory at Charkham as a small crumb of comfort.⁹² He died, still a mere canon, early in the next reign when his association with George Jeffreys and William Sancroft would have been as great a drag on his prospects as his links with Tillotson, one of the orchestrators of the campaign of anti-popish preaching and pamphleteering, had been in this one. The Archbishop and Lord Chancellor were frustrated but powerless. Burnet later claimed:

Some of the bishops brought to archbishop Sancroft articles against them [Parker and Cartwright], which they desired he would offer the king in council, and pray that the mandate for consecrating them might be delayed, till time was given to examine the particulars. And bishop Lloyd told me, that Sancroft promised him not to consecrate them, till he had examined the truth of the articles; of which some were too scandalous to be repeated. Yet when Sancroft saw what danger he might incur, if he were sued in a *praemunire*, he consented to consecrate them.⁹³

Others hoped that it would at least now be possible to detach Wigan rectory from the bishopric of Chester, while Lord Chancellor Jeffreys quibbled over the details of Cartwright's patents and delayed passing them, but achieved thereby only the very

⁹⁰ The letter is printed in G.W. Keeton, *Lord Chancellor Jeffreys and the Stuart Cause* (London, 1965), p.362.

⁹¹ Cartwright, *Diary*, p.1.

⁹² *CSPD 1686-1687*, p.288.

⁹³ G. Burnet, *History of the Reign of James II* (Oxford, 1852), p.162.

minor triumph of forcing his brother's rival to yield seniority of appointment to Parker.⁹⁴

In the case of Wilkins, the Supreme Governor had shown himself capable of overruling his own archbishop and ecclesiastical establishment when he chose. Though Wilkins' embarrassing visit to Sheldon and James II's request for Sancroft's advice show that some consultation between Whitehall and Lambeth was expected, the king remained a free agent, and in this case he himself was the successful candidate's patron. There is no indication that Cartwright had any other backers; certainly there was no patron with comparable influence to Buckingham eighteen years earlier. Cartwright's promotion depended on the personal relationship he had formed with James in Scotland (though Francis Turner, who had also been there, benefited more) and on his avowal of a high doctrine of royal authority which carried him beyond the orthodox Tory belief in passive obedience to a commitment to active obedience.⁹⁵ Yet these alone might not have been enough. Though it appears from Dolben's letter that Cartwright believed he had received some sort of promise from James quite early in the reign, it might all have come to nothing if the Tories in Parliament had proved more amenable to the King's wishes. Sprat wrote to the disappointed James Jeffreys:

The King has declared his resolution that you shall be speedily made a Bishop, whether Chester, or any other, is left to time and the casualty of vacancies; so that you must be content, and submit to the hard fortune in this affair, as some of your friends have done before you.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ HMC, *7th Report & Appendix, part 1*, p.500 (where it appears that the accusation against Parker and Cartwright may have been one of simony); Cartwright, *Diary*, pp.2-6.

⁹⁵ Foxcroft (ed.), *Supplement to Burnet's History*, p.215; HMC, *7th Report, & Appendix, part 1*, p.500; Thomas Cartwright, *A Sermon Preached upon the Anniversary Solemnity of the Happy Inauguration of our Dread Sovereign Lord King James II, in the Collegiate Church of Ripon, February the 6th, 168⁸* (London, 1685 old style).

This survey of the appointments made to Chester shows that 'time and the casualty of vacancies' were indeed crucial factors time and again. If Walton had lived a few more weeks, Ferne might never have been a bishop. Hall's fatal accident, coming so soon after the fall of Clarendon, opened an opportunity for Wilkins that might not otherwise have come about, while the same political circumstance probably delayed the advancement of Pearson to the episcopate. Premature death might well have deprived both Hall and Wilkins of the chance of further preferment. Four of the vacancies fell in the extended periods when the crown was co-operating with its 'old friends', the Anglican Cavaliers; two came at moments when it was determinedly trying to break free from their restrictive embrace. So far as the surviving evidence shows, these were the only times when the claims of rival candidates for the diocese of Chester were seriously considered, and the interregna were consequently the two longest in a period when nominations were generally made swiftly. Overall, this was the era when churchmen felt themselves to be beset by enemies and the notion of a distinct 'church interest' emerged. The majority of royal appointments to the bench of bishops respected that interest and were accepted by its representatives, clergy or lay politicians who saw it as their responsibility to uphold the traditional rights and privileges which secured the place of the Church in society. A minority of appointments threatened to undermine the Church's position and met with resistance, a resistance that invariably failed in the short term over particular nominations, but before which both Charles and James were eventually forced to retreat when it was shown to have the backing of the majority of the political nation. The king not unnaturally wanted bishops to be his servants, not his masters. In Cartwright James indeed found a willing servant who helped implement his religious policy but apparently took little or no part in

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The letter, dated 15 December, but without a year, is printed in Keeton, *Jeffreys*, p.363.

trying to shape it. Generally, however, both Charles and James had to settle for partners with whom they could try and establish a *modus vivendi*. Churchmen of all shades of theological opinion had learned during the chaotic years from 1646 to 1660 to ground their understanding of the Church and its authority on something other than the royal supremacy alone and to look for other partners who might help to uphold that authority.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Judith Maltby, 'Suffering and Surviving: The Civil Wars, the Commonwealth and the Formation of Anglicanism, 1642-1660' in Stephen Platten (ed.), *Anglicanism and the Western Christian Tradition* (Norwich, 2003), pp.122-43, argues that certain strands within the national Church before 1640 became the self-conscious Anglicanism of the Restoration, hostile to the other strands which had been dominant in the Interregnum. She also notes an ambivalence in attitudes to the royal supremacy. This will be examined in chapter 6 below.

§3 RESIDENCES, RESOURCES AND ADMINISTRATION

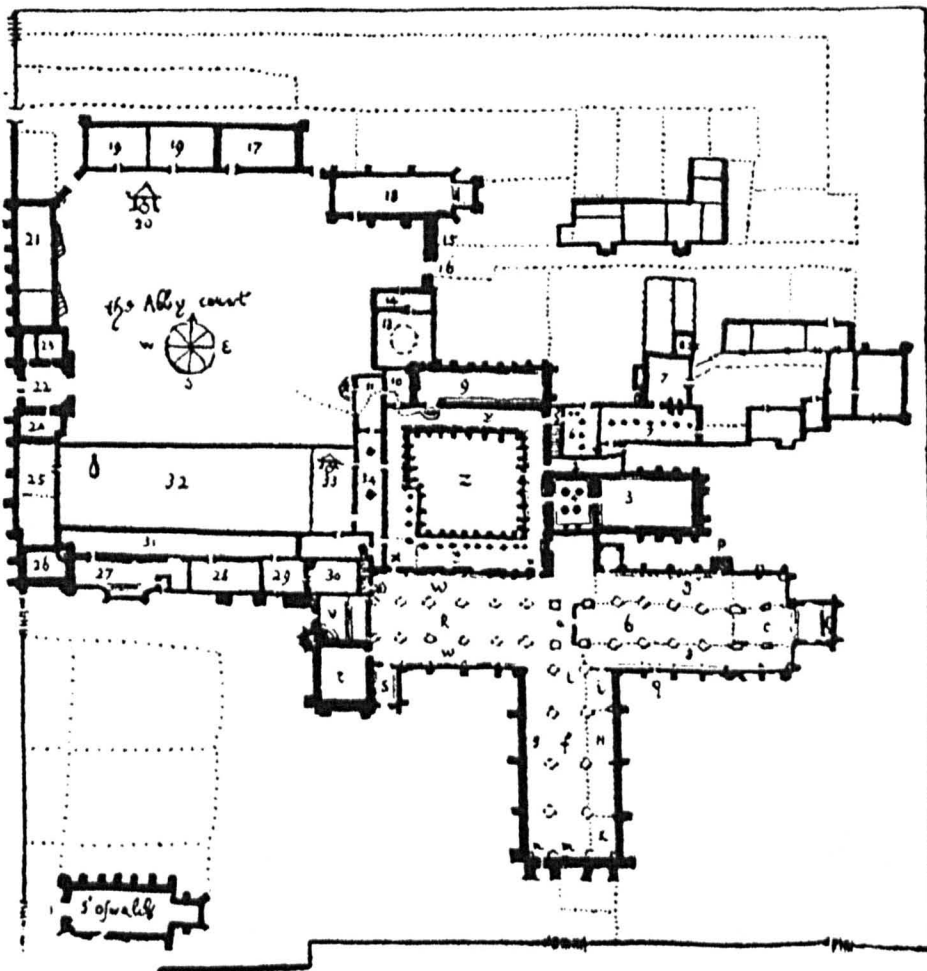
When Bryan Walton was consecrated as Bishop of Chester in Westminster Abbey on 2 December 1660, the sermon was delivered by William Sancroft. The preacher took as his text chapter 1, verse 5, of St Paul's epistle to Titus, and endeavoured to prove that the authority of the revived episcopate was of divine origin. It came from God through his commission to Paul to be an apostle, while Paul in turn had sent Titus to Crete with instructions to appoint a bishop in each city of the island. Sancroft refuted the claim of some Roman Catholic theologians that a bishop's authority can come from God only *via* St Peter and the accusation that in England it merely derived from the king, and also rebutted the argument of non-episcopalians that Titus had been given only a temporary commission; it had been and remained a permanent power to exercise discipline, to teach, and to ordain. England and Crete were compared: Archbishop Juxon was like Titus, ordaining bishops for each city, while Charles II was like Theseus in the legend of the Minotaur, but with the help of his bishops he too could safely navigate a labyrinth of error that had been created by the sects. Walton and his colleagues, therefore, bore a heavy burden of responsibility and the preacher warned that they would face many hardships in carrying out their duties. The Restoration had seen the Church of England rise like a phoenix from the ashes, but there was still much to be put right.⁹⁸

Subsequent chapters will consider how far Chester's bishops understood their role in a similar way and how they carried out their local and national responsibilities; this one will be concerned with the resources available to them: their

⁹⁸ The full text of the sermon is given in G. D'Oyly, *Life of William Sancroft* (London, 1840), pp.339-68.

residences, income, powers of patronage, and the administrative machinery of the diocese. As with many of the dioceses established by Henry VIII after the Dissolution of the Monasteries, it will appear that none of these was really adequate if the bishop was to exercise effective control. The administrative structure was rudimentary and had to be exploited to generate income (as it had been by earlier bishops) rather than developed as an effective tool of pastoral oversight.⁹⁹

Fig. 1: Chester Cathedral and Abbey Court



This early seventeenth century plan of the Cathedral and former abbey buildings is reproduced from R.V.H. Burne, *Chester Cathedral from its Foundation by Henry VIII to the Accession of Queen Victoria* (London, 1958), front endpaper. The Palace buildings (nos. 25-31 & 34) are grouped around the bishop's garden and well (nos. 32 & 33). No. 18 is the Deanery.

⁹⁹ C. Haigh, 'Finance and administration in a new diocese: Chester, 1541-1641' in R. O'Day &

Residences

An immediate problem was for the bishop to have a proper base within his diocese from which to work. Bishops of Chester had but one official residence, their palace within the city of Chester itself. The cathedral was the former abbey church of St Werburgh and the palace, extending from the western side of the cloisters and the north-west corner of the church along the south side of Abbey Court, had previously been the abbot's dwelling. At the time of the Restoration much of it was in a ruinous condition and part was in use as a prison, and this may have been one reason why Walton did not visit his diocese until nine months after his consecration and eleven after his nomination. The Chester historian Randle Holme, writing at the end of the first Civil War, bewailed the damage done to the city during the siege, including 'the destroying of the Bishop's palace, with stables in the barne yard, and the ruine of the great churche.'¹⁰⁰ To say that the palace had been destroyed by 1646 was an exaggeration, but at the very least it must have been suffering from neglect by the time it was sold off by the republican regime at the end of 1650 for £1,059.¹⁰¹

Returning the palace to the bishop's use was only one element in the slow process of returning the city to something resembling pre-War normality. It was only in July 1661 that Walton was able to petition the King for the removal of prisoners from the palace to the castle, where they were formerly held, on the disbandment of the garrison that had been stationed there. In his petition he claimed

F. Heal (eds.), *Continuity and Change: Personnel and Administration in the Church of England, 1500-1642* (Leicester, 1976), pp.145-166.

¹⁰⁰ D.M. Palliser (ed.), *Chester: Contemporary descriptions by residents and visitors* (Chester, 2nd edition, 1980), p.15.

that it would be impossible to begin repairs until the prisoners were gone, and in the following month he estimated that these would cost £1000.¹⁰² Two years later it was reported to Sheldon,

In Bishop Waltons time about 600^l [was spent] in repairs of the Bishops Pallace, & Bishop Hall hath since expended on the same Pallace 300^l, & is building still.

The same report went on to claim,

Seaven hundred pounds will not put the Bishops Pallace into its Condition before the Rebellion, nor will 1000^l restore the Church, Deanes and Prebendaryes houses, to a comely & habitable state.¹⁰³

The repair of episcopal residences was a protracted business, and often caused ill feeling when an incoming bishop felt his predecessor had failed to do all that he could or should. For example, Anthony Sparrow at Exeter complained that though Bishop Gauden had received much in fines for renewing leases on episcopal lands he had 'carried his money away with him [on his translation to Worcester] and left his successors to repair the Palace.'¹⁰⁴ In Chester such disputes continued into the 1670s, when John Tillotson, as Bishop Wilkins' son-in-law and executor, was still pursuing a law-suit in the Archbishop of York's Consistory Court against the estate of Bishop Hall for repairs that were outstanding in 1668. The papers in the case survive¹⁰⁵ and serve to confirm or amplify what can be known from other sources.

Several craftsmen gave their estimates for dealing with 'the [outstanding]

¹⁰¹ Burne, *Chester Cathedral*, p.133, citing William Cowper, *A Cursory View of Chester*, a manuscript account of 1728.

¹⁰² *CSPD 1661-1662*, pp.49 & 69.

¹⁰³ Tanner 144 f.14. In an early example of what is now termed political correctness, 'Warr' was crossed out and replaced by 'Rebellion'.

¹⁰⁴ Tanner 141 f.132. For other examples from Salisbury and Carlisle, see Pope, *Life of Ward*, pp.66-67, and Magrath (ed.), *Flemings at Oxford*, Vol.1, p.191.

dilapidacions and ruines which were about the Pallace' and these came to a total of £690 19s 0d, of which £85 10s 0d was for work on the stables. It seems that the part in worst condition was the area of the so-called Great and Green Halls, which adjoined the cloisters.¹⁰⁶ The witnesses confirmed Randle Holmes' assertion that the stables had been demolished during the war -- the garrison had used the timber for firewood -- and tell how the lead had been stripped off the roofs during the Interregnum. Materials and labour for recovering the roof of the Green Hall account for nearly half the estimated costs. Peter Stringer, who had been a chorister and lay clerk at the cathedral before the War and who was ordained and became a petty canon in 1662 gave a good deal of hearsay evidence. He believed Walton had spent £1500, of which £500 had been donated by Sir Peter Venables, one of the wealthiest gentlemen in Cheshire, to whom he refers as the Baron of Kinderton. In view of the figures quoted above in the report to Sheldon, this is a considerable over-estimate but without Venables' contribution (which the report may have ignored as not coming out of the bishop's own pocket) matches the likely cost given in Walton's petition to the King. The story of the £500 gift is also related by the Nonconformist Adam Martindale as one 'all the countrey was told'.¹⁰⁷ Stringer went on to report the now deceased Gertrude Hall claiming her husband had spent over £500 on the palace. In the light of the 1663 statement that he had by then spent £300 and that work was still in progress, this figure seems quite reasonable. Indeed, one of the bricklayers employed at the palace during Hall's time reckoned what was then done must have cost at least £700, without allowing for the erection of new stables. The various workmen who gave evidence at the hearing had themselves received £339.

¹⁰⁵ The bulk of them are transcribed in *JCAHS*, n.s. vol.xxxvii (1948), pp.302-11.

¹⁰⁶ These were above the great cellar, no.34 on Fig.1, p.46 above.

¹⁰⁷ *The Life of Adam Martindale, written by himself*, ed. by Richard Parkinson (Chetham Society, o.s.4; Manchester, 1845), p.165.

The protracted case ended on 30 May 1673. It was decided that the damage was the result of the Civil War and not of Hall's neglect, and that he and his successors were protected by the Act of Indemnity, but both sides had to meet their own legal costs, which must have been considerable.¹⁰⁸ Taken all together, the evidence suggests that successive bishops must have spent around £2000, the equivalent of three or four years' income, before the palace was really in a satisfactory condition.

There is also evidence that the work carried out by Hall included some improvements. Whereas the old stables had been constructed of wood, the early eighteenth-century bishop, Francis Gastrell, noted that

Brick stables were built by Bishop Hall upon Land belonging to [the] Dean and Chapter and were held by Lease of 21 years from them. A void piece of ground under the Walls being let to him to build on anno 1662 paying 6d. per annum rent.¹⁰⁹

The hearth tax returns for 1664-65 show that he paid tax for seventeen hearths in the palace itself, and that this was an increase of five compared to previous returns -- so even if the roof still leaked, the palace was warmer than before -- while the same returns also refer to one hearth in 'the Lord Bishopp's garden house new built'.¹¹⁰ In addition, they provide a rough standard of comparison with the occupants of other houses in Chester. No-one exceeded the bishop's total of seventeen hearths, though two citizens equalled it. Altogether, ten people in Chester lived in houses grand enough to pay on ten or more hearths, including three knights or ladies, two aldermen, a colonel, the Dean (Henry Bridgeman), and the Chancellor of the diocese

¹⁰⁸ A similar verdict was reached when Morley sued Duppa's executors over work needed on the bishop of Winchester's residences. Green, *Re-establishment of the Church of England*, p.107.

¹⁰⁹ F. Gastrell, *Notitia Cestriensis, or historical notes of the diocese of Chester*, ed. by F.R. Raines (Chetham Society, o.s. 19, 21 & 22; Manchester, 1849-50), Vol.1, p.35.

¹¹⁰ F.C. Beazley (ed.), *Hearth Tax Returns for the City of Chester, 1664-5* (London, 1906), pp.57 & 60.

(John Wainwright). This would suggest that even though the bishop, when in residence, was a highly significant figure, he did not dominate the city, and, in fact, though he had inherited the old abbot's lodging, the various traditional rights of St Werburgh's Abbey, such as jurisdiction over the cathedral and its precincts, had descended to the Dean and Chapter. One consequence of this was that the bishops in this period seem to have had a relatively untroubled relationship with the civic authorities, in contrast to the dean, who was periodically in dispute with them. The city assembly accepted nominations from the bishop for people (usually his former servants) to be given the freedom of the city, and only once challenged Pearson for, allegedly, erecting a new fence on their land, a dispute which appears to have been settled amicably.¹¹¹

Though only Pearson and Cartwright may have enjoyed the palace in a good state of repair, it was not and never had been looked upon as ideal. Bishop Bridgeman had regarded the smoke and fumes from the buildings on the north and west sides of Abbey Court, which were used as a brewery and bakery, as a threat to his health,¹¹² but there were other reasons why the bishop might want an alternative residence. In his petitions of August 1661, Walton had asked for the vicarage of Croston to be granted to himself and his successors. Not only did he hope to increase his income so as to offset some of the costs of repairing the palace in Chester, but he also noted that Croston was 'seated near the middle of the Diocese', and therefore 'by the Bishop residing there some part of the yeare, he may be the better enabled to governe the same, than by constant residing at Chester, which is at

¹¹¹ On disputes, especially with Dean Arderne, HMC, *8th Report*, p.391; on grants of freedom, Cheshire RO, AB/2 ff.138, 189 & 196; on the fencing, Cheshire RO, AB/2 f.197, and *The Diary of Henry Prescott, LL.B., Deputy Registrar of Chester Diocese*, ed. by John Addy (RSLC 127, 1987), Vol. I, p.246.

the hithermost part of the Diocesse.’¹¹³

The need for a more accessible residence in Lancashire had long been recognized. As early as 1545 Bishop Bird had asked Henry VIII to transfer ‘the house, lands, and tithes’ of Manchester Collegiate Church to the newly founded diocese in order to provide a more convenient administrative centre, and the Elizabethan bishop, William Chadderton, who held the wardenship of Manchester *in commendam*, tried unsuccessfully to have the arrangement made permanent.¹¹⁴ Immediately before the Civil War, Bishop Bridgeman had similarly held the wealthy and conveniently placed rectory of Wigan, and no less a person than Archbishop Laud was trying, before he was swept from power, to purchase the advowson so that this link could be perpetuated. In the end, though, the advowson came into the hands of Lord Chief Justice Bridgeman, the former bishop’s son, who presented Hall to the living when it fell vacant as a result of the Bartholomewtide ejections, and established trustees who for the future were to present the ‘Bishop of the said Bishoprick of Chester, or other persons as they in their judgements shall think fitt’.¹¹⁵ In the event, they thought fit to appoint the successive bishops for the remainder of the seventeenth century. Nevertheless, if possession of Wigan brought practical and financial benefits in the long term, Hall, at least, found the rectory there involved him in further expense. Two of the witnesses in the court case about the repairs to the palace claimed ‘that Bishop Hall was at a great deale of charges in repaires about the Parsonage in Wigan’, and in a letter written from Wigan in April 1667 the Bishop implied that the work had absorbed most of the benefice income for the past

¹¹² *Ch.Sh.*, 1st series, i, pp.5, 9. The bakery is no.17 and the brewhouse no.19 in Fig.1.

¹¹³ PRO, SP 29/40; *CSPD 1661-1662*, p.69.

¹¹⁴ Haigh, ‘Finance and administration’, pp.152 & 163.

¹¹⁵ Bridgeman, *History of Wigan*, p.484; Tanner 144 f.22.

five years. Bridgeman's intention of annexing the living to the Bishopric, he declared, 'hath been my encouragement to bury the revenue of it hitherto in rebuilding and making this place fit for a successor.'¹¹⁶ He must have succeeded in this, for Wilkins did not sue Hall's family for neglect of the house at Wigan, while Hall's own last surviving letter, written from Wigan two and a half weeks before his fatal accident, makes it clear that he much preferred living there to Chester.¹¹⁷

As rectors in Wigan, Hall and his successors enjoyed a greater local standing than they did as bishops in Chester, since they were also Lords of the Manor. This, though, could involve them in disputes with the town authorities similar to those of the Dean and Chapter with the city authorities. Lord Chief Justice Bridgeman was asked to arbitrate over these, and in an award made on 5 July 1664, placed restrictions on the Rector's jurisdiction and compelled him to lease his annual fair and weekly markets to the corporation.¹¹⁸

A bishop, however, did not only need a home in his diocese. He had duties at court, in Parliament, and about government business that frequently required him to reside in London. The bishops of many of the wealthier and more ancient sees had official residences in the capital; those from the newer foundations did not. Unfortunately, far less information survives about this than about the living arrangements for Chester's bishops in the north-west, so it is almost impossible to tell whether the lack of a permanent London house was, on balance, a disadvantage or not. Even Cartwright's diary is little direct help in this matter, and the great majority of the bishops' surviving letters, being sent to Sheldon or Sancroft, were

¹¹⁶ Bodl. MS Add. C305 f.58.

¹¹⁷ Bodl. MS Add. C305 f.64.

written from Chester or Wigan, not from London addresses where it was easier to speak face to face. An exception occurred in August 1667, when Hall wrote to the Archbishop from 'The Ship in Aldersgate Street' explaining how 'I could not conveniently wayt personally upon your Grace, as I would have done, being ingaged to preach in my old parish tomorrow.'¹¹⁹ Whether Hall regularly put up at 'The Ship' because he knew it from his time at St Botolph's, Aldersgate, or just on this one occasion because it was handy for his preaching engagement, there is now no way of knowing. Perhaps the latter is more likely as his only other surviving letter from London, written four years earlier, was sent from 'Captaine Strongs, Chappell Street, Westminster'.¹²⁰

A number of contemporaries recorded visits to Wilkins in London. Pepys went to see him on 18 October 1668, just three weeks after his nomination, at which time he was at Lincoln's Inn. In the following January, when Henry Newcome called on him, he was in lodgings in Pall Mall. During his final illness, he was, apparently, staying at his son-in-law John Tillotson's house in Chancery Lane.¹²¹ To lodge with relatives, if possible, would seem a natural solution to the problem, and Cartwright recorded one occasion, a week before his actual consecration, when he 'preached at Stepney ... and lodged the night before at my cousin Margaret's.' This was clearly exceptional, however, for he does not usually bother to note where he passed the night. Most probably Cartwright used a variety of rented lodgings, since on 12 April 1687 he noted, 'Dined at home with my sister Barnard, Mr Furnis and his son my landlord,' while on the following 14 July he recorded, 'I ... took my

¹¹⁸ Bridgeman, *History of Wigan*, p.486-93.

¹¹⁹ Bodl. MS Add. C305 f.62.

¹²⁰ Cheshire RO, ML/3/390v. The identity of Captain Strong is uncertain.

leave of my old landlady in King Street.’ Only in October, 1687, when he was promoted to a place on the Ecclesiastical Commission did Cartwright mention, ‘I went and hired a house in Lincoln Square, and stables, for £2 10s. per week.’¹²² In the following September, a newsletter sent out to the English resident in Venice informed him that ‘the Bishop of Chester has taken a great house in St James’s’.¹²³ This must have been unusual if it was considered worth remarking on, and there is no evidence that anyone apart from Cartwright took such a step. With a greater involvement in government affairs than that of his predecessors (by 1688 he was even helping to recruit fishermen to serve in the navy) Cartwright may have felt the need of a more substantial London base to work from.¹²⁴

By the 1670s, then, the bishops of Chester had two permanent residences in good repair, one located alongside their cathedral, registry, and consistory court, the other more accessible to much of their diocese. Until the final year of Cartwright’s episcopate they were, apparently, spared the expense of maintaining a house in London, but there does not appear to have been any other regular arrangement for their accommodation when they were required to be there. Arranging for lodgings must have added to the inconvenience of a journey which could take up to a week in either direction, and it all had to be done on the basis of an episcopal income which, so Walton claimed in his petition for the grant of Croston and the removal of prisoners from the palace, was inadequate.¹²⁵

¹²¹ Pepys, *Diary*, Vol.9, p.331; Newcome, *Autobiography*, p.179; Wood, *Athenae*, Vol.III, col.970. Ferne was also staying with relations when he died: Kennett, *Register & Chronicle*, p.644.

¹²² Cartwright, *Diary* pp.4, 45, 67, 86.

¹²³ HMC, *Downshire*, Vol.1, p.141.

¹²⁴ HMC, *Dartmouth*, Vol.1, p.301.

¹²⁵ On one occasion, Cartwright left Chester on 28 March and, after brief stops in Lichfield and Northampton, reached London on 7 April, but not until 20 May did he record, ‘Part of my goods came from Chester.’ - *Diary*, pp.40-43 & 56. In Queen Anne’s reign Bishop Nicholson of Carlisle was to estimate that travelling to London and staying there cost him an average £100 *per annum*, but by then

Revenue

Croston, Walton informed the King, was valued at £38 5s 10d, and he explained how

the said Bishoprick is valued in your Majesty's Bookes in the Exchequer att £420 01s 08d per Annum, and though there have been some Improvement since the said valuation, yet there is constantly paid out of the Revenues thereof 430/ or thereabouts,... And your Petitioner further sheweth that a far greater Charge is incumbent upon him than any of his Predecessors have bin lyable to, both in regard that the palace at Chester ... is by the late ill times so demolished, that the Repairs thereof ... will cost 1000/ & upwards, and also that the Bishoprick consisting wholly of Impropriations, upon the renewing of any Lease, an Augmentation of the Vicarage must be made, according to your Majesty's late pious order,... [so that] there will be little profit accruing to the Bishop.¹²⁶

The estimate for repairs to the palace has been shown to be reasonable, but Walton himself admitted that the official figure for his income is too low as, in fact, was the one for Croston. How far was he involved in special pleading?

On paper his position was a difficult one. According to those official figures, in England only the bishops of Gloucester, Peterborough, and Rochester had smaller incomes than their colleague at Chester, but only the Bishop of Lincoln and the Archbishop of York had larger dioceses (in terms of area) to administer. Twenty-nine years before Walton outlined his financial difficulties, Charles I had acknowledged that Chester was one of several dioceses in which the revenues 'suffice not to maintain the Bishops which are to live upon them according to their place and dignity', and Bishop Cartwright referred to this in 1687 when he complained that two opportunities to annex the revenues of the rectory of Ribchester

Parliament was in more frequent and regular session: N. Sykes, *Church and State in England in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1934), p.48.

¹²⁶ PRO, SP 29/40. The King's order is in Cardwell, *Documentary Annals*, Vol.2, pp.221-24.

to the diocese, as the royal martyr had directed, had been let slip.¹²⁷ Randle Holmes likewise declared that the bishop had insufficient income to live in accordance with his status.¹²⁸

A number of sources allow more detailed examination of these claims, including a couple of summaries of the bishop's income made soon after the Restoration. One of these gives the revenues of the see as a mere £319 per annum.¹²⁹ This document is undated, but probably belongs to 1663 since it is accompanied by a list of the cathedral revenues for that year. However, even when pleading poverty, Walton had admitted to an annual income over £100 higher than this, and the list of sources of revenue, when compared to others, is incomplete, omitting half of the impropriated rectories which were leased out to provide the bulk of the bishop's regular income.

The most detailed figures are to be found in a survey of the endowments of the diocese, the cathedral Chapter, and the collegiate church in Manchester begun under the Commonwealth and completed in 1655.¹³⁰ Alongside this may be placed a summary list of regular income and outgoings made at some time in the autumn of 1661 and the notes on every aspect of the diocese and its history made in the reign of George I by Bishop Gastrell and known as the *Notitia Cestriensis*. Unfortunately, the three cannot be made to yield entirely consistent figures, though the divergences are not wide. The 1661 summary is concise enough to be reproduced in full and so give a guide to the various sources of revenue:-

¹²⁷ Tanner 144 f.26.

¹²⁸ BL Harley MS 2155 f.44.

¹²⁹ Bodl. Gough MS, Cheshire 2, f.11.

Bishoprick of Chester

Old Rents issuing out of the Rectories Improprate belonging to the Bishopricke of Chester amount to the sume of	817	10	00
Tenths, Subsidyes, Archdeacons Pensions, Vicars wages, & other payments going out of the said Rents yearely are about	400	00	00
So the cleare profits of the Impropriations only	417	10	00
But the			
Rents of Deaneryes yearely payd to the Ld Bp of Chester are	36	06	00
Pensions yearly payd to the Ld Bishop of Chester are	98	14	00
Yearely Synodalls & procurations are	74	17	01
More Synodalls Procurations & pensions are due to the Ld Bishop of Chester out of several Ecclesiasticall promotions within the Archdeaconry of Richmond rising to the yearely sume of	116	02	11
	326	00	00
Besides Trienniall procurations in the Bishops Visitation come to	127	00	00
So in the yeare of Visitation the Bishopricke of Chester, if all these dues are truly payd, shall be worth besides what may happen by ffines upon renewing of Leases	870	10	00
other yeares	743	10	00

There are now severall Leases (some having two Lives, others but one) which the Tennants are desirous to renew.

My Lord, for the benefit of his successors, hath procured the Vicarage of Croston in Lancashire (valu'd at 4 or 500^l per annum) to be annexed to the Bishopricke, when it shall become void, by the death or Removall of Mr Hyet, who is reported to be near fourscore yeares of age, & no true son of the Church.¹³¹

These totals certainly show that the bishop's income was indeed 'now improved' on the figure of £420 1s 8d. They also reveal the even greater improvement in the income for Croston, something about which Walton's petition to

¹³⁰ H. Fishwick (ed.), *Lancashire and Cheshire Church Surveys, 1649-1655* (LCRS 1, 1879). The bishop's possessions are dealt with on pp.171-223.

¹³¹ Tanner 144 f.12. This must have been drawn up before Walton's death on 29 November but after the grant of the advowson of Croston on 22 August; see *CSPD 1661-1662*, p.69.

the King had remained silent. This would suggest that all figures which cannot be verified from other sources should be treated with caution. What more can be said about the various headings in this list?

The rents on leases of impropriated rectories stand out as by far and away the most important source of revenue, coming to more than all the others put together. It was with these that the Commonwealth Survey was concerned. In 1663 Bishop Hall bewailed the fact that 'the true value' of impropriations was 'knowne by the Tennant but usually conceal'd from the bishop'.¹³² This implies that he was unaware of the contents of the Survey made only a decade earlier, probably because it had been prepared for the central government authorities and no copy would have been kept in the north-west since no revival of the old diocesan structure was anticipated. The surveyors' detailed enquiries had revealed the cumulative value of the twenty-four rectories to be over £4000 to those who had leased them, but the rents being paid to the bishop totalled only £567 8s 6d. Apparently, no rents were being paid for Backford or Cottingham in the early 1650s, but it would appear from Gastrell's *Notitia* that they would normally have added a further £70 11s 4d. His figure for the rents from the other rectories is fractionally lower than that calculated from the Commonwealth Survey at £566 13s 2d, but he mentions two pieces of property which the Survey did not: some tenements in York which were leased for £1 10s 0d per annum and the so-called Archdeacon's House in Chester which was let for £1 6s 8d, though the tenant could reclaim up to 13s 4d each year for repairs.¹³³ In addition, the rents due on the manor and rectory of St Bees in Cumberland, which were payable to the crown, had been made over to the diocese by Queen Mary. These were worth £143 16s 2½d, though £63 1s 2½d had to be returned to the

¹³² Tanner 144 f.14

¹³³ In 1683 Pearson made a new lease under which the tenant was 'obliged to repair without any abatement of Rent'. By Gastrell's time the bishop's orchard, the orchard house, and old porter's

monarch. All these various rents give a grand total of £814 1s 4½d, slightly lower than the estimate made in 1661, but not significantly at variance with it.¹³⁴ It is also clear that this income remained more or less static across the entire period. Gastrell's summary of all the leases and their terms shows that only minor adjustments were ever made on renewal, and there is no evidence of any sustained or determined attempts to increase the levels of rent. Tenants preferred the long-term advantage of low rents, even when other inducements to agree to an increase were offered. 'Tenants that were only to revise & adde a life or two (though offer'd some proportionable abatement of their ffines) would not yield to charge their estates with much, if anything, above the old rents,' reported Hall in 1663.¹³⁵ It is not unlikely that the bishops readily went along with this. As individuals, they naturally benefited more from a substantial entry fine that could be pocketed at once than from a long-term but relatively small increase in the regular income of the see, but they were also subject to other pressures and temptations. One such case was Bowden rectory, leased by Lord Delamere. In 1669, as the expiry of his lease drew near, he prevailed upon the King himself to write to Wilkins urging him to renew on the existing terms 'in consideration of his [Delamere's] acceptable services.'¹³⁶ The new lease was duly granted in the following year. Another was the case of Ribchester, which so distressed Bishop Cartwright. Here the elderly Bishop Walton seems to have been primarily concerned with making provision for his family after his own death. In 1661 he leased the impropriated rectory to John Tibboles (who may have been a relative) 'in trust (as it appears) for the Bishop and his Family.' The three lives for the term of the lease were Walton's wife, son and nephew.¹³⁷

lodge were also rented out on an annual basis for a further £10 16s 8d. It is uncertain when this practice began, but it may have been after Wilkins' arrival. Gastrell, *Notitia*, part 1, pp.33 & 63.

¹³⁴ It is worth noting that the £1 rent due each year for Bradley Rectory in Staffordshire seems to have been unpaid since 1553. Hall and Pearson both fought legal battles to recover possession of the Rectory, but without success. Gastrell, *Notitia*, part 1, pp.41-42; Tanner 37 f.60 & 144 f.21.

¹³⁵ Tanner 144 f.14

¹³⁶ *CSPD 1668-69*, p.608; the 'acceptable services' are not defined.

¹³⁷ Gastrell, *Notitia*, part 1, pp.24 & 59. Clarendon recalled that many of the loyal clergy had been impoverished during the Interregnum, and 'some of the bishops ... saw that if they died before

But Cartwright's protest over this may have been a case of the pot calling the kettle black. He himself bought out the existing tenant for Wallasey and then let it to his own son with the intention that the income should help provide an annuity for his widow in the event of his death.¹³⁸

The 1661 summary estimates unavoidable expenditure under various headings at £400. Bishop Gastrell reckoned the actual administration of his leases cost £20 each year, and the figure was probably much the same in the Restoration period. Other costs were written into the terms of some leases. In some cases they were regular costs such as the vicar's stipend or the payment of tenths on the vicar's behalf; in others they were irregular, such as payment of first-fruits and clerical subsidies, or responsibility for the repair of the chancel of the parish church in question. These costs can never have come to less than £80 in total, and on occasion may have been much more. Tenths for the bishopric itself were £42 0s 2d, which had to be paid every year. When the diocese was created by Henry VIII out of the archdeaconries of Chester and Richmond, the actual powers of the two archdeacons had been vested in the bishop himself to be delegated as he chose. However, the post of archdeacon was retained and the bishop was personally responsible for allowing each of them a stipend of £50. All these items come to about £250 a year, sometimes more, but are well short of the figure of £400 in the summary. This, however, may have been allowing for the payment of first-fruits on the diocesan income as well as tenths, although only the latter are explicitly mentioned. First-fruits were generally paid in instalments, commonly over four years. Ferne managed to obtain permission to spread payment over six years, but this was

they were enabled to make some provision for them, their wives and children must unavoidably starve'. Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, *The Life of Edward, Earl of Clarendon* (Oxford, 1842), p.1047.

exceptional and may reflect the government's recognition that bishops returning to dilapidated palaces and cathedrals faced added expenses in the early years of the Restoration. Wilkins, by contrast, had a prolonged tussle with the Treasury Commissioners to obtain even four years over which to pay, but by then churchmen may have been felt to be under less financial pressure while the government was in a fairly desperate plight at the conclusion of the second Dutch War. Legally a clergyman had the right only to spread the payment of first-fruits over two years, and the Commissioners obtained a declaration from the Privy Council 'that for future these things may be restrained to the law'. Pearson, though, also obtained four years in which to pay, and Cartwright three, so the custom that had evolved was clearly too strong to be easily set aside even though the government had law on its side.¹³⁹ Nevertheless, this still represented a drain on the bishop's income of £94 10s 4½d in most years and brings the total of unavoidable costs much nearer to the £400 anticipated by Walton. Indeed, only Pearson held the see for long enough to be free from this particular burden for a significant period of time.

Turning to the other sources of income that were listed, the first is 'Rents of Deaneries'. Some aspects of an archdeacon's usual jurisdiction, with the right to the accompanying fees, were delegated by the bishops to the rural deans, who of course paid for the privilege. The traditional rents on the deaneries had yielded £36 6s 0d per annum, though Bishop Bridgeman had succeeded in raising this to over £100. The 1661 list gives only the older figure, however, and the partial list of 1663 is in line with this with a figure of £24 for the deaneries within Chester

¹³⁸ Cartwright, *Diary* for 6 October 1687, p.83; Sanders, 'Cartwright', p.30.

¹³⁹ The arrangements for payment by the successive bishops can be traced in *CTB 1660-1667*, pp.191 & 370 (Walton and Ferne); *CSPD 1661-1662*, p.373 (Hall); *CTB 1667-68*, pp.509 & 513;

archdeaconry. Gastrell records that they were let *en bloc* in 1666 for an unspecified sum, and a rental of £100 was definitely reached again only in 1686 when Cartwright leased them to his son John and cousin Thomas Waite. It seems unlikely that this family arrangement would have been the occasion for a nearly threefold increase in rent, so the higher figure was probably restored twenty years earlier by Bishop Hall after a number of years at the lower level.¹⁴⁰

Other aspects of the bishop's jurisdiction also boosted his regular income. In the Chester archdeaconry (though not in Richmond) he had the customary right to certain property belonging to any priest who died. This right was maintained until 1755 and was reckoned by Gastrell to be worth between £10 and £20 a year. In 1661 this figure might have been included in the total for 'Pensions yearely payd to the Ld Bishop of Chester' since Gastrell gives a correspondingly lower figure under this heading of 'about £80', a difference of £18 14s 0d. The sources of these pensions are nowhere fully stated, and by the early eighteenth century if not before they were no longer being regularly received. Consistory Court papers show that some were payable by the holders of certain impropriations, but that Hall and Wilkins had to take legal action to secure them.¹⁴¹ The same was true of synodals and procurations. Synodals were a small annual payment made by parochial clergy as a token of their submission to the bishop's authority; procurations were payments made by parishes at the time of the bishop's triennial or archdeacon's annual visitations. The various sources agree that those paid annually should have yielded about £70. When defaults in payment became widespread is uncertain, but the

CTB 1669-72, pp.2, 3, 5, 11 & 33; CSPD 1668-69, p.190 (Wilkins); CTB 1672-75, p.737 (Pearson); CTB 1685-89, pp. 163-4 (Cartwright).

¹⁴⁰ Gastrell, *Notitia*, part 1, pp.18, 26-29, 33 & 34.

¹⁴¹ Cheshire RO, EDC5 (1664) no.60; EDC5 (1668) no.44; EDC5 (1671) no.19.

Interregnum must be the most probable time. Clergy and parishes were surely reluctant in the years after 1660 to resume a small but irksome burden which they had been spared for sixteen years or more, and when the total anticipated revenue was listed in 1661 there is already a note of doubt: ‘*If* all the dues are truly paid...’ [my italics].¹⁴²

The expectation of a regular disposable annual income from diocesan sources of £745 was not unrealistic, though it may have been a little over-optimistic. There is no clear evidence that this figure shifted much in the period under review.¹⁴³ There were, however, more irregular additional sources of income, and also further demands on the bishop’s purse.

The greatest boost to his revenue came when a lease was due for renewal and the tenant would pay an entry fine. In 1663 Sheldon had asked the level at which these were set, to which Hall replied, ‘Seaven yeares purchase for 21 yeares, & Eight for 3 lives is the most that is taken.’¹⁴⁴ Virtually all the leases were for lives rather than years, and Gastrell listed all the leases and renewals from the foundation of the diocese. Unfortunately, he did not record the entry fines, nor are they stated in those leases of which copies happen to survive,¹⁴⁵ so all that can be known for certain is those years in which this additional revenue would have been received and the

¹⁴² Tanner 144 f.12; Gastrell, *Notitia*, part 1, p.33. Some clergy refused payment of procurations due to Cartwright at Easter 1689 when he was in exile: *Ch.Sh.*, 3rd series, i, 86.

¹⁴³ D.R. Hirschberg, ‘Episcopal Incomes and Expenses, 1660-c1760’ in R. O’Day & F.Heal (eds.), *Princes and Paupers in the English Church, 1500-1800* (Leicester, 1981), 211-230 (p.214) reckoned a basic revenue of £473 in c1663 rising to £744 in c1680, but the lower figure probably placed undue reliance on the Gough MS while he apparently ignored the evidence of the Commonwealth Survey.

¹⁴⁴ Tanner 144 f.14.

¹⁴⁵ Cheshire RO, EEB 99127, 99225, 99234, 99235, 99340, 99349, 99399 & 99450. The Register Book of Leases (EEB 99486), which covers the period after 1673, was missing at the time I consulted these documents.

maximum sum that it may have been if a rate of eight times the annual rent was always charged, which is doubtful. Hall's words quoted above would suggest it was not, and this proves to be the case in those instances from Cartwright's time for which his diary provides additional evidence. 'I sealed a Lease of Kirkby Ravensworth to Mr Andrew Wilkinson for his own life, and Anne Jackson, and Charles Wilkinson his brother, and the fine I took was £112', he recorded on 13 September 1687. This is nearer to just four-and-a-half times the annual rent of £25 5s 4d. Only a few weeks earlier he had written to Wilkinson 'that he should have his lease for £114 18s 8d and not under', but he must have had to drop his price slightly. Tenants were always likely to press for a low fine as well as a low rent. When trying to find a new tenant for Patrick Brompton in December 1686, Cartwright first tried for an entry fine of £80 and a few months later of £74, little more than double the annual rent, though £80 represented five times the balance left to the bishop after he had paid the vicar's stipend. Cartwright's best deal was the £100 he received from his own son for the lease of Wallasey, which represented over six times the annual rent, but it was the same sum that he spent buying out the previous tenant. In earlier negotiations with another prospective purchaser of the lease he had only asked 'for £80 and an hogshead of claret'.¹⁴⁶ The bishops will have received no additional income from entry fines in seven of the twenty-nine years from 1660 to 1688. The leanest period was the early 1670s. No leases were renewed in 1671, 1672 or 1674, and 1673 can have produced no more than £8 since Budworth, renewed that year, was let for a mere one pound per annum. In contrast with this, Pearson could have gained as much as £1000 in 1677 when Backford (let at £12 13s 4d) and Bolton and Clapham (let at £113) both came up for renewal. Over the period as a whole, the bishops may have seen their annual income bolstered

¹⁴⁶ Cartwright, *Diary*, pp.16, 69, 72 & 78.

by an average of just under £200, which is what Gastrell expected in the early eighteenth century.

There were also the procurations payable in the years of an episcopal visitation of the diocese. Theoretically, these took place every three years, but in practice were often missed because they were superceded by a metropolitanical visitation by the Archbishop of York or because the the illness or death of the bishop. Walton, Ferne and Cartwright never carried out visitations of the whole diocese; Hall, Wilkins and Pearson only in 1665, 1671, 1674 and 1677. Since three of these were years when no entry fines were received, the procurations, if duly paid, would have been all the more welcome.

Another source of ready cash may have eased any problems arising from the somewhat erratic nature of the sources of income just considered. The bishops would commonly take a bond before instituting an incumbent to his living, its ostensible purpose being to indemnify the bishop if he were sued by a third party claiming the right of presentation. Bishop Cartwright noted in his diary for 18 November 1686 that he instituted 'Gabriel Blakiston, master of arts, to the rectory of Danby Wisk, ... and had Sir William Blakiston the patron's bond to save me harmless.' At the beginning of the previous year Sir Daniel Fleming had recorded in his 'Great Book of Accounts' a bond of £100 given to Pearson among the expenses involved in his son's institution to the living at Grasmere. The practice was not new. Bridgeman had taken a bond of £200 from Laud when instituting Robert Bath, the Archbishop's nephew-in-law, as Vicar of Rochdale in 1635.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷ Cartwright, *Diary*, p.13; Magrath (ed.), *Flemings at Oxford*, Vol.2, p.351; F.R. Raines, *The Vicars of Rochdale* (Chetham Society n.s.1; Manchester, 1883), p.93.

Though this money had ultimately to be repaid, it must have eased short term cash-flow problems.

All this left the bishops of Chester with an average income of around £900, more in some years but less in others. Certainly it is still well short of Gregory King's estimate made in 1688, that a Spiritual Lord would have an income of around £1,300, or of the suggestion made on the eve of the Restoration by some (whom Abernathy characterises as 'Presbyterian in politics and Erastian in religion') that bishops should receive a salary of £2000 taken from customs and excise duties.¹⁴⁸ This explains Walton's desire to secure the income of Croston Vicarage for the diocese. When the opportunity finally came in August 1662 and James Hyatt was ejected for Nonconformity the situation had moved on. Croston remained a crown living, but successive bishops of Chester were also rectors of Wigan. According to a survey of Lancashire parishes carried out in 1650, the combined tithes and glebe rents of Wigan and Holland parishes (the two were divided during the Interregnum but re-united at the Restoration) were £462 8s 0d, while stipends due to curates and other outgoings came to £209 17s 4d, leaving a net income of £252 10s 8d. This substantial sum may even have increased somewhat during the time the rectory was in the hands of the bishops, for Gastrell believed it was worth 'above 300/ p. an. clear, all Curates paid'.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ King's 'Scheme of the income & expence for the several families of England' is reprinted in Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost - further explored* (London, 1983), pp.32-33. Abernathy, *English Presbyterians*, p.37. One of Cosin's correspondents, Clement Spelman, saw the Civil War as God's punishment for the Tudor plunder of the Church, and suggested former monastic lands should be restored to Chester and other poorer dioceses: Maltby, 'Suffering and Surviving', pp.138-40. Income was meant to secure status rather than be a reward for work done, and the variations between sees gave the crown a potential lever of control over churchmen: see above, pp. 29 & 56-57.

¹⁴⁹ Fishwick (ed.), *Church Surveys*, pp.59ff; Gastrell, *Notitia*, part 1, p.243.

When Ferne was appointed bishop, he was allowed to retain his Mastership of Trinity College, Cambridge, 'for a year or more',¹⁵⁰ but even after Hall and his successors had been presented to the rectory of Wigan, they held other senior posts *in commendam*. Hall remained Archdeacon of Canterbury and Pearson Archdeacon of Surrey, while Cartwright held on to the vicarage of Barking until he resigned it in favour of his son.¹⁵¹ The records show Wilkins to have been involved in complex negotiations not only over the time he would be allowed to pay first-fruits on the bishopric, but also over which of his existing posts he could retain and what should happen over the outstanding installments of first-fruits on those he would resign. The outcome shows him to have been a shrewd and successful man of business. He retained the deanery of Ripon with the hospitals of St John the Baptist and St Mary Magdalen, which he had held since August 1660, so were long clear of the burden of first-fruits. This was despite the fact that a warrant had been issued granting them to Thomas Lamplugh. On the other hand he shed several more recently acquired preferments, and with them debts to the Treasury totalling £97 13s 3d.¹⁵²

Hall and Pearson, at least, also had small family estates of their own, the one in Cornwall, the other in Norfolk. Taken altogether, these various benefices and private means will have brought Chester's bishops up to the level of income expected of a spiritual peer of the realm and will have been in line with those of

¹⁵⁰ *CSPD 1661-1662*, p.306.

¹⁵¹ The living was in the gift of All Souls' College, Oxford. In the summer of 1688 Cartwright resigned it to James II as the 'supreme Ordinary' who in turn commanded the Warden and Fellows of the College to nominate John Cartwright in his father's place. The College balked at this, so the King declined to accept the resignation. The matter was unresolved at the Revolution. *CSPD 1686-1687*, p.277; *CSPD 1687-1689*, pp.250 & 255.

¹⁵² E.H. Dunkin, C. Jenkins & E.A. Fry, *Index to the Act Books of the Archbishops of Canterbury, 1663-1859* (London, 1929), Part 2, p.152; *CSPD 1668-1669*, pp.13, 23-24, 74, 154-55 & 190; *CTB 1669-1672*, pp.5-6.

many of the leading gentry within their diocese,¹⁵³ but the demands made on this income were heavy, and some had to be met before the bishop saw a penny of it.

When Jonathan Trelawny learnt that James II was intending to nominate him to the see of Bristol he wrote to the Earl of Rochester in some alarm:

I hear his Majesty designed me for Bristol, which I should not decline was I not already under such pressure by my father's debts, as must necessarily break my estate to pieces if I find no better prop than the income of Bristol, not greater than 300*l.* per annum; and the expence in consecration, first fruits, and settlement, will require 2000*l.*

'Your Lordship must needs know,' he wrote to Bishop Turner of Ely a few weeks later, 'the income of Bristol is too mean to give a man credit for so large a sum as is required before I can be seated there.'¹⁵⁴ Though Chester's bishops enjoyed better financial prospects than Bristol's, they too may have had to go into debt on first taking up office.

Of the expenses to which Trelawny referred, first fruits have already been discussed. 'Expense in consecration' would involve the fees payable to a variety of legal and court officials, firstly to procure the *Congé d'élire* and royal letters needed for election by the dean and chapter and then for the royal assent to confirm the election. In Sheldon's letter-book kept by his secretary there is a list of 'Fees for passing the Seales for a Bishop'.¹⁵⁵ Though it refers explicitly to Blandford's

¹⁵³ J.T. Cliffe, *The World of the Country House in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven & London, 1999), Appendix A, pp.198-202, mentions Sir Peter Venables (Baron Kinderton) among gentry with an income of over £3000; Sir John Bellot, Roger Nowell, Richard Shireburn, Richard Shuttleworth and Richard Towneley among those with over £1000, and William Lawton, Sir Peter Leycester and Sir Geoffrey Shakerley (governor of Chester) among those with over £500. The list is not exhaustive, being based on those for whom there is also evidence for the number of servants they employed, but is sufficient to show the bishop's relative standing.

¹⁵⁴ Both letters (dated 10 July and 22 September 1685) are quoted in Agnes Strickland, *The Lives of the seven Bishops committed to the Tower in 1688* (London, 1866), pp.369-71.

¹⁵⁵ Bodl. Add. MS C308 f.157.

consecration as Bishop of Oxford in 1665, it was clearly preserved as a record of the standard payments, which came to a total of £60 17s 4d. The only item likely to have varied was the £1 5s 0d paid 'to the officers of the Signet & Privy Seale for their Extraordinary trouble in despatch'. Seventeenth-century bureaucratic machinery was in constant need of lubrication. Custom then also demanded that the new bishop provided a lavish banquet after his consecration. John Evelyn was among the guests at the 'sumptuous dinner' laid on by Wilkins along with 'the Duke of Buckingham, Judges, Secretaries of State, Lord Keeper, Counsell, Noblemen, & such an infinity of other company.'¹⁵⁶ Some idea of the cost of these celebrations is given by the fact that when Sancroft became Archbishop of Canterbury he obtained an order in council directing that the custom of presenting each of the guests with a pair of gloves should be replaced by a donation of £50 towards the rebuilding of St Paul's Cathedral.¹⁵⁷ Further expense was involved when the new bishop came to take his seat in the House of Lords. On 12 May 1687 Cartwright paid 'Sir Thomas Duppa £6 for my fees due to the officers attending the House of Lords at my first admission on 28 April last past' -- this despite the fact that Parliament was prorogued at the time -- and on the same day he paid twenty guineas for the privy seal on the permission for him to pay his first-fruits in instalments.¹⁵⁸

'Expenses of settlement' presumably involved furnishing the bishop's new residences and acquiring anything that might be felt necessary to his new status. A list survives of items from the palace at Chester and the parsonage at Wigan sold by

¹⁵⁶ Evelyn, *Diary*, vol.III, p.518.

¹⁵⁷ James Chambers, *Christopher Wren* (Stroud, 1998), p.82.

¹⁵⁸ Cartwright, *Diary*, p.54. In 1702 William Nicolson reckoned the various expenses of his consecration came to at least £500, plus a further £115 for travelling to London and staying there: Sykes, *Church and State*, p.150. Rather earlier, in 1633, Juxon's consecration banquet had cost £110: Mason, *Serving God and Mammon*, p.49.

Hall's executor Sir Amos Meredith.¹⁵⁹ Many, though not all, were sold to Wilkins and included such essential items as the fire grates and water cisterns. The new bishop must have had to replace many of the items that went to other purchasers, such as 'the Copper in the washhouse'. Unfortunately, the prices paid are not recorded, but an interesting sidelight is thrown on the differing ways in which Hall and Wilkins provided for the needs of their households. Among the items the latter chose not to buy were an assortment of tubs and barrels used in connection with a cider press. Presumably Hall had his own cider made from the fruit grown in the bishop's orchard; it may have been Wilkins who began the practice of renting this out.¹⁶⁰ Gregory King expected a bishop's household, his dependent relatives and servants, to number about twenty. Obviously this will have varied from case to case. Hall and Pearson had no children; Cartwright was married twice and had eight. Pearson's will made provision for legacies to his servants, but does not say how many there were. A dozen or fifteen would fit with King's generalisation and with the numbers maintained by gentry of similar means to the bishop. There are too many variables to give any precise indication of what this will have cost in terms of wages and provision of food or liveries, but it must have been a significant amount.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Tanner 144 f.28. When Bishop Stratford first visited Chester in October 1689 he went into lodgings while the Palace was being furnished: *Ch.Sh.*, 3rd series, i, 86-87.

¹⁶⁰ See above, p.59, note 132.

¹⁶¹ On the numbers of servants and their cost in comparable gentry households, see Cliffe, *World of the Country House*, chapters 5 & 6 and appendix A. Pearson's housekeeper (female) and cook (male) are referred to in the City of Chester Assembly Book: Cheshire RO, AB/2 ff.189 & 186. His will, providing for payment of arrears of wages plus a further year's pay for those who had been with him more than twelve months and six months' additional pay for those employed for a shorter time is printed in Bridgeman, *History of Wigan*, pp.560-61. Cartwright mentions paying 'Joseph Lloyd his year's wages ... £6', but does not say in what capacity Lloyd served him: *Diary* for 5 October 1687, p.82. Richard B. Schlatter, *The Social Ideas of Religious Leaders, 1660-1688* (Oxford, 1940), p.62, notes that writers of the period taught that servants should receive a just wage, but never defined what that was.

Once in his diocese, the new bishop was under constant pressure to set a good example of devotion to church and crown and of concern for the welfare of the wider community. Archbishop Sheldon kept a record of money 'Disbursed by Bishops since the King's returne in Publique Works & Charities'.¹⁶² By the summer of 1663, in response to Sheldon's enquiries, Hall reckoned that he and Walton (and probably the Dean and Chapter, though the document¹⁶³ explicitly refers only to the bishops) had 'already expended' £2736 5s 8d and that a further £1700 was 'necessarily to be expended'. This was not exceptional. From Sheldon's records it would appear that in the same three year period Archbishop Juxon had spent £6400, Bishop Sanderson £4092, and Bishop Duppa £1600. These were all occupants of wealthier sees than Chester, but Sheldon maintained a relentless pressure on everyone to contribute to the needs of church, state and society. In 1666 Bishop William Nicholson was informed that £100 was not enough to loan the King, even from so poor a diocese as Gloucester, while Bishop Gilbert Ironside was rebuked for not setting the clergy of Bristol a better example in his response to the King's request for money.¹⁶⁴ In such circumstances, however, it would not be surprising to find bishops sometimes provided the figures Sheldon wanted to see, and those in Hall's return should be treated with some caution where they are not corroborated by other evidence or could not have been easily verified by Sheldon himself.

The largest single item was the renovation of the palace, and the figures there are supported by the evidence of witnesses in the case brought by Wilkins against Hall's executors. The same is true of his claim to have donated plate and furniture to the Cathedral worth £86 5s 8d. Flagons embossed with Hall's arms are still in

¹⁶² Bodl. MS Add. C308 f.151v.

¹⁶³ Tanner 144 f.14.

existence, and at the trial the Precentor had valued them at £100.¹⁶⁵ One claim which Sheldon could easily have checked was that Hall had contributed £50 towards the repair of St Paul's. Another was the answer to his question, 'What has been expended since the King's Majestyes Returne in presents to the King, Particularly that by Act of Parliament, and the other by the Bishops Deanes & Chapters free Consent?' He replied, 'The Statute Voluntary Present, together with the perfectly free Present of Bishop Walton, was 500/-00-00;' and added for good measure, 'Bishop Halls free Present of 250/- was given in his Capacity of Prebendary of Windsor, & is not to be counted here.'¹⁶⁶

About the other items it is impossible to be so certain. The £300 allegedly already spent and £1000 yet to be spent on the repair of the cathedral and the houses of its clergy is more likely to have come from the Dean and Chapter themselves. A question mark should also be placed against the claim to have given at least £600 to the augmentation of poor vicarages. Meeting the King's expectations about this had been a particular anxiety for Walton,¹⁶⁷ but the whole issue clearly caused Charles and his advisors some concern in the early days of their return to power. During the Interregnum many poor livings had been augmented by the Committee for Plundered Ministers from the confiscated revenues of the old hierarchy, and with the return of the *status quo ante bellum* impoverished clergy who lost this additional income would feel little reason to be loyal to the restored church or government. Only in the next century, when revolution and war had changed the whole basis of royal finance did the initiative known as Queen Anne's Bounty out of first-fruits and

¹⁶⁴ Bodl. MS Add C308 ff.62 & 65v.

¹⁶⁵ Burne, *Chester Cathedral*, p.134; M.H. Ridgway, *The Early Plate of Chester Cathedral* (Chester, 1980), p.3 & plates 6 & 7.

¹⁶⁶ Tanner 144 f.14.

tenths become feasible. Forty years earlier the crown retained its income from first-fruits and tenths and merely exhorted the bishops to give a lead in helping poorer clergy, but the records show only one example of improvement in the remuneration of the vicar in any of the bishop of Chester's impropriated rectories, and that was made by Pearson several years after this return was drawn up.¹⁶⁸ Perhaps Hall's figure represents a pious intention rather than the actual expenditure claimed, a case where the spirit was willing but the flesh was weak.

Hall's figure of over £2700 spent in three years should probably be reduced to something nearer £1600, but this still represents nearly 80% of the regular income from the diocese in the same period, one in which three new bishops had to meet all the expense that taking up post has been shown to involve. With the passage of time the costs of making good the ravages of war and neglect became less, but bishops were still expected to show conspicuous loyalty to the crown. In the summer of 1687 Cartwright had to entertain the King himself as a guest at the palace, and there was a steady flow of other important personages travelling to and from Ireland who required hospitality. Some other items continued to be important. For example, even the ports of the north-west lost seamen to Barbary pirates. In his return to Sheldon, Hall claimed to have given £100 for the redemption of captives, and Pearson was certainly involved in raising money for the same purpose during the summer of 1681. Though the records prove only that he tried to ensure money raised in the diocese went to help men from Chester, it is precisely the kind of

¹⁶⁷ See above, p.56.

¹⁶⁸ In 1705 the Vicar of Childwall wrote, 'In the year 1681, the Rt. Rev. Father in God, Dr John Pearson, then Lord Bishop of Chester, and John Garraway Esq. Gave each £200, wherewith £30 per annum was purchased out of the Great Tithes, and are annexed to the Vicarage.' Gastrell, *Notitia*, vol.2/2, p.166.

instance where bishops were expected to lead by example.¹⁶⁹

Financial exactions did not cease at death. Just as the bishops received property from deceased incumbents in the Chester archdeaconry, so a similar payment was due to the crown on their own deaths. In November 1664 Henry Ferne's executors secured

a grant ... of discharge from the gift of a horse, bridle and saddle, cloak with a cape, cup with a cover, bason and ewer, gold ring, and kennel of hounds, usually given to the King by the executors of a bishop of Chester.¹⁷⁰

Ferne's tenure of the see had been exceptionally brief and his estate will have received little or none of its income. There is no evidence of similar dispensations for any of the other bishops in this period.

The Restoration bishops of Chester, it seems safe to conclude, were not poor men, but they were not in a position to accumulate large personal fortunes given the short time for which most of them held the see and the expectations contemporaries had of how their wealth would be used. In one letter Hall referred to the expense of renovating the chancel at Wigan (his responsibility as rector) and losses from a robbery as 'a sufficient caveat against my growing rich', while Lloyd, in his sermon at Wilkins' funeral, claimed that 'what he [Wilkins] yearly received of the Church, he bestowed in its service', and declared, 'I have heard him say often, I will be no richer, and I think he was as good as his word.'¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ Tanner 144 f.14 & 36 f.143; Cheshire RO, ML/4/518.

¹⁷⁰ CSPD 1664-1665, p.98.

¹⁷¹ Bodl. MS Add C305 f.60; Lloyd, *Sermon at the Funerals*, p.43.

Patronage

Those contemporaries, however, did not measure a man's standing only by his income. Another important indicator was the patronage he controlled. When Pearson's friend Anthony Sparrow was translated from Exeter to Norwich in 1676, the much greater opportunities he would have for exercising patronage rather than the three-fold increase in income that he would enjoy were what occasioned comment by one of Sir Joseph Williamson's correspondents.¹⁷² Bishops of Chester were never more than minor players in this crucial aspect of seventeenth-century life, though they did have the right of appointing the holders of various posts in the diocese, both clerical and lay. These included the six prebends of the cathedral, the two archdeacons, the four King's Preachers for Lancashire, the twenty rural deans, and the lay officials of the church courts. As the holders of impropriated rectories they had the right to nominate the vicars of the parishes in question unless the advowson had been passed over to the lesee. From the information on these in the Commonwealth Survey and Gastrell's *Notitia* it appears that the bishops had retained the patronage of eleven of the nineteen impropriations within the diocese and would affirm the same right in a twelfth (Over) in 1676 if not before, while in two more they had an explicit right to veto the tenant's choice of vicar. They also retained the patronage of two of the six impropriations which lay outside the diocese. None of the livings to which they appointed were worth more than £50, however, and at least two (Chipping and Kirby Ravensworth) were each worth a mere £10, so they were not the most tempting rewards to be able to offer for loyal service or to assist impecunious friends and relatives. The King's Preachers, whose original purpose had been the Protestant evangelisation of the most strongly recusant county in

England, each received £50 a year (frequently in arrears) for what was now a sinecure post. Likewise, the archdeacons of Chester and Richmond drew a stipend of only £50 each (paid by the bishop himself) and according to a list of cathedral income and expenditure drawn up in 1663, the prebends shared just £160 between them, which would be a mere £26 13s 4d each, with a small addition for the holders of various posts: £2 for the subdean, chanter and sacrist, and £4 for the receiver and treasurer. A couple of decades later, in 1686, John Thane valued his prebend at £30 *per annum*, so the situation was little changed.¹⁷³ It was rare to find someone who would write in the same vein as John Rawlet, who by accepting the position of Wilkins' curate in Wigan had suffered a £20 reduction in his stipend but believed himself adequately recompensed by the opportunity of preaching to 'near 20 times so many people' as in his former position.¹⁷⁴

This does not mean that the bishop could not significantly advance the career of a favoured client. One clear instance of his doing this is the case of Richard Wroe, though it was achieved through the exercise of the bishop's influence as visitor to the collegiate church in Manchester as much as through direct powers of patronage. Part of the story is set out in a letter from one George Ogden to Williamson written on 26 November, 1677:

For the support of myself and those dependent on me his Majesty granted his letters dated 2 Nov., 1670, for me to be admitted into the first fellowship vacant in the Collegiate Church of Manchester, but, when that became void, the now Bishop of Chester favoured his chaplain, Mr Wroe, with the same [letters] by an after grant too, which came out of Lord Arlington's office. For quietness' sake, I was willing to sacrifice my own reputation as well as interest, rather than salve it by wounding a person (not the chaplain) more eminent in the Church than myself, and according to Secretary Coventry's advice accepted a second mandate dated 8 May, 1675, which he procured me

¹⁷² CSPD 1676-1677, p.551.

¹⁷³ Burne, *Chester Cathedral*, p.135; Tanner 30 f.119.

¹⁷⁴ CCRB, Vol.2, pp.89-90.

for the now next that should become void. According to his directions, after he had acquainted you, I brought this to your office, and at my very first motion you appointed one of your under-secretaries to enter a *caveat*.¹⁷⁵

Ogden was not entirely honest in this instance, for he had sought to wound Pearson by complaining to Coventry about the Bishop's 'determination in his case against him, and in favour of one who had a letter of posterior date' in 1674. Coventry, though, tried to calm the situation by keeping Pearson informed and persuading Ogden to seek a second mandate.¹⁷⁶ Wroe had first come to the notice of John Pearson while a student at Jesus College, Cambridge, during the time of Pearson's mastership there, becoming a fellow of the college just as Pearson moved to Trinity. In 1672 Wroe graduated as B.D. and obtained his royal mandate for election to a fellowship at Manchester when one should fall vacant. That this was likely to cut across the previous grant to Ogden is not untypical of the confused ways of court patronage, but it was Wroe's good fortune that by the time a vacancy occurred Pearson was in a position to settle any dispute in his favour. Ogden's letters reveal that Pearson had also made Wroe his chaplain. It would have been in this capacity that he witnessed Pearson's will in January 1678, and two months later the Bishop collated him to a vacant prebendal stall in the cathedral. In 1681 Pearson also collated him to the vicarage of Bowden, one of his impropriated rectories. The climax to this steady accumulation of preferments came with the resignation of Nicholas Stratford as warden of Manchester in 1683. The right of nomination lay with the King, though was at this time delegated to the Commission for Ecclesiastical Promotions in which Sancroft had a dominant voice.

Wee have great reason to blesse God [wrote Pearson], who hath put it into the heart of the King to leave the disposing of his Ecclesiasticall preferment in such reverend & honourable hands, by which wee finde able & deserving men promoted in all parts of the nation. The Warden of Manchester hath suddenly

¹⁷⁵ CSPD 1677-1678, p.468.

¹⁷⁶ CSPD 1673-1675, p.407; CSPD 1675-1676, p.73.

left us, & in such manner as the people thinke he will not returne againe. If so, I beseech you give mee leave to put your Grace in minde of What I formerly wrote concerning Mr Wroe, who, all things considered, seemes not onely to mee but to others to be as fitt a man for the managing of that place as any that can be propounded.¹⁷⁷

Pearson had anticipated that 'there may be many competitors', but his recommendation of Wroe proved successful.

Wroe's career illustrates what a bishop of Chester could do, but these occasions when Pearson acted in Wroe's favour were spread over a span of ten years, and he was the only bishop in this period who held the see for so long. It also illustrates one of the ways in which a younger clergyman might come to the bishop's notice, as someone first met at university. Phineas Bury, for example, Bishop Wilkins' only appointment to the cathedral Chapter, had graduated from Wadham College, Oxford, in 1652 when Wilkins was warden there. On the other hand, the dispute with George Ogden reveals the chagrin that could be felt by disappointed suitors for preferment, and possibly the external pressure a bishop could be under, restricting his freedom of action. Though Ogden feared that he would be passed over for a fellowship at Manchester again, the *caveat* he obtained from Williamson would leave Pearson no discretion in adjudicating another contested election. In the end he did indeed obtain his fellowship, while Pearson may have felt constrained to compensate him for his earlier disappointment by collating him to the vicarage of Ribchester in 1682 with a dispensation to be non-resident while the parsonage was put into good repair. The Bishop's original preference for Wroe over Ogden may have rested on more than personal acquaintance, however, for while the contemporaneous epithet 'silver-tongued' testifies to Wroe's skill as a preacher,

¹⁷⁷ Tanner 144 f.36, dated 25 June 1683 and referring to an earlier letter, Tanner 144 f.34, dated 10 March.

Ogden proved an unsatisfactory Vicar of Ribchester. In 1692 Stratford, by then himself the bishop, berated Ogden for not having completed the repairs to the vicarage and taken up residence, insisting he should either do so or resign.¹⁷⁸

Someone else who did relatively well out of the limited powers of patronage held by the bishop of Chester was William Finmore, though he had other influential friends to help him. Finmore had been an undergraduate at Christchurch while Oxford was the royalist capital. Perhaps he became acquainted with Ferne at that time, for shortly after that bishop's death in 1662, he claimed to have been nominated by him as one of the King's Preachers, but during the vacancy in the diocese another clergyman, Thomas Blackburn, had secured the place on the nomination of the crown. Finmore's petition to the King to try and regain his appointment was accompanied by a certificate in his support signed by John Fell, the Dean of Christchurch, commending him as a former student of the college.¹⁷⁹ Despite these difficulties, Finmore's position as Vicar of Runcorn kept him in the eye of Ferne's successor, and his apparently wide circle of acquaintance were able to use their influence on his behalf. In 1666 Hall appointed him as a prebend of the cathedral, where he appears to have been the receiver, and on 5 April 1667 the Bishop wrote to Sheldon,

Upon a late vacancy in the Archdeaconry of Chester, I have well placed it (according to my Lord Bishop of Rochesters motion, at my coming away from London) upon Mr Finmore overlooking others who thought themselves neere to it, and by the malcontent which I see upon this singular ocasion, I cannot but be sensible, what encounters your Grace do meet with, how hard you are besett in your most prudent disposall of greater promotions.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ J.P. Earwaker (ed.), *Local Gleanings relating to Lancashire and Cheshire* (reprinted from the *Manchester Courier*, 1875-1878), Vol.2, p.4.

¹⁷⁹ *CSPD 1661-1662*, p.325. The certificate from Fell is dated 4 February, so may originally have been sent on Finmore's behalf to Bishop Ferne.

¹⁸⁰ Bodl. MS Add C305 f.58.

Finmore had now really gone as far as the bishops of Chester could take him and although he lived another nineteen years, during which Fell became Bishop of Oxford and Dolben was translated from Rochester to York, his other patrons did no more for him. This was despite Hall's comment that he 'did rather pitch upon Mr Finmore, because (if need should be) he is the best, in virtue, for the deanery'.¹⁸¹ Hall also witnesses once again to the trouble unsuccessful rivals for a post could cause, even referring to his experience in this respect as 'purgatory'.¹⁸²

In one of his last acts as bishop, Pearson nominated Finmore's successors.

Bishop Lloyd of St Asaph wrote to Sancroft:

Upon the death of Mr Finmore late Archdeacon of Chester, that Archdeaconry & a Prebend of that Church are become void, & at the Bishops disposall. The former the Bishop has given to his chaplein Mr Allen; then whom, (setting aside his Relation & his Obligations to him,) I believe he could not have found a better man for that Church. The Prebend he intends for his Nephew Mr Thane, who has served him many years as his Amanuensis; being a very good Scholar & a man of very good Life, & Master of Arts of long standing. But he is not yet in holy orders, & therefore not capable of Institution. For which reason the Bishop has written to me by Mr Allen, desiring me very earnestly to put his Nephew in holy orders: & to do it with all speed, for fear a fit may come (as it has done without warning) & either take him away, or disable him from giving Institution.¹⁸³

Allen, like Finmore, in fact succeeded to a prebend as well, since two became vacant at this time. As a former fellow of Trinity College he had probably come into the bishop's household through their Cambridge connection,¹⁸⁴ but almost immediately after his promotion to archdeacon he married Margaret Bridgeman, so it is likely that

¹⁸¹ When Henry Bridgeman became Bishop of Sodor and Man in 1671 he was allowed to retain the deanery of Chester *in commendam*, so there was no vacancy until 1682.

¹⁸² Other patrons might, of course, decline to put pressure on the Bishop. According to Pope: 'Before Dr Wilkins was settled in his Bishopric, a certain Person address'd himself to the Archbishop, and desir'd his Graces Recommendation to him for a Place in his Gift. No, reply'd the Archbishop, that I can by no means do, it would be a very unreasonable thing in me, to desire a Favour from one whose Promotion I oppos'd.' Pope, *Life of Ward*, p.57.

¹⁸³ Tanner 30 f.17.

¹⁸⁴ Henry Dove, whom Pearson made Archdeacon of Richmond in 1678, had also been a Fellow of Trinity College and was married to the bishop's niece.

the influence of that family had helped him as well. Thane was the son of Pearson's sister and would be his literary executor, but apparently no suitable preferment in the bishop's gift had fallen vacant before, another indication of the limited patronage at his command. Another nephew, Robert Callis, had to be content with the position of curate at Wigan.

Wroe, Finmore and Allen were indeed the exceptions in receiving more than one position through the bishop's patronage or influence, but their stories show the kind of influences that might be brought to bear either by or on the bishop. Thane's case might smack of nepotism, and the bishops certainly used their position to help their relatives in matters of preferment as well as through the grant of leases on rural deaneries and impropriations. This was especially true of lay positions in the diocesan administration. Wilkins made his half-brother Walter Pope his registrar just as Walton had made John Tibboles apparitor general and Cartwright later gave the same position to his cousin Peter Whalley.¹⁸⁵ It does not follow that these were necessarily bad appointments. Pope seems to have improved diocesan record keeping on his appointment, though for much of the time he was absent and the work was done by deputies.¹⁸⁶ Lloyd, an independent observer, clearly had a high opinion of Thane, and Pearson obviously made some distinction between his two nephews and what was appropriate to each. Cartwright followed Pearson's example and one of his first acts on arriving in the diocese was to make one cousin, Peter Haddon, his curate at Wigan and another, Thomas West, both his chaplain and also Vicar of Childwall, an independent position with freehold.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ Gastrell, *Notitia*, part 1, pp.25 & 31; Cartwright, *Diary* for 6 December 1686, p.16.

¹⁸⁶ Cheshire RO, EDA 1/4 f.137. Prescott, *Diary*, Vol.I, pp.xii-xiii.

What the records also make clear, however, is that the bishop could not always use his influence with others as successfully as Pearson did on behalf of Wroe, while at other times circumstances took matters out of the bishop's hands, especially in the first two or three years after the Restoration when the diocese was vacant three times and incidents like that over Finmore's preachership were likely to occur.

The first of these points may be illustrated by Hall's attempt to influence the choice of a warden for Manchester Collegiate Church in 1667, an exact parallel to the situation Pearson addressed in 1683. He was in London when he heard of the death of Warden Heyrick, who had held the post for over thirty years. During the 1640s and 1650s Heyrick had been a leading proponent of Presbyterianism in Lancashire, but contrived to retain his post at the Restoration. He was someone 'the loss of whom I cannot lament,' confessed Hall when he conveyed the news to Sheldon, 'He [Heyrick] being too much with the presbytery, and a supporter of that faction, where was the greatest need of discountenance of it.' Hall then proceeded to advance his suggestions as to the course of action Sheldon might put before the King.

If it may be judged fit to promote one of the fellows to be warden, another may be gratified, as fellow, by his Majesty's mandate. The fittest person in virtue to mee, to prevent competition, is one Mr Thomas Weston, now Fellow, and a vicar resident neere Manchester, he being able, and more stoutly spirited to govern there. But if your Grace have any other minister by, I do but barely propose, leaving this (as I will always all things of promotion) to your Graces best prudence and pleasure. Possibly you may be solicited by Dr Mallory, but without any prejudice to him, I could in your eare give fresh reasons to your negative, as I am sure will weigh in your judgement. There is in the Towne of Manchester a deserving person, and of good temper, and discretion, one Mr Wirking the Schoolmaster whom I could heartily wish in that Society, as the fittest of any, but I begg your pardon for naming either.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁸

Cartwright, *Diary* for 6 December 1686, p.16, and 18 February 1687, p.33.
Bodl. MS Add C305 f.62.

The whole tone in which Hall makes his suggestions is somewhat diffident. If Mallory did have any backers, they failed to secure his promotion, but Hall had no more success on Weston's behalf. An outsider, Nicholas Stratford (whose patron was Bishop Dolben of Rochester, a relative by marriage) became the new warden,¹⁸⁹ so Wirking too was left without his fellowship.

Early on, the bishops faced legal restrictions on their use of patronage, partly from the crown's right to present to certain posts where a patron failed to do so, and partly from the Act for Confirming and Restoring of Ministers passed by the Convention Parliament. Thus both archdeaconries had fallen vacant since the breakdown of normal administration in the 1640s. Bishop Bridgeman had made the gesture of nominating his son Henry to Richmond in 1648, but Chester remained unfilled at the Restoration and the right of nomination had passed to the crown. Among the flood of petitions for ecclesiastical preferment addressed to Charles in the summer of 1660 was one from a certain John Carter, who asked to be made archdeacon of Chester in recognition of his sufferings for the royal cause. Carter was duly presented by the King on 19 October, two weeks after Walton's nomination as bishop. There is no evidence whether or not Walton's views were sought, though as it turned out he seems to have approved of Carter, writing in his support a few months later when he petitioned for the degree of D.D. to be conferred, which he had been unable to take during the Protectorate.¹⁹⁰

As an example of the limitations on the bishop under the Act, there is the case of the Vicar of Childwall, John Litherland. According to the clergy Exhibit

¹⁸⁹ Wood, *Athenae*, Vol.IV, col.670.

¹⁹⁰ *CSPD 1660-1661*, p.219; *CSPD 1661-1662*, p.28.

Book from Archbishop Frewen's visitation carried out in the autumn of 1662, Litherland had been ordained priest by Walton in October 1661 and collated to the living in November.¹⁹¹ In fact, Litherland had occupied the parish since 1657 and could not have been legally ejected until and unless he failed to comply with the terms of the Act of Uniformity in 1662, regardless of whether he was the man whom the bishop as patron wanted there.

Compared to their colleagues in some of the more ancient and prestigious sees, the bishops of Chester had little patronage of their own, and did not always have an entirely free hand in the exercise of what they did have. In terms of bringing influence to bear on others who could make crucial appointments within the diocese, theirs was but one voice among many and not always the one that carried most weight, perhaps because of their distance from London and the court, perhaps because they would not be in a position to reciprocate any substantial favour. Nevertheless, they illustrate the range of factors that must have influenced all bishops in the use of powers of patronage, just as their own advancement reflected the shifting patterns of power and influence at court. The desire to advance the deserving, provide for relatives, and return favours each had a part to play. By the standards of the time each of these motives was entirely proper.

¹⁹¹ W.J. Sheils (ed.), *Restoration Exhibit Books and the Northern Clergy, 1662-1664* (York, 1987), p.44.

Church Courts and Administration

It will be clear from the discussion of the bishop's financial resources that these, or the lack of them, impinged directly on the administration of the diocese. As already noted, the diocese was formed from the two archdeaconries of Chester and Richmond, both of which had come into the possession of one man, William Knight, in the 1530s. The archdeacons of Richmond, in particular, had in the middle ages come to hold an extensive jurisdiction largely independent of their nominal masters, the archbishops of York. It was partly to remedy this situation and prevent its recurrence that Henry VIII vested the powers of the two archdeacons in the new bishop, but it also let him transfer to the new see the endowments of the archdeaconries and avoid handing over too much of his own newly-acquired monastic wealth. The effect was to create a huge diocese in a remote area of the country with poor communications where the bishop would depend on a series of *ad hoc* measures to maintain any control over what went on in the parishes and chapelries, measures that would need to be cheap if not self-financing, and this led to a number of peculiarities about the administrative structure of the diocese.

Firstly, the bishops inherited the old archidiaconal courts in both Chester and Richmond. That in Chester became the Consistory Court for the whole diocese,¹⁹² and theoretically had parallel jurisdiction with the court in Richmond for the area north of the Ribble and could hear appeals. In practice, however, it interfered little in the northern archdeaconry, and disputes over jurisdiction could arise when it did;

¹⁹² The courtroom with its seventeenth-century furnishings may still be seen in the south-west corner of the Cathedral. It is marked 't' in Fig.1 on page 44 above.

appeals from Richmond commonly went directly to York.¹⁹³

The bishop could preside over these courts in person,¹⁹⁴ but normally they were the responsibility of his chancellor at Chester and of his commissary at Richmond. Each of these was assisted by other officials: a registrar, an advocate, and an apparitor. Because the usual jurisdiction of archdeacons had been absorbed into that of the bishop, the rural deans acquired a significance in Chester not found elsewhere. They were delegated the power to hold their own courts to deal with local matters of discipline and to prove wills and grant probate for estates valued at under £40. As noted above, Bishop Bridgeman had begun the practice of leasing the deaneries in each archdeaconry *en bloc* to various officials, and this practice was continued at the Restoration. The original motive for this would appear to have been financial since the change was the occasion for charging higher rents on the leases than before. It did not necessarily give the bishop any greater control over what was happening at local level and it cannot now be known whether individual bishops hoped it would when they made leases to relatives, as Wilkins did by leasing the Richmond deaneries to his half-brother Walter Pope and as Cartwright also did by leasing the Chester deaneries jointly to his son John and cousin Thomas Waite. In practice, it probably made no lasting difference to levels of efficiency or of episcopal control, at least after the death of the bishop who made the appointment in

¹⁹³ W.J. Sheils, *Ecclesiastical Cause Papers at York: Files Transmitted on Appeal 1500-1883* (York, 1983); papers for 1660-1688 are listed on pp.26-46. Cheshire RO, EDA 3/2 (Bishop Bridgeman's Act Book) ff.120-122 contains cases from Richmond for the period 1681-83. The Record Office catalogue suggests they may have been recorded to assert the Chancellor's jurisdiction. This was around the time when John Wainwright was standing down as Chancellor of the diocese, to be replaced by his son Thomas in December 1682: EDA 2/3 (Bishops' Register, 1660-1704), ff. 109-111.

¹⁹⁴ In January 1687 Cartwright assured Sancroft that he would 'not be absent one day from the Cathedral prayers, or sitting in the Consistory court' while his health allowed. His diary shows that he presided in the court in person on at least seven occasions during the four months he then spent in

question. These particular men survived in office well into the eighteenth century, but Pope spent most of his time in the south of England and Bishop Gastrell considered Waite to be unprincipled and extortionate, so it would appear that their interest was mainly financial.¹⁹⁵ Virtually all seventeenth-century officials were dependent on fees and other perquisites rather than a salary, and this represented a standing temptation to use their position for financial advantage rather than in the interests of efficiency or fair dealing, so it is no great surprise to find that at Bishop Hall's visitation in 1665, the people of Kirkby chapelry complained of 'Philip Flanner M.A. dean Rural for excessive fees ... taken by him or his under officers', or that two years later a case was being brought against the deputy of the rural dean in Manchester for commuting penances to cash fines and charging excessive fees in probate cases.¹⁹⁶

The procedures of these courts were frequently slow and cumbersome, while their power over those who chose to ignore them could be limited. Archbishop Sheldon in 1664 and Bishop Hall in 1665 both issued directions aimed at tackling the former problem,¹⁹⁷ but about the latter they could do nothing. It arose in part because the church courts could not compel anyone to appear before them, and in part because the severest penalty they could inflict on the laity was excommunication. Though this carried civil disabilities, for the man in the street who was not involved in other litigation and who did not seek public office it made

the diocese. Bishops might also deal with cases personally while in residence at Wigan. Tanner 30 f.180; Cartwright, *Diary*, pp.15-40; Cheshire RO, EDA 2/3 ff.81-82; Addy, *Sin and Society*, p.24.

¹⁹⁵ Gastrell, *Notitia*, part 1, pp.27-31; Cartwright, *Diary* for 29 December 1686, p.22.

¹⁹⁶ Cheshire RO, EDV 1/34 f.21; EDC5 (1667) no.22.

¹⁹⁷ Cheshire RO, EDA 2/3 contains 'Orders & Rules that Proctors may not use delays in expediting of causes' issued from Lambeth on 7 June 1664 (ff.20-21), together with Hall's visitation articles and injunctions for the Consistory Court from September 1665. In the answers to Hall's articles of inquiry it was claimed that the known laws of the realm and the common practice of other consistory courts were followed, and that Sheldon's directions were being observed (ff.23-26).

no more difference than he or his neighbours chose. If they were out of sympathy with the Established Church, be it because they were Protestant dissenters, Catholic recusants, or downright irreligious, this would be very little, particularly in areas where such people formed a substantial proportion of the local population.¹⁹⁸ True, the Presbyterian sympathiser Roger Lowe was extremely alarmed when, as a practical joke, his friends told him that he was to be haled before the Consistory Court, but Thomas Jolly's Independent congregation were made of sterner stuff and in 1662

upon the last Sabbath in the Publique Place, all were satisfied that neither censure in the Bishop's Court, nor Act of Parliament did discharge the Pastor from his office, or any duty thereof. [They] Resolved unanimously to continue in church relation and keep up communion.¹⁹⁹

Edward Hincks of St Oswald's parish in Chester was prosecuted for using obscene language about Bishop Hall, but he had also allegedly declared, 'I care not for the bawdy court' -- the name by which the court was popularly known because of its jurisdiction in cases of sexual morality.²⁰⁰ It is unsurprising that in his letters to Sheldon Hall twice speaks of 'the impotency of jurisdiction'.²⁰¹

The church courts could send a writ *de excommunicato capiendo* to the secular authorities requiring them to imprison the offender until he or she submitted to the court, but such a drastic step with its implicit admission of the court's own ineffectiveness was a last resort. Nor was it only the ecclesiastical authorities who might appeal to the secular courts. From one of Pearson's last letters, it is clear he feared his sentence in a case might be well be overturned, and not for the first time.

¹⁹⁸ In 1668 a speaker in Parliament alleged that excommunication 'was of no force at all with some men, especially those who did willingly absent themselves from church': John Milward, *The Diary of John Milward, Esq.*, ed. by Caroline Robbins (Cambridge, 1938), p.240.

¹⁹⁹ *Diary of Roger Lowe*, p.15; *The Note Book of the Rev. Thomas Jolly, A.D. 1671-1693* and *Extracts from the Church Book of Altham and Wymondhouses, A.D. 1649-1725*, ed. by H. Fishwick (Chetham Society, n.s.33; Manchester, 1894), p.131.

He informed Sancroft that he

pronounced sentence of Deprivation in the Court against Charles Beswick Rector of Radclif for the most scandalous & abominable crimes that ever were heard of in a Clergyman. He by his Proctor immediately made a Protestation of appeale; & Beswick himself despises all our proceedings in confidence of an Act of Grace to relieve him once againe...

The Patron, Sir Ralph Ashton, who prosecuted him, writeth at this time to the Lord Chief justice Jeffreys, to acquaint him with the Case, & to crave his assistance, if there be neede; that such abominable crimes may not be pardon'd againe, as some of them have bin formerly to this Beswick...²⁰²

Before the Civil War, of course, the ordinary church courts had had the backing of the prerogative Court of High Commission, but this had been abolished in 1641 and the same Act of July 1661 that confirmed the ordinary jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts also barred any attempt to revive the High Commission and declared the canons passed by Convocation in 1640 after the dissolution of the Short Parliament to be invalid.²⁰³ Even the Cavalier Parliament wanted limits to the pretensions of the Anglican clergy, just as the Long Parliament had been prepared to endorse only what the Scots dismissed as 'a lame erastian presbytery', and much of its ecclesiastical legislation would need to be enforced by secular magistrates who varied enormously in their zeal for the task and were entirely independent of the bishop.

This should not be taken as meaning that the traditional church courts were universally unpopular, or that any revival of their activities awaited the parliamentary confirmation of their jurisdiction. Indeed, the Chester Consistory Court was one of the first to resume its proceedings in the winter of 1660-61, fully

²⁰⁰ Cheshire RO, EDC5 (1666) no.44.

²⁰¹ Bodl. MS Add C305 ff.60, 64.

²⁰² Tanner 31 f.30.

²⁰³ J.P.Kenyon (ed.), *The Stuart Constitution, 1603-1688: Documents and Commentary* (Cambridge, 1966), pp.375-76.

two years earlier than its northern neighbour in the Carlisle diocese.²⁰⁴ As early as October 1660 there had been two rival candidates for the post of chancellor, for in that month two petitions were addressed to the King by Dr Thomas Byrd asking to be given the appointment in preference to Timothy Baldwin, whom he denounced as a collaborator with the Interregnum regimes. Walton, however, formally appointed Baldwin on 30 November, though the latter (who had also secured the chancellorships of Hereford and Worcester dioceses) resigned after just four months, to be succeeded by John Wainwright. Wainwright and his son Thomas would between them hold office for nearly sixty years.²⁰⁵ The first cases heard by the Court concerned the proving of wills, but these were soon followed by a range of other disputes that were brought before it. Since these were cases brought by the parties involved rather than ones initiated by the Court itself, they testify to a degree of popularity for the ecclesiastical courts within the wider community as well as among lawyers seeking to make a living.²⁰⁶

The diocesan administration was certainly hampered by a fair degree of inefficiency and feuding between various officials. Nowhere is this more graphically illustrated than in the bishops' Act Book. This was a record of official transactions kept by the registry and begins in 1579 with the appointment of Bishop William Chadderton. Naturally there is a break after the fall of Chester to the

²⁰⁴ Hutton, *The Restoration*, p.173.

²⁰⁵ *CSPD 1660-1661*, p.346; Gastrell, *Notitia*, part 1, p.22; Cheshire RO, EDA 2/3 ff.1, 3 & 109-11. There is no evidence of the Wainwrights' relationship with the various bishops of Chester, but Nathaniel Crewe believed there was a problematic relationship in most dioceses since the chancellor, once appointed, was more or less independent though the bishop would bear the blame for his mistakes: Tanner 30 f.68. On Baldwin, see Green, *Re-establishment of the Church*, p.119.

²⁰⁶ These early cases were 'instance' cases, roughly equivalent to civil cases in the secular courts. 'Office' cases, initiated by the court and dealing with matters of discipline, were the equivalent of criminal prosecutions. A Lancashire petition presented to the Long Parliament in 1641 or 1642 had welcomed the end of the courts of Star Chamber and High Commission, but made no

Parliamentarians, but it began to be kept properly again only in 1668 when Walter Pope became Wilkins' registrar. He began his records with a solemn recitation of 'the happy restoration of his Sacred Majesty King Charles the Second to his thrones and Kingdoms' and of the appointments and deaths of Walton, Ferne and Hall. In rather less resounding language he noted the appointment of John Dwight as their secretary, and the whole passage then degenerates into a tirade against Dwight whom he accused of neglect and of failing to pass a whole series of vital documents on to the registry, 'and the said Dwight denyeth that he hath any of these things (though it's most likely he knoweth where they are).' The somewhat hysterical tone is one of self-justification for the small number of deeds of institution and similar documents which are then transcribed for the period before Wilkins' episcopate began.²⁰⁷ Similarly Cartwright, on his arrival in Chester, grumbled to Sancroft about the inadequate records he had inherited, 'nor soe much as the counterparts of many of the leases to be found'. He complained of his predecessor, Pearson:

He hath increased my burden for by minding his Private study more than the Publike concerns of the Church when in health; in the former part of [his time]; & his lingring sicknis in the latter part; & his Officers being intent on nothing but getting money, it is not easy to imagine how much disorder there is, in most parts of the Diocese.²⁰⁸

All this was probably something of an exaggeration. Though Cartwright went on specifically to mention indiscipline among the cathedral clergy, the Beswick case shows Pearson to have been actively involved in discipline issues and the business of his consistory court less than eighteen months before his death. Cartwright's other real complaint was about Pearson's failure to increase the revenue of the see, but on this his own record was no better.

complaint about the diocesan courts in Chester and Richmond: Maltby, *Prayer Book and People*, p.111.

²⁰⁷

Cheshire RO, EDA 1/4 f.137.

The fact that the bishops depended on *commendams* to bolster their own income must have had some effect on the running of the diocese, if only because they were liable to distract the bishop's attention from his main task.²⁰⁹ Certainly, an adverse effect was felt the other way. While Pearson was busily promoting the collection for the redemption of captives and pressing for its use to help the crews of ships from Chester, he was having to defend himself against charges of mismanaging the same funds in his role as archdeacon of Surrey.²¹⁰

Some aspects of the Restoration settlement itself may have hindered the effective oversight and pastoral care of the diocese. Ironically, one of these was the overturning of the Worcester House Declaration, which had offered concessions to the Presbyterians, in favour of the rigid re-imposition of the pre-War structure of the Church. Among the reforms thereby lost was the re-introduction of suffragan bishops. In the vast Chester diocese, with no archdeacons capable of providing an effective level of 'middle management' such an episcopal assistant might have proved invaluable. Also lost in the reaction against all that the Interregnum had stood for were the reforms made at parish level during that time. The reintegration of Holland into Wigan parish has already been noted, and even Liverpool reverted to being a chapelry of Walton until after the Revolution. Many other reforms to the parochial system which had been proposed in the Lancashire Church Survey of 1650 were now not to be implemented until the nineteenth century, while it is worth noting once again that many poor livings lost the supplementary income provided by the Committee for Plundered Ministers, which at the very least must have sapped the

²⁰⁸ Tanner 30 f.180, the words in square brackets are a conjectural reconstruction where the MS is illegible; Tanner 144 f.26.

²⁰⁹ e.g. Lambeth Palace Library MS 2014 f.84 shows Hall involved in a legal case regarding the revenues of his archdeaconry at Canterbury.

morale of men on whom Walton and his successors would rely to rebuild the church at grass-roots level. No really serious pastoral re-organisation took place in the Restoration era. At a City Assembly held on 4 March 1675

a letter of the twentieth of february last from the right reverend father in God John Lord Bishopp of the dyocesse together with a transcript of a bill for uniting of parishes in the citty of Exeter, were read... And it being put to the question whether the parishes in this citty should bee reduced to a lesser number (to wit) those churches which have noe endowment belonging to them bee added to others that have, it was resolved in the negative.²¹¹

Neither Pearson nor any of the other bishops of this period took the initiative in any other attempt to combine small parishes or divide larger ones. It was on the patron's initiative that Worthenbury was separated from Bangor-on-Dee, and the bishops' Register contains several expert legal opinions that were obtained in 1683 regarding not only the manner but even the possibility of such a thing coming about.²¹² The motive was mainly to do with the advowson and its sale, not the better care of the people.

At the start of the period under review, during the episcopate of Bishop Hall, there seem to have been areas where the bishop's personal authority or that of his appointees was being challenged. The evidence invariably comes from the protests of those defending what they conceived to be traditional rights and privileges of the offices or institutions they represented. No doubt everyone was feeling his way and probing the frontiers of his own authority and influence in the recently restored Church, and bishops will have done the same. As early as October 1662 the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral remonstrated with the Bishop that the diocesan chancellor and registrars were encroaching on the jurisdiction of the rural deans and

²¹⁰ Tanner 35 f.8.

²¹¹ Cheshire RO, AB/2/f.180.

²¹² Cheshire RO, EDA 2/3 ff.219-220.

their officials, who were losing income as a result, and Hall was compelled to issue a written confirmation of the rural deans' traditional sphere of jurisdiction.²¹³ Two years later the Chapter of the collegiate church in Manchester questioned the extent of the Bishop's powers as their visitor following certain 'demands' he had made, and successfully maintained their own view of their rights and privileges.²¹⁴ A little later the four existing proctors in the Consistory Court were challenging Hall's attempted admission of another.²¹⁵ Like the first example, this case was probably about money and the profits of office, since the newcomer, Edmund Seare, would take a share of the fees paid by litigants. Like the second, though, it may have arisen from Hall's attempts to assert or extend his own powers, but if so apparently he failed again, for no patent for Seare to be a proctor appears in the bishops' Register.

Chester, it must be concluded, was a hopelessly unwieldy diocese with structures of administrative control and pastoral oversight that were inadequate and outmoded. The limited basic revenue meant those structures were further undermined by financial expedients and the bishop's own attention could be distracted by the needs of his commendams. The dominant mood of the Restoration era was one of reaction against the experiments and upheavals of the Civil War and Interregnum. It was a time for defending traditional rights and not one in which to attempt any major re-adjustment or radical restructuring of the Church. That would have to await the great wave of reform of so many aspects of national life in the

²¹³ Cheshire RO, EDR 6/6 ff.78-81.

²¹⁴ F.R. Raines, *The Rectors of Manchester and the Wardens of the Collegiate Church*, (Chetham Society, n.s.9; Manchester, 1885), p.132; F.R. Raines, *The Fellows of the Collegiate Church of Manchester*, (Chetham Society, n.s.21; Manchester, 1891), p.179. The information derives from the chapter register, but the exact nature of Hall's demands is nowhere specified.

²¹⁵ Sheils, *Cause Papers at York*, p.31.

nineteenth century when the diocese was gradually broken up into the smaller units found today, bishops were freed from many of their political duties, and the transport revolution made travel around their dioceses much easier. For now the bishops of Chester struggled to retrieve and maintain the situation that had existed before the cataclysmic events of the middle decades of the century. In this they were like all their colleagues, but perhaps only those in the Welsh dioceses worked in such difficult areas with yet more slender resources.

§4 THE CHURCH BY LAW ESTABLISHED

Re-establishing the Church and defending it from a repetition of the disaster that had overwhelmed it in the 1640s was no easy task. ‘The bishops were not all of one mind,’ observed Clarendon, in a sentence of unwonted simplicity and brevity.²¹⁶ He was referring specifically to the debates in Convocation on the revision and restoration of the Book of Common Prayer, but his words could be applied to far more than this one issue, and not only to bishops but to all, clergy or laity, concerned with formulating and implementing religious policy. Contemporaries were as divided as later historians as to the root cause of the recent upheavals, and their view of the best way of preventing a recurrence would depend on whether that root cause was understood to be Puritan or Laudian subversion of the Elizabethan Settlement, or to lie in an essentially political dispute in which religious questions had become entwined. To quote Clarendon again on the particular issue of liturgical revision: ‘All men [were] offering such alterations and additions, as were suitable to their own fancies, and the observations which they had made in the time of confusion.’²¹⁷

For some time Charles moved with caution. No bishops were appointed until the Convention Parliament was in recess, and they did not go down to their dioceses until the summer of 1661, by which time the elections to, and first session of, the Cavalier Parliament had made clear the extent of the reaction against all that the Interregnum years represented. The reaction, indeed, was strong enough not merely to provide support for the government’s revival of Anglican institutions but

²¹⁶ Clarendon, *Life*, p.1074.

²¹⁷ *ibid.*

to carry that revival further and faster than Charles or Clarendon thought prudent.

Nor was this swing in the public mood one that left the north-west unaffected.

An illustration of this comes from an Address to the King signed by fifty-nine Lancashire ministers of Puritan sympathies in December 1660. They thanked him for the Worcester House Declaration which had given considerable latitude to Puritan clergy over the manner of conducting worship and promised to modify the way episcopacy operated. But they also complained that 'there are some penal statutes that seem to be in force concerning some of the matters in your Majesty's Declaration' and alleged that some of their number had been 'molested and indicted' under them by local magistrates.²¹⁸ There are certainly instances of this being the case elsewhere in the diocese. Philip Henry, at that time curate of Worthenbury, and two other ministers found themselves being presented at Flint Assizes as early as September 1660 for failing to observe the Elizabethan Act of Uniformity.²¹⁹ In January 1661 a royal proclamation was issued forbidding assemblies for worship other than 'in the publique Parish Churches or Chappells appointed for the same', which the Cheshire justices required ministers to read to their congregations. 'Adam Martindale Vicar of Rostherne for his Contempt in refusing to read this Precept publiquely in Rostherne church was committed to Prison, by Order dated 3i of January, i660, under the handes & seales of Tho: Cholmondely, P. Leicester.'²²⁰ In the Convention Cheshire had been represented by Sir George Booth and Thomas

²¹⁸ The text of 'The Humble Address and Petition of the Ministers of the Gospel in the County oPalatine of Lancaster' is given as Appendix 1 of F. Bate, *The Declaration of Indulgence, 1672; a study in the rise of organised dissent* (Liverpool, 1908), pp.iii-iv.

²¹⁹ Matthew Henry, 'The Life of Mr Philip Henry' in *Complete Works* (Edinburgh, n.d.), Vol.2, p.78; *Diaries and Letters of Philip Henry, M.A. of Broad Oak, Flintshire: A.D. 1631-1696*, ed. by M.H. Lee (London, 1882), pp.81-82.

²²⁰ Cheshire RO, DLT/B11, pp.98-101: Leicester's own transcription of the relevant documents. The year would be 1661 new style. Martindale was released after Clarendon, who was informed of

Mainwaring, both of whom had fought for Parliament in the Civil War. The Cheshire gentry, reflecting the national swing, chose in their place two former cavaliers, Peter Venables and William Brereton, to be their representatives in the new Parliament. Similarly, fewer former supporters of Parliament or the Protectorate were found representing Lancashire or its various boroughs.²²¹

This was the situation when Walton finally travelled north to a generally enthusiastic reception. An eye-witness report of his journey from London and 'gallant reception into his Diocese of Chester' was published in the *Publick Intelligence*:

When he came within six miles of Lichfield, some persons of very good worth met him, who came purposely from this City of Chester, above fifty miles from that place.

The next day, being Sunday, he rested at Lichfield, where his Lordship, and all we that were with him, went to the Chapter House, there to pay to Almighty God the duty of the day...

Next Morning (Monday, September 9) his Lordship went to Stone, but in the midway, betwixt Lichfield and that town, he was met by more persons of quality, who also came from Chester; and the next day almost all the Gentry of the whole County, and the militia both of the County and City came out to meet him. Five troops of horse met him at Nantwich upon Tuesday night; the day following the spiritual militia, the true sons of the Church of England, came to their reverend diocesan upon the road.

The Militia of the City received him at the confines of their liberties with much gladness, and, with many of the aldermen, conducted him into the town; which he no sooner entered but many thousands of people, blessing God for so happy a sight, made many and loud acclamations. Having thus brought him to his Palace, they there saluted him in the language of soldiers with several volleys of shot.

As soon as he had put on his episcopal robes, he hasted to the performance of his devotions in the Choir. When he entered the body of the Church, the Dean (Dr Henry Bridgeman, brother of Lord Chief Justice Bridgeman) and all the members of the Cathedral, habited in their albs, receiving a blessing from his Lordship, sung the *Te Deum*; and so encompassing the Choir in the manner of

the case by Baxter, intervened on his behalf. J.J. Bagley, *Lancashire Diarists: three centuries of Lancashire lives* (Chichester, 1975), p.48.

²²¹ J.S. Morrill, *Cheshire, 1630-1660: County Government & Society during the English Revolution* (Oxford 1974), pp.326-27; B.G. Blackwood, *The Lancashire Gentry and the great Rebellion* (Manchester, 1978), p.76. Booth, of course, had led the Cheshire rising of 1659 and was rewarded with a seat in the House of Lords after 1661. Venables was to be an active persecutor of Dissent.

a procession conveyed him to his chair. After the solemnity was ended with his Lordship pronouncing a benediction, they all waited on him back to his Palace, and committed him to his rest.

The next day the generous Dean gave a noble entertainment to his Lordship and his family, and all the officers and gentry, where with much cheerfulness and great resolution, they professed their affection to the maintenance of episcopal government.²²²

This is obviously the account of a supporter of the restored Church, which is no doubt why it was published in a semi-official news-sheet, but its substantial accuracy is confirmed by the hostile narrative of Edward Burghall, the militantly Presbyterian Vicar of Acton, in his 'Providence Improved', a private record of local happenings in which he believed the hand of God could be detected. Burghall's desperate quest for signs of divine anger at the return of a lord bishop to Cheshire only serves to underline the widespread popular approval at what was going on. Thus he reported that 'two of those Troops of Horse that came to conduct him (Sir George Booth's & Philip Egerton's) fell at Odds about Precedency, & were ready for Blows', but it can be surmised that both coveted the honour of escorting the bishop.²²³ In describing accidents that befell people in the crowds of spectators he incidentally revealed that as Walton came through Tarporley the bells were rung in his honour, that an officer's wife gave him a present, and that a man in Chester congratulated him on his appointment and sought his help in a dispute. These incidents were mentioned by Burghall only because of the accidental injuries those involved suffered; it is reasonable to suppose that there were many similar occurrences that passed off without mishap. The arrival of bishops in their dioceses

²²² Kennet, *Chronicle and Register*, p.537.

²²³ J. Hall (ed.), *Memorials of the Civil War in Cheshire* (LCRS 19; 1889), p.234.

that summer provided an opportunity for people in the provinces to celebrate in the way Londoners had done when Charles entered his capital the year before.²²⁴

A more sombre note was sounded when Burghall gave the last of his 'remarkable passages at the coming down of Bishop Walton to Chester', and it serves as a reminder that he was not alone in his rather jaundiced view of the Bishop's popular reception: 'Dr Winter, a learned & pious Divine, being silenced by him, told him to his Face, He would have no Comfort for so doing, when he must appear before Christ: which was not long after.'²²⁵ There was a degree of hostility to the restored Church of England, even if for the moment it was largely swamped by the tide of reaction in favour of the old order. While George Booth's troop of cavalry contended for the honour of escorting their bishop, their commander had primarily appealed to Presbyterians in his abortive rising of 1659, and subsequently employed the ejected Adam Martindale as his private chaplain and opposed legislation that further restricted dissenters. Not every sign of rejoicing at the restoration, even in its religious aspects, was necessarily a sign of real commitment to the Anglican form of Christianity. It is therefore necessary to look more widely for signs of commitment to or disaffection from the various aspects of the revived ecclesiastical regime in the early 1660s before considering how Walton and his successors tried to secure the Church's position and what help they had in the task.

²²⁴ Boshier, *Restoration Settlement*, pp.233-34, gives contemporary accounts of the enthusiastic receptions of Cosin in Durham and Morley in Worcester. Unlike his colleagues, Sheldon in London was quietly enthroned by proxy.

²²⁵ Hall (ed.), *Memorials of the Civil War*, p.234: For good measure Burghall adds, 'Within a While his Chaplain dyed also.' Winter had in fact been ejected from the Provostship of Trinity College, Dublin, but perhaps believed he should have recovered his former living as Vicar of Cottingham, one of the bishop's impropriations. Walton probably took the same view as Winter's contemporary biographer, that he had resigned the living on going to Ireland rather than having leave of absence granted by his congregation: see 'Winter, Samuel, D.D.' in *DNB*.

The clergy and people of the diocese at the Restoration

Strength of opinion among the laity is especially hard to assess. It has been shown that the national mood in 1660-61 was reflected in the north-west, but how superficial was the professed enthusiasm for 'the maintenance of episcopal government' and was there any concern for the other distinguishing feature of Anglicanism, the Book of Common Prayer? Cheshire and south Lancashire were the only parts of the country where dissatisfaction with the republican government and fear of the sects had actually led to an armed rising in 1659, but the rebels' programme had not included a restoration of either bishops or Prayer Book. On the other hand, the region had produced petitions to Parliament on the eve of the Civil War in which large numbers of people had professed their desire to maintain the traditional forms of church polity and liturgy once the more extreme and arbitrary developments of the Laudian ascendancy had been dealt with. In February 1641 a petition signed by eighty Cheshire knights, baronets and esquires, seventy clergy, four noblemen, and 6000 others had expressed their fear that

the desire was to introduce an absolute innovation of Presbyteriall government, whereby wee who are now governed by the Canon and Civill Lawes, dispensed by twenty-six ordinaries (easily responsall to Parliament for any deviation from the rule of Law), conceive wee should become exposed to the more arbitrary government of a numerous Presbytery.

In the following December a further petition from the county, which claimed half as many signatures again, begged that 'there be admitted no Innovation of Doctrine or Liturgie'.²²⁶ The signatories of the second petition have been scrutinised by Maltby, who concludes that the petitions are evidence of widespread and genuine commitment to Anglicanism and fear of the alternatives at all levels of society. The

²²⁶ The petitions are quoted in R.H. Morris, *Diocesan Histories: Chester* (London, 1895), pp.192-93.

experience of the subsequent two decades is unlikely to have changed these attitudes.²²⁷

For Lancashire, Haigh has claimed, 'There are few hints of a substantial Anglican presence ..., except in the sense of mere passive conformity, until after the Civil War.'²²⁸ Yet in 1642 a petition in support of the Prayer Book was presented to Parliament from the county, and one contemporaneous copy has a note that it had attracted nearly eight thousand signatories.²²⁹ When the Cavaliers had been defeated in the field and the Church of England's fortunes were at their lowest ebb some Lancashire gentry took up the pen in her defence. In 1648 William Farington looked back on a 'sad declension in religion', claiming that

Never did the excellency of episcopal government appear so demonstratively as now. Under their authority we had a church so united, so orderly, so well governed; a religion so well settled; articles so true, sufficient, and confessed; canons so prudent; devotions so regular and constant ...

He condemned those who were 'tempted to neglect the assembling of themselves together in reverend holy offices, and be content with any thing though it be but the husks and acorns of Presbyterian prodigals.' All this was in a letter addressed to one of the then dominant Presbyterian clergy, while three or four years later another Lancashire gentleman, Edward Chisnall, published his *Catholike History* to defend 'the reformed Church of England' from attacks of Roman Catholics eager to exploit its parlous state.²³⁰

²²⁷ Maltby, *Prayer Book and People*, chapter 5 and appendices 2 & 3.

²²⁸ Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance*, p.332.

²²⁹ Maltby, *Prayer Book and People*, p.246.

²³⁰ Farington and Chisnall are discussed in B.G. Blackwood, 'The Catholic and Protestant Gentry of Lancashire during the Civil War Period' *THSLC*, 126 (1977), 1-22 (p.9). Farington's letter is printed in S.M. Farington (ed.), *The Farington Papers* (Chetham Society, vol. xxxix; Manchester, 1856), pp.108-11.

If these were lay people who were articulate enough and felt strongly enough to express their preference for Anglican forms at the time when they were most under threat, they doubtless represented many others, for evidence from various parts of the diocese shows adherence to the old ways remained widespread during the Interregnum. In Burnley, for example, the parish registers show an average of twenty marriages each year down to 1652. During the following five years, when all marriages were conducted before J.P.s, the average fell to just three. With the revival of the old ceremony in 1658 the number immediately rose to eighteen.²³¹ When Sir Daniel Fleming wrote that when he married the daughter of a royalist killed at the battle of Rowton Heath, a private ceremony before a Justice -- 'by virtue of an Act of the rebels' -- was followed 'immediately after & publicly' by 'the Form of Solemnization of Matrimony in the Book of Common Prayer' conducted by his friend Thomas Smith, chaplain to the bride's mother, who was herself a relative of the J.P. who conducted the civil ceremony.²³² Such an arrangement may have been desired by many others, but was probably more difficult for those less affluent and well-connected to organise unless it was through group pressure or a chance opportunity.

The people of Middleton successfully compelled the minister who had been imposed on them by the Bolton classis to make use of the Prayer Book ceremonies in private even though he condemned them in public.²³³ At St John's, Chester, the church-wardens' account books show that the traditional Rogationtide procession, abandoned for several years as a relic of superstition, was spontaneously revived by

²³¹ W. Bennett, *The History of Burnley, part 3: 1650-1850* (Burnley, 1949), p.106.

²³² Daniel Fleming, *Memoirs*, ed. by W.G. Collingwood (Kendal, 1928), p.74.

²³³ R. Halley, *Lancashire: its Puritanism and Nonconformity* (2nd edition - Manchester, 1872), p.307.

the parishioners in 1656 when the minister was away in Ireland and the following year it was observed at Holy Trinity, Chester, as well. The registers also show that the parishioners of St John's had a taste for sequestered clergy as visiting preachers.²³⁴ Presumably, in churches where the minister of his own volition continued to make use of the Prayer Book, as John Oldcroft did at Stretford, he will have had the support of at least some of the congregation.²³⁵ In 1642 the people of Tarporley had shown themselves capable of 'gadding after ceremonies' in a neighbouring parish when their Puritan Vicar refused to use the sign of the cross at baptism.²³⁶ The laity, like Anglican clergy who accepted lectureships in the 1650s, could take a leaf out of the Puritan book when it came to evading the new official line.

There are also examples from the early months of the Restoration, when the shape of the religious settlement was far from certain, of lay people pressing for a revival of Anglicanism. Examples of prosecutions under Elizabethan religious legislation have already been noted. More positively, churchwardens' accounts from Chester show that already in 1660 the people of St Mary's set about finding and restoring their former communion table, while at St Peter's the church linen was washed for the first time in several years.²³⁷

All such evidence is in some measure anecdotal and could be matched by other stories of resistance to the revived Prayer Book liturgy in the 1660s. Nor does

²³⁴ M.J. Crossley Evans, 'The Clergy of the City of Chester, 1630-1672', *JCAHS*, vol.68 (1985),97-123 (pp.116-17).

²³⁵ Halley, *Puritanism and Nonconformity*, p.306.

²³⁶ Richarson, *Puritanism in north-west England*, pp.27-28.

²³⁷ The St Mary's accounts are quoted in Morris, *Chester*, p.200. Extracts from St Peter's accounts are printed in F. Simpson, *A History of the Church of St Peter in Chester* (Chester, 1909) with items for 1660 on p.127.

it take into account those for whom the form of a Protestant establishment was irrelevant, the Roman Catholics on the one hand and the Quakers on the other. Lancashire had long been the stronghold of recusancy in England, and surveys from the period would suggest they numbered about 6000 or 7000, though heavily concentrated in certain areas.²³⁸ The curate at Formby reckoned 'more people goe openlie to Masse than to our Church.'²³⁹ Quakerism, too, had its heartland in the north-west (Swarthmore, George Fox's effective headquarters, being in the north of the diocese) while the tolerant atmosphere of the 1650s had arguably done as much to promote religious apathy as it had the growth of sects. One Lancashire observer claimed in 1655, 'Not one in twenty in many towns go to any place of worship upon the Lord's Day, but sit in their houses.'²⁴⁰ Matthew Robinson, Vicar of Burneston in Catterick Deanery from 1651 to 1682, found 'many poor people rarely attended the public worship' even after the re-imposition of religious uniformity.²⁴¹ There is insufficient evidence to quantify lay feeling and attitudes, but there was undoubtedly a widespread body of opinion that would welcome the restoration of the Church of England in its old form along with the monarchy alongside those who would regret such a development. On turning to look at the clergy, however, the available evidence makes it much easier to give some sort of statistical analysis.

The diocese contained 532 churches and chapels, though the number of clergy may often have been a little lower, partly because of vacancies and pluralities, and partly because the stipends attached to many of the chapelries in particular were

²³⁸ J. Hilton, *Catholic Lancashire: from the Reformation to Renewal, 1559-1991* (Chichester, 1994), p.41. This was about 4% of the population of the county.

²³⁹ Bate, *Declaration of Indulgence*, Appendix 1, p.iv.

²⁴⁰ Fishwick (ed.), *Church Book of Altham and Wymondhouses*, p.128.

²⁴¹ Quoted from Robinson's *Autobiography* in Christopher Hill, *Some Intellectual Consequences of the English Revolution* (London, 1980), p.76.

too poor to attract men to serve remote cures. In Lancashire, for example, the 181 churches and chapels were being served in 1650 by 148 ministers.²⁴²

By the time of Walton's arrival in the diocese the composition of the clerical body had already been modified to some extent by the Act for Settling Ministers passed by the Convention Parliament in the autumn of 1660. While confirming the great majority of clergy in the posts they had held on 25 December 1659 and excluding only Baptists from being nominated to vacant livings, the Act had provided for sequestered royalist clergy who were still alive to be re-instated and intruded minister to be ejected. The proportion of serving clergy who favoured an Anglican restoration must thus have been slightly increased. On the other hand, the Address of the Lancashire Ministers of December 1660 had fifty-nine signatories,²⁴³ indicating that nearly 40% of the clergy in the county favoured the broadly based settlement envisaged in the Breda and Worcester House Declarations. It comes as little surprise to find that half of those who signed the Address were ejected from their livings in August 1662 for failing to comply with the new Act of Uniformity, while at least five of those who retained their posts were never more than partial conformists and none were likely to be enthusiastic promoters of the revived Anglican liturgy.

A vast amount of biographical information on the clergy of the time was collected in the early eighteenth century by the Whig Nonconformist Edmund Calamy and the Anglican Tory John Walker, each trying to prove his own side had been more sinned against than sinning in the series of ejections that took place

²⁴² Fishwick (ed.), *Church Surveys*, pp.1-170.

²⁴³ Bate, *Declaration of Indulgence*, p.iv.

between 1642 and 1662. In the twentieth century these findings were checked against other sources such as administrative records by A.G. Matthews to provide his two comprehensive surveys *Calamy Revised* and *Walker Revised*. Information on the roughly two-thirds of clergy who were university graduates has been gathered in Venn's *Alumni Cantabrigiensis* and Foster's *Alumni Oxoniensis*. The widest cross-section of the Chester diocesan clergy in the early 1660s, however, is provided by the Exhibit Books drawn up during Archbishop Frewen's metropolitanical visitation conducted in the autumn of 1662, just after the Act of Uniformity had come into force. These books, recording the letters of orders, deeds of institution, and evidence of subscription to the oaths and declarations required by law which the clergy had shown the visitors supply much direct information and more which may reasonably be deduced, especially when collated with the other available sources of information.²⁴⁴

The Exhibit Books are not entirely accurate, containing some obvious scribal errors.²⁴⁵ However, these do not seriously undermine their usefulness for the purpose of gaining an overview of the backgrounds and likely attitudes of the clergy of the diocese. More serious is the question of completeness, for very far from all the clergy presented themselves to the Archbishop's officials. Sheils comments:

²⁴⁴ E. Calamy, *An Abridgement of Mr Baxter's History of his Life and Times, with an Account of many others of those worthy ministers who were ejected after the restoration of King Charles II* (London, 1702); E. Calamy, *An Account of the Ministers, Lecturers, Masters and Fellows of Colleges, and Schoolmasters, who were Ejected or Silenced after the Restoration in 1660* (London, 1713); J. Walker, *An Attempt towards recovering an account of the numbers and sufferings of clergy of the Church of England, heads of colleges, fellows, scholars, &c. who were sequester'd, harrass'd, &c. in the late times of the Grand Rebellion* (London, 1714); E. Calamy, *A Continuation of the Account... to which is added, The Church and Dissenters compar'd as to Persecution* (London, 1727); A.G. Matthews, *Calamy Revised* (Oxford, 1934) and *Walker Revised* (Oxford, 1948); J. Venn & J.A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigiensis*, part 1 (Cambridge, 1927); J. Foster, *Alumni Oxoniensis* (Oxford, 1891-92); the clergy exhibit book is transcribed in Sheils, *Restoration Exhibit Books*.

²⁴⁵ e.g. Two men are alleged to have been ordained by Henry, Bishop of Chester, well over a year before Ferne's brief tenure of the see. The reference should probably be to Henry [King], Bishop of Chichester. Sheils, *Exhibit Books*, pp.4 & 5.

‘The volume covers a fraction over 70% of the parishes and chapelries in the dioceses and archdeaconries concerned. This distribution is divided equally throughout the whole area.’²⁴⁶ At first sight this would seem to be too high a proportion for Lancashire. Clergy or parish clerks only presented themselves from 39% of parishes or chapelries. If, however, the churches with no minister in 1650 (which was usually because of inadequate endowment) and those vacant since the ejections of St Bartholomew’s day are discounted, the proportion would be nearer 75%.

Throughout the diocese as a whole at least sixty-eight clergy were ejected in August 1662 and very few of them had been replaced by the time of Frewen’s visitation. It might be supposed that the evidence of the Exhibit Books would be biased against those who remained within but were out of sympathy with the restored Church. Such well-known characters in this category as Robert Heyrick, the Warden of Manchester College, or John Angier of Denton are indeed missing. On the other hand, Isaac Ambrose, who had been ejected as Vicar of Garstang on 29 August, presented himself to the visitors at Kendal on 20 October to show his evidence of ordination in 1626 and institution in 1654, and four days later he appeared before them again at Preston to show his preaching licence from Bishop Bridgeman.²⁴⁷ John Wilkins, the future bishop and at that time Dean of Ripon was another well-known name among those who failed to appear, but he was a non-resident pluralist. His example serves as a reminder of the variety of reasons for which someone may have failed to attend the visitation, and the sample it gives may

²⁴⁶ *ibid.*, Introduction, pp.xii-xiii.

²⁴⁷ *ibid.*, pp.37 & 39; the notice of Ambrose’s deprivation is printed as Appendix III in Bate, *Declaration of Indulgence*, p.vi.

be regarded as fairly representative of the clergy who felt able to live with the final settlement of 1662.

The visitors began work in the Yorkshire deaneries of Chester diocese during the first week of October, they then turned their attention to Carlisle diocese before arriving in Cockermouth to deal with Copeland deanery and then gradually work their way south through Lancashire and Cheshire over the following month.²⁴⁸ Their records list details of 241 clergy serving in the Chester diocese. These ranged from twenty-five men who had been but recently ordained by Bishop Hall to John Tennant, the elderly curate of Dent, who had been ordained deacon in the reign of Elizabeth I (in 1602) and who had suffered sequestration from 1646 to 1660.²⁴⁹ There were twenty-three other clergy who had been restored to livings they had lost during the Interregnum. These men, nearly 10% of the total, had at least a vested interest in maintaining the Restoration settlement in religion, whether the grounds for their earlier deprivation had been primarily religious or political. That same vested interest in upholding the settlement will have been shared by those who eventually replaced the clergy ejected for Nonconformity that summer.

Another significant group with a clear sign of commitment to an episcopal church settlement were those who had sought ordination by a bishop in the period between the outbreak of civil war and the restoration of Charles II. There were no fewer than forty-eight of these in the autumn of 1662, almost one fifth of those who appeared at the visitation. The largest number, thirteen of them, had been ordained

²⁴⁸ They were in Macclesfield deanery on 6 November; the book gives no dates for their subsequent visits to Manchester and Warrington. The shortening days and deteriorating weather of this time of year may also have had something to do with the level of response from clergy.

²⁴⁹ Sheils, *Exhibit Books*, p.34.

by Henry Tilson. Tilson had been Bishop of Elphin in Ireland before the war and held the living of Cumberworth in Yorkshire from 1650 to 1655, so had been easily accessible to men from the north who wanted the sanction of a bishop's spiritual authority for their ministry. All these men, of course, like Tilson himself, had been prepared to minister within the Interregnum church while being critical of it. They clearly preferred episcopacy to Presbyterianism or Congregationalism, and probably preferred the Prayer Book liturgy as well,²⁵⁰ but were not ready to unchurch those with different views. On balance, though, they should definitely be included among those who would have welcomed the revival of Anglicanism and were probably among some of the better clergy. Not only were they sufficiently well-motivated to have sought out a bishop to ordain them when such a step was unnecessary and liable to arouse suspicion, but a slightly higher proportion of them had received a university education than of their colleagues ordained before the war (67-72% compared with 61-66%²⁵¹).

Clergy whose views would make them unhappy with the restored church, even if they were prepared to work within it, are less easy to identify, but they too may have been a significant group, even after the St Bartholomew ejections. A contemporary biography of Nathaniel Heywood relates how he told a parishioner who wished him to remain as Vicar of Ormskirk, 'I would as gladly preach as you

²⁵⁰ Support for an episcopalian polity did not necessarily imply support for the Prayer Book liturgy, but the two so commonly went together that contemporaries frequently used the terms 'episcopal' and 'presbyterian' to refer to styles of worship rather than forms of church order. Edward Richardson, ejected as Dean of Ripon in 1660, denounced 'episcopal devotions' in a manifesto for the abortive rising of 1663: R.L. Greaves, *Deliver Us From Evil: the radical underground in Britain, 1660-1663* (Oxford, 1986), p.178. Roger Lowe wrote in his *Diary* for 25 February 1664 (p.13): 'John Pottr and I began to discourse concerning the manner of God's worship he was for Episcopacie and I for Presbittery.'

²⁵¹ It is harder to make a comparison with those who received episcopal ordination after May 1660, when only 63% can definitely be identified (in Venn or Foster) as university graduates, but the figure could be as high as 79% if all the uncertain identifications are included.

can desire it, if I could do it with a safe conscience in conforming;’ to which the man made reply, ‘Oh! Sir, many a man nowadays makes a great gash in his conscience; cannot you make a little nick in yours?’²⁵² The majority of the Nonconformist or reluctant-conformist clergy in the north-west should be counted as Presbyterians; indeed, Lancashire was the one area outside London where a Presbyterian system had been legally established, even if it had had little success in imposing its authority in practice. In 1647 ‘the ministers of Christ within the Province of London’ had published *A Testimony to the Truth of Jesus Christ* in which they claimed that ‘the presbyterial government is that government which is most agreeable to the mind of Jesus Christ, revealed in scripture,’ and consequently deplored ‘England’s general backwardness to embrace, yea forwardness to oppose this government,’ and condemned the toleration of sects as worse than popery. In the following months this had been supported by *An Attestation to the Testimony* signed by fifty-nine Cheshire clergy and the *Harmonious Consent* of eighty-three Lancashire ministers.²⁵³ Obviously many of these men had died or moved to other parts of the country by the time of the Restoration. Of those remaining in Cheshire in 1660, five were ejected as intruders, though one of these, Henry Newcome, and seven others continued to work under Walton and Ferne until they died or were deprived under the Act of Uniformity. Seven more are duly listed in the Exhibit Book. All of them were older men who had been episcopally ordained before the war, so did not need to repudiate Presbyterian ordination; two (William Holland and William Bridges) are not recorded as having subscribed to the declaration laid down in the Act of Uniformity; two more (James Marbury and Richard Jackson) having been in deacon’s orders since before the war were ordained as priests only after the

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Quoted in Bate, *Declaration of Indulgence*, p.30, from Ashurt’s *Life of Heywood*.
Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, Appendix I, pp.553-55.

Restoration, probably regarding this as a mere formality and continuing to hold the Presbyterian belief in a parity of ministers.²⁵⁴ In Lancashire thirty of those who had signed the *Harmonious Consent* were ejected at the Restoration (though three of these later conformed), two contrived to minister unofficially, and seven appear in the Exhibit Books as conformists. This would still mean 6% of the clergy listed in the book had made an explicit declaration of their Presbyterian preferences and probably remained within the church because of their greater fear of being identified with the sects if they seceded.

No doubt there were more with similar views among those who were only episcopally ordained after the Restoration or who avoided attending the visitation. The most notorious example would be John Angier senior, curate at Denton. Angier had repeatedly been in trouble with the ecclesiastical authorities before the war and had publicly defended Presbyterianism. Though he retained his living (the endowments were worth a mere sixteen shillings a year, so were coveted by no-one) his diary reveals that the Prayer Book was not used in Denton Chapel until 20 March 1664 and then it was by a visiting clergyman, while his friend and biographer, Oliver Heywood, reported that he felt compelled to withdraw from Denton for several weeks because of the Five Mile Act of 1665. In 1672 he even licensed his house as a Nonconformist place of worship.²⁵⁵ Robert Heyrick was a more prominent figure who similarly retained his position in the church without fully conforming. He maintained his position by virtue of having been originally granted his place as settlement of a royal debt to his family (which might have had to be repaid in cash if

²⁵⁴ Sheils, *Exhibit Books*, pp.45(Bridges), 50(Jackson), 53(Marbury), 54(Holland).

²⁵⁵ E. Axon (ed.), *Oliver Heywood's Life of John Angier of Denton together with Angier's Diary and extracts from his An Helpe to Better Hearts* (Chetham Society, n.s.97 - Manchester, 1937), pp.4, 92, & 132.

he were deprived) and having a powerful patron and protector at court in the person of the Earl of Manchester. In the opinion of Bishop Hall, Heyrick remained 'too much with the presbytery, and a supporter of that faction.'²⁵⁶

Overall, it appears that rather more of the clergy in post in late 1662 were active supporters of the restored church polity than opponents of it, but before the ejections of the summer the balance would have lain the other way, with those who preferred a more circumscribed episcopacy and flexible liturgy if such things had to be born with at all. However, for about half of the clergy listed in the Exhibit Books there is no way of telling likely preferences. They probably conformed willingly, but would have done so to almost any ecclesiastical regime. Ninety-six of the clergy who presented themselves at the visitation (40%) had received episcopal ordination only since the return of the King, but many of them had occupied their parishes since the 1650s. The Exhibit Books themselves record six presentations from before May 1660, and there were certainly many others, but several clergy clearly thought it expedient to be instituted afresh by the new authorities rather than flaunt the fact that they had been put in by Cromwell's commissioners, the Triers. Of those ordained after the Restoration, fifty-four were certainly graduates whose biographies can be checked in Venn or Foster. Twenty-four had been serving as ministers in the 1650s, fourteen of them in the same parishes they were in at the time of the visitation; twenty were certainly new to ordained ministry, having only just graduated, and for ten there is insufficient information to be sure. On this basis it may be reckoned that at least half of those ordained by the restored bishops had been quite content with their earlier Presbyterian ordination, even if they were not active

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S. Hibbert, *History of the Foundations in Manchester of Christ's College, Chetham's Hospital and the Free Grammar School* (London, 1834), Vol.I, pp.367-68; Bodl. MS Add C305 f.62.

favourers of a Presbyterian church polity. Of the ninety-six, ten had been ordained by Walton and twenty-five by Hall. The remainder were ordained by some dozen other bishops -- the opportunities for ordination in Chester had necessarily been scarce -- but a significant proportion of these (sixteen, or one sixth) had sought ordination by the Scots bishop Thomas Sydsenf. Sydsenf had a reputation for being ready 'to admit into orders any body that will'²⁵⁷ but his popularity at this time probably derived from his willingness to let the occasion be seen as regularising the position of those previously ordained by a Presbyterian classis rather than as a repudiation of that earlier ordination. Those ordained in this way also avoided taking an oath of canonical obedience to their diocesan bishop.

How did this situation develop? In which direction did individual bishops try to take it? What was the real extent of their influence? Historians have commonly spoken of a Restoration Settlement, as in the title of Bosher's study *The Making of the Restoration Settlement*, but this is something of a misnomer. The Act of Uniformity of 1662 did not, as did the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity of 1559, create a religious framework that would endure for three or more generations. Rather, it marked one important stage in a process which may be seen as extending from 1660 to 1689 before a lasting compromise was reached based on a privileged position for the Church of England and its adherents with a toleration but limited civil rights for those outside it. This process began with the Declaration of Breda and was marked by a series of parliamentary statutes and royal declarations until the passing of the Toleration Act and the loss of the Comprehension Bill in 1689. Each of these measures sought to define what was expected of the clergy and laity of the national church, the degree of dissent that was acceptable in religious observance or

²⁵⁷ Pepys, *Diary* for 9 June 1661, vol.2, pp.117-18.

among the politically active, and the relative influence of the hierarchy, the crown, and the classes represented in Parliament. The measures being taken against some Puritan clergy by lay magistrates even before Walton's consecration or arrival in the diocese are a reminder that a bishop worked within a framework of law that he played only a small part in creating (as a member of the House of Lords) or enforcing (as a man of local influence and authority). With this in mind, the history of these years can now be examined.

Shaping the restored Church: Walton and Ferne

Simon, reviewing the records of the various bishops in Charles II's reign, reckons Walton and Ferne among those who were in office for too short a time to earn a reputation either as persecutors or for trying to coax dissenters back into the fold.²⁵⁸ Swatland, on the other hand, in his list of bishops entitled to sit in the House of Lords during the reign counts neither of them as supporting a more comprehensive church than was established in 1662.²⁵⁹ Both judgements are somewhat anachronistic, in that prior to August 1662 -- by which time Walton and Ferne were both dead -- bishops could do little against Nonconformist clergy who were protected by the Act for Settling Ministers and the Worcester House Declaration and did not need to shield them from an Act which had not been passed or come into force. This is not to say that their attitudes are a complete mystery. Cambridge Nonconformists certainly believed that Ferne as Master of Trinity College and Vice-Chancellor of

²⁵⁸ Simon, *Restoration Episcopate*, pp.140-41.

²⁵⁹ Swatland, *House of Lords*, Appendix 2, pp.275-78.

Cambridge was striving to exclude them entirely. John Ray, one of the fellows of Trinity, wrote in September 1660:

Dr Fern ... came down hither, about the beginning of August, with 14 or 15 of the old gang; who, having constituted, among themselves, a seniority, swore again, and then forsooth admitted all new Fellows... I being then out of towne, and they having information that I should refuse the Common Prayer, surplice, etc., they had well passed me by; but by the mediation of some, they were content to reserve my place, in case I would promise conformity.²⁶⁰

The Worcester House Declaration, issued the following month restricted the liberty of not wearing the surplice to parochial clergy and insisted it be worn in the university chapels. Baxter and other Nonconformists saw this as a ploy to stifle dissent in the next generation of clergy,²⁶¹ but it might be seen as originating with men like Ferne rather than with the King. The Declaration also stated that nobody should be prevented from taking his degrees because he refused to make any religious subscriptions, but in the following year Ferne was accused by another Presbyterian of using his position as Vice-Chancellor to prevent fifty undergraduates 'who could not find in their Consciences to subscribe to the Lawfulness of the Common Prayer, and the Book of Consecration, and to the thirty-nine Articles' from receiving their degrees. Ferne, apparently, based his action on an order of 1616 from James I.²⁶² In May Ferne was elected as prolocutor of the lower house of the southern Convocation and in December as a proxy to represent the lower house of the northern Convocation. On 20 December he headed the list of members of Convocation subscribing the revised Prayer Book, and on 21 February 1662, in one of his few official acts as Bishop of Chester, presented it to the Privy Council which

²⁶⁰ Quoted in John Twigg, *The University of Cambridge and the English Revolution, 1625-1688* (Cambridge, 1990), p.243.

²⁶¹ G. Gould (ed.), *Documents Relating to the Settlement of the Church of England by the Act of Uniformity of 1662* (Oxford, 1862), pp.76 & 96.

²⁶² Kennett, *Register and Chronicle*, p.374; Twigg, *University of Cambridge*, p.245.

then commended it to the House of Lords.²⁶³ Never visiting the diocese in person, Ferne had little or no direct impact on the search for a settlement there, but indirectly he had an influence as one who pressed the demand for conformity to the Prayer Book, supported a revision that gave no greater latitude to those unhappy with aspects of it, and tried to ensure that the clergy of the future would be trained in its ways.

Walton, of course, had rather more time to exert an influence in the diocese itself, though little more than a month of the year for which he was bishop was spent there. Burghall recorded one clash with a deprived minister which has already been noted, but it was provoked by Samuel Winter rather than by Walton himself and did not actually involve a benefice in the diocese.²⁶⁴ From other incidents, it would seem that Walton strove to be conciliatory, but was unlikely to have yielded on any of the major points at issue between Anglican and Puritan. As the editor of the Polyglot Bible he had a natural affinity and respect for William Cooke, the Presbyterian minister at St Michael's, Chester, who was also a scholar of oriental languages; but while expressing a wish to help Cooke, he insisted that the latter would eventually have to conform.²⁶⁵ At the Savoy Conference he spoke up in support of Baxter as one who had opposed the deprivation of royalist clergy solely for their political opinions. On the other hand, he made no effort to argue for concessions to Nonconformists. 'Bishop Walton of Chester was there once or twice, and spake but what is before recited, that I know of,' recalled Baxter.²⁶⁶

²⁶³ Kennett, *Register and Chronicle*, pp.434, 448, 564, 584 &632.

²⁶⁴ See above, p.101.

²⁶⁵ W. Urwick (ed.), *Historical Sketches of Nonconformity in the County Palatine of Chester* (London, 1864), p.22. Cooke had been a prominent supporter of Booth's rising in 1659.

At the same time the elections were being held for Convocation. Edward Bowles, a Puritan minister in York, wrote to Baxter a couple of days after the opening of the northern Convocation there:

I heare you are chosen of the Convocation at London... I wish you may doe good of it. Wee have also chosen here or rather they for few that are calld Presbyterians concerned themselves in the Election and the choice is accordingly. But our Clarkes only say Amen to Canterbury province so that's not much materiall. Wee had also a Latin sermon on Wednesday from Dr. Samwayes Parson of Bedall and Wath. It was good Latin and pretty indifferently managed he did pronounce the Non-conformists *peccatores* [sinners].²⁶⁷

Sheldon in fact exercised his right as bishop of London to 'excuse' Baxter from attending as one of his diocese' representatives. There is no evidence that Walton tried to interfere in the Chester election, so presumably he approved of Samwayes and the views he held. If there was widespread abstention by northern Presbyterians, the outcome of the elections there were more likely to be acceptable to the hierarchy. These abstentions were not the result of indifference. A letter from Henry Newcome in Manchester written to Baxter a few days before that by Bowles shows a keen interest in the progress of the Savoy Conference. Baxter himself believed many clergy with Presbyterian sympathies felt unable to participate in the elections because this would appear to endorse the existing structure of church government.²⁶⁸ The main business before Convocation, of course, was liturgical revision. Walton joined the other northern bishops in urging the clergy meeting in York to nominate Ferne and others as their proxies in this matter since the King and Parliament were wanting matters brought to a speedy conclusion. Although Ferne was not an official delegate at the Savoy Conference he nevertheless attended some of the sessions and wrote about it in a letter within a few days of its closure. This

²⁶⁶ *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, part II, pp.340 & 357.

²⁶⁷ *CCRB*, pp.14-15. Bedale was in Catterick deanery and Samwayes was the representative of the lower clergy for Chester diocese. Bowles had declined an offer of the Deanery of York.

shows some exasperation at Baxter's proposals for an entire alternative liturgy rather than revision of the existing Prayer Book, and at the way Convocation was prevented from beginning this more limited but practical task until the conference was over.²⁶⁹ There is nothing to indicate Walton's own views about how the Prayer Book should be modified, if at all, but the Convocation in York acceded to the bishops' request only after passing a resolution proposed by Samways that, among other things, there should be a declaration that any changes did not imply earlier Puritan separation had been justified. The resolution also requested better provision for the observance of the Ember Days. Both these requests were met in the revised Prayer Book, but not the further demand that clergy should be required to warn former Parliamentarians who had profited from their Civil War victory that though the King might have passed an Act of Indemnity and Oblivion, God still required true repentance shown by giving up their ill-gotten gains.²⁷⁰ This, though, gives an indication of how embittered and partisan some preaching in the diocese must have been.

Though serving as bishops at a time when the final form of the restored Church was still uncertain, Walton and Ferne can both be seen as working for a complete return to its traditional structures and forms of worship. It was noted above how swiftly the church courts in the diocese were revived,²⁷¹ and this owed something to Walton's rapid appointment of a chancellor and other essential personnel. Negatively, there is no evidence that Walton was acting in the spirit of the Worcester House Declaration in his diocese (for example, by acting in

²⁶⁸ CCRB, p.14; *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, part II, p.333.

²⁶⁹ The letter is extensively quoted in Bosher, *Restoration Settlement*, pp.226-31.

²⁷⁰ W.D. Macray (ed.), *Records of the Northern Convocation* (Surtees Society, 113 - Durham, 1907), pp.315-17 & 319-23. Similar views were still being expressed by Cartwright, the future bishop, twenty years later: Thomas Cartwright, *A Sermon preached at Holy-Rood House, January 30, 168½, before Her Highness the Lady Anne* (Edinburgh, 1682), p.27.

²⁷¹ See above, p.90.

consultation with senior clergy in matters such as appointments or discipline²⁷²) any more than Ferne was doing in Cambridge. John Carter seems to have held a visitation of parts of his archdeaconry of Chester even before Walton came to the diocese in the late summer of 1661.²⁷³ Since the archdeacons in Chester diocese had no inherent authority of their own but only what the bishop chose to delegate to them, this must have been done with Walton's approval and is a further indication of his desire to quickly re-establish the traditional organs of diocesan administration, even if he himself was detained in London and had to act through his various officials. The Consistory Court papers for 1661 show it was already dealing with disputes over who was the lawful minister of a church, or if particular clergy were properly qualified.²⁷⁴ It was Bishop Hall, however, who had to deal with the situation created by the Act of Uniformity which finally excluded Nonconformists from the Church's ministry. This meant that he had also to test the effectiveness of the disciplinary machinery which his predecessors had re-established to a far greater extent than they had done.

²⁷² According to Green only Gauden of Exeter and Reynolds of Norwich did: *Re-establishment of the Church of England*, p.127. Half the clergy with whom the bishop consulted were supposed to be from the parishes and half from the cathedral chapter. At Chester an unusually high proportion of the prebends had survived the Interregnum - five out of six. Only one of these, John Lee, was a strong Presbyterian sympathiser and he held aloof from the Chapter, and the others are unlikely to have pressed Walton to act in accordance with the Declaration. The vacant place had gone to Thomas Mallory, a son of the pre-war Dean. Five members of the Mallory family had died fighting for Charles I. Burne, *Chester Cathedral*, pp.128-29.

²⁷³ There are extant *Articles to be enquired of ... Chester* (Yorr [sic], 1660) and records of the presentments from Woodchurch parish on the Wirral: Cheshire RO, EDV 5/6.

²⁷⁴ Cheshire RO, EDC5 (1661) 10 & 12 deal with rival claims to the curacies of Heswall and Hargreave; EDC5 (1661) 17 & 18 are cases challenging the qualifications of Robert Constantine of Oldham and Thomas Jolly of Altham as well as their Nonconformity. The cases against Thomas Trafford, the alleged intruder at Heswall, and against Constantine were office cases brought by the diocesan authorities.

From the Act of Uniformity to the Declaration of Indulgence: Hall and Wilkins

The Act of Uniformity received the royal assent on 19 May, just eight days after Hall's consecration as a bishop and came into force on 24 August, only three and a half weeks after his arrival in the diocese. According to the *Mercurius Publicus* Hall, like Walton before him, was also welcomed by large numbers of gentry, citizens and clergy when he first entered his cathedral city, but the report speaks of all being 'in decent order' rather than conveying the sense of spontaneous enthusiasm of ten months earlier. There could, however, be a quite mundane explanation for this -- the weather. According to Burghall, the Almighty again expressed his displeasure at the appearance of a bishop in Chester, this time by means of 'great Thunder & lightnings & a great Storm of Hail', so the more low key welcome is not necessarily evidence of declining support for the restored episcopate.²⁷⁵ Meanwhile there was considerable uncertainty as to whether the Act of Uniformity was indeed the last word in the quest for a religious settlement. The letters to Baxter from Newcome and Bowles show northern Nonconformists placed their hopes less on Parliament than the King and less on Convocation than on the Savoy Conference that Charles had summoned. The surviving portion of Newcome's diary, which covers this period, and also Martindale's autobiography show them still hoping in August for an eleventh-hour reprieve through the King's attempt to mitigate the severity of the Act by obtaining Parliament's approval for his dispensing individual ministers from its provisions.²⁷⁶ When these hopes were dashed, Bishop Hall was held partly to blame, as appears from Newcome's diary for 4 September:

²⁷⁵ Kennet, *Register and Chronicle*, p.736; .Hall (ed.), *Memorials of the Civil War*, p.234.
²⁷⁶ Newcome, *Diary* for 23 August 1662, pp.113-14; Martindale, *Life*, p.167.

Met my Cozen Moseley by whom I understand the certainty of the Bishops hasty rigor towards us. And by a letter this night I understand that his letter to the Bishop of London [Sheldon] was of most importance towards the crossing of the indulgence.²⁷⁷

That Hall fully supported the Act and its condemnation of the Solemn League and Covenant which Presbyterians held so dear was put beyond doubt a week later when Newcome received

An account ... of a sermon preached by our diocesan the last Lord's day on Exodus xxxii, 20, and compared the covenant to the calfe, and this open renunciation of it to be drinkeinge of the powder of the calfe.²⁷⁸

The Bishop certainly dealt with the question of Presbyterian ordinations in the spirit of this sermon, and gave ample evidence of 'hasty rigor', though it will appear that negative views of Hall as no more than a vengeful persecutor are too one-sided.²⁷⁹

Such views have been especially influenced by Martindale's autobiography, one of the first such manuscript works to be printed in the nineteenth century and still an important source for the ecclesiastical history of the region. Martindale was deeply embittered by his experiences at the Restoration, and saw himself as the victim of a conspiracy between Bishop Hall and Peter Venables, the patron of the parish of Rostherne where he was vicar. 'What favour could I expect (or rather what violent proceedings might I not expect) from a prelate that preached so violently against us, was so brisk with *significa[vi]ts*, and was linked so fast in interest to the patron...?' he asked in self-justification.²⁸⁰ There is no doubt that Venables wanted to present his chaplain to the living, and it is also true that Martindale did not receive a copy of the revised Book of Common Prayer to which he had to swear his

²⁷⁷ Newcome, *Diary*, p.119. Sheldon had vigorously opposed the proposed power of indulgence in the Privy Council.

²⁷⁸ *ibid.* p.121.

²⁷⁹ e.g. in Halley, *Lancashire Puritanism and Nonconformity*.

²⁸⁰ Martindale, *Life*, p.165.

‘unfeigned assent and consent’ until St Bartholomew’s day itself, but the rhetorical question just quoted follows an admission that he did not even seek a period of grace from Hall such as the law allowed. In fact, he had chosen to preach a farewell sermon a week earlier and had never even considered seeking episcopal ordination as so many other clergy first ordained during the Interregnum had done. Hall’s sentence of deprivation, which Martindale transcribed in his autobiography, was issued on 29 August. The sentence against Isaac Ambrose, which is also extant, bears the same date.²⁸¹ This would suggest that even if Hall was aware of who the likely Nonconformists in his diocese were, and was prepared to move against them swiftly, he did not act until he could have been reliably informed of their failure either to conform by the 24 August deadline or claim some lawful impediment for not having done so. After that date, however, he was resolute. Only a month later, on 27 September, Newcome recorded in his diary:

I certainly understood this day that I was ascited [sent a summons] to Chester as my deare Brethren Mr Harison, Mr Walker, Mr Holland, Mr Leigh. Mine it seemes is for repeatinge in my family...²⁸²

Hall was clearly determined to stamp out all forms of Nonconformist ministry, even when they took as a starting point the sermon of a conforming cleric, and so nip potential conventicles in the bud. In the autobiography that Newcome compiled near the end of his life from his diaries, he contrasted this incident with the aftermath of the Conventicle Act of 1664:

It was a wonder of mercy that I should so soon be disturbed for nothing & after when there was an Act too to further rage this way, we should never of all the three years & a half after be either ascited or molested.²⁸³

²⁸¹ Martindale, *Life*, pp.165-66; Bate, *Declaration of Indulgence*, Appendix III, p.vi.

²⁸² Newcome, *Diary*, p.126.

²⁸³ Quoted in a footnote to the passage in the diary.

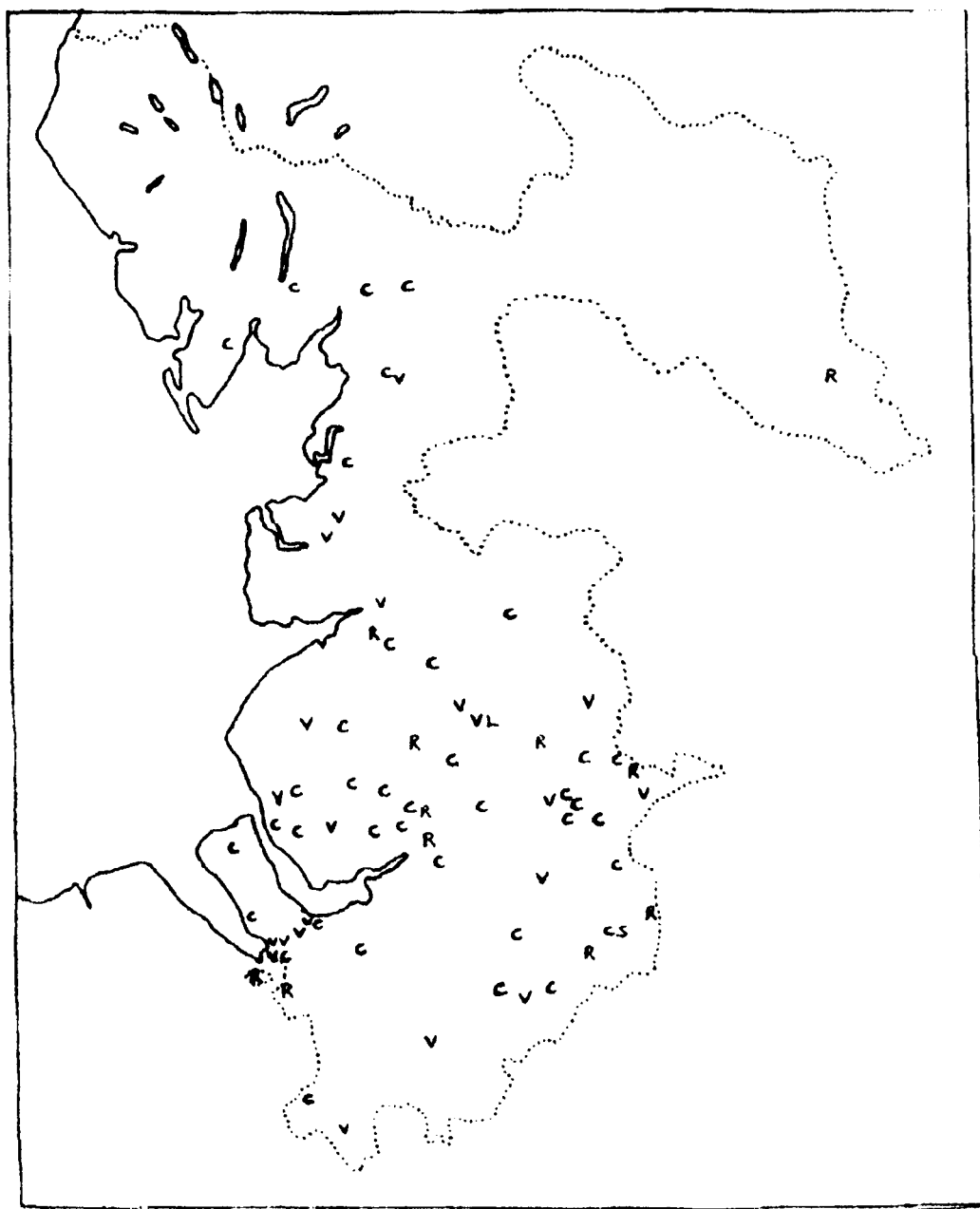
The spasmodic nature of the persecution, both from time to time and from place to place, will be discussed later. First, consideration needs to be given to the pattern of ejections, and then to the process of filling the many vacancies.

The authorities had little idea how many clergy would quit. *Mercurius Publicus* listed Cheshire among counties in which there were thought to be very few Nonconformists, while another contemporary claimed, 'The Lancashire ministers talk little less than treason, and none intend to conform.'²⁸⁴ Across the diocese as a whole the number of clergy ejected was probably sixty-eight, along with a couple of schoolmasters. Their geographical distribution is shown in Map 2. Nonconformist clergy were still heavily concentrated in the same areas which Richardson found gave most evidence of Puritan activity prior to 1642: the central and eastern parts of the arch-deaconry of Chester and around Liverpool and Chester itself. This is virtually a mirror image of the distribution of clergy who had sought episcopal ordination during the Interregnum and who are listed in the Exhibit Book from Archbishop Frewen's visitation. Twenty-seven of these men were working in the archdeaconry of Richmond and only nineteen in that of Chester. The implication is that Puritan attitudes had made little headway among either the clergy or those laymen who held the right of presentation to livings during the two decades between the outbreak of war and the Act of Uniformity. One reason for this was probably the same as Baxter observed in other parts of the country:

When the Parliament purged the ministry,... they left in near one half the ministers, that were not good enough to do much service, nor bad enough to be cast out as utterly intolerable: these were a company of poor weak preachers, that had no great skill in divinity nor zeal for godliness.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁴ Green, *Re-establishment of the Church*, pp.152-53; *CSPD 1661-62*, p.441.
²⁸⁵ *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, p.95.

Map 2: Ejections for non-conformity in 1662.



Key:- C = Curate L = Lecturer R = Rector
 S = Schoolmaster V = Vicar

Many laity, in any case, saw 'zeal for godliness' as divisive of their communities, so that even in areas of relative strength the Presbyterians had been unable to impose their idea of godly discipline.²⁸⁶ When the churchwardens of Altham presented Thomas Jolly in the Consistory Court in 1661 they complained

²⁸⁶ John Spurr, *English Puritanism, 1603-1689* (London, 1998), pp.124-25.

That he neglects the duty of a minister in administration of both the sacraments, refusing the Lord's supper to all the parishioners except three families, and the baptizing of our children; that he refuseth to read the Book of Common Prayer; that he refuseth to bury our dead, enforcing us to put them into the grave without any decency of Christian burial or ceremony.²⁸⁷

Bishop Hall, then, was faced with an exodus of dissenting clergy which left some areas particularly short of ministers, but the extent of which had been impossible to predict. While many patrons or parishioners were doubtless glad to see the back of their old minister and may have been ready with a replacement, as Venables was at Rostherne, other parishioners would have remained loyal to a devoted pastor, thus providing the nucleus of a conventicle. Likewise, some patrons may have been reluctant to replace a minister they too respected, while others were likely to experience difficulty attracting a conformist to a remote or poorly endowed living when clergy found themselves in the rare position of being able to pick and choose where to go.

The fullest account of the removal and replacement of Nonconformist clergy on a national scale is given by Green, who provides a detailed analysis of the process of filling the vacancies that were created by the Act of Uniformity in the dioceses of London, Canterbury, Winchester and Exeter. In presenting his figures, Green notes that in some instances it is not possible to know how promptly the Nonconformist left or was driven out, and that in others a reader may have been appointed as a stop-gap measure until a new incumbent was instituted. He also comments that 'in a few instances, above all chapelries and perpetual curacies, we do not know the exact date on which an ejected minister's replacement was appointed.'²⁸⁸ For Chester diocese,

²⁸⁷ Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, p.301.

²⁸⁸ Green, *Re-establishment of the Church*, p.156 and chapter 8, *passim*.

however, this is a rather more significant problem, for thirty-nine out of the sixty-eight clergy ejected there in 1662 were curates. It has been possible to establish dates by which successors were appointed for only 18% of these compared with 90% of the incumbents.²⁸⁹ Nevertheless, the available figures are sufficient to show that Chester was noticeably slower in replacing Nonconformists than the four southern dioceses. A month after St Bartholomew's day 25% of the vacancies in Winchester had been filled, followed by London on 23%, Exeter on 22% and Canterbury on 16%, but with Chester trailing at just 7%. After six months only 3% of vacancies in Canterbury remained to be filled, though elsewhere the figure was considerably higher: 16% in Exeter, 17% in both Winchester and London, but 27% in Chester. To some extent this slow rate of replacement may have been a particular problem in the north. It would appear that 30% of places were unfilled after six months in the diocese of York, the one which for geographical extent and mix of relatively accessible and more remote areas is most nearly comparable with Chester. As far as location may have been a factor, it should be noted that at least twelve of the twenty-four vacant incumbencies in Chester archdeaconry had been filled by the end of 1662, but only one of the five in the more remote Richmond archdeaconry.

The evidence certainly indicates that the better-endowed parishes and chapelries were easier to fill. Those with a new minister by Christmas 1662 had an average nominal value for taxation purposes of £26, while those filled later had an average value of only £18. If attention is confined to the parishes in Lancashire for which the survey made in the 1650s provides an assessment of their actual

²⁸⁹ Information has come mainly from Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, but also from Sheils (ed.), *Restoration Exhibit Books*; W. Bell Jones, *A History of the Parish of Hawarden* (unpublished work in Flintshire RO, 1943), vol.1, p.58; Bagley, *Lancashire Diarists*, p.49. For the following percentage figures, only the known incumbencies and curacies are included.

contemporary value, plus one or two others for which this is also known, the contrast is even more marked. Parishes occupied by the end of 1662 had an average real value of £118, those filled later of only £45; and if Warrington (worth £153 and filled in mid-January) is excluded this figure drops right down to £27.²⁹⁰ Calamy recorded that Timothy Smith, the curate at Longridge, 'did not conform, and yet preached frequently in the chapel afterwards, for it being an obscure place with a small salary, there was no great striving for it'.²⁹¹

A poor endowment could be a problem, even where the bishop himself was responsible for finding a new minister. In the four dioceses considered by Green, all livings in the gift of the diocesan bishop or other churchmen had been filled within six months, yet Hall failed to find a Vicar for Backford or a curate for St Michael's in Chester until March 1664. Both posts had a stipend of just £30 a year -- by no means the poorest livings, but as one contemporary writer asked:

Which way is it possible that a man shall be able to maintain perhaps eight or ten in his family, with £20 or £30 per annum, without an intolerable dependence upon his parish; and without committing himself to such vileness as will, in all likelihood, render him contemptible to his people?²⁹²

Bishops who needed several *commendams* to bolster their own income did not have the kind of patronage that would enable them to take a lead in making speedy appointments, and it has already been noted that (despite claims to the contrary) Walton and Hall did nothing to augment the stipends of vicars or curates of their impropriations.²⁹³

²⁹⁰ *A Book of Valuations of All the Ecclesiastical Preferments in England and Wales* (London, 1680); Fishwick (ed.), *Church Surveys*.

²⁹¹ Quoted in Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, p.449.

²⁹² J. Eachard, *The Grounds and Occasions of the Contempt of the Clergy* (London, 1670), pp.92-93.

Financial considerations might also determine exactly when a new minister took possession of his cure. Edward Burghall recorded how his successor

took Possession of the Church Nov: 10, the Day before Martinmas, when all the Tythe Calves in Wrenbury & Acton (which was the Substance of my Means) were due to mee & were wont to be gathered at that Time: & yet I had but one-Half of the Calves in Acton: he had all the Rest, tho' I had taken the Pains the whole Year before.²⁹⁴

Though Burghall had preached his farewell sermon on St Bartholomew's day, he clearly did not vacate the vicarage for several weeks. What happened to provide for the spiritual and pastoral needs of the parish through September and October is not clear.

Even when a vacancy was quickly filled, it might not mean immediate and effective care of the parish concerned. In at least two cases the new incumbent was a pluralist. On 20 September Alexander Featherstone was appointed to St John's in Chester although he was already rector of Wallasey, while in the same month what was possibly the wealthiest living in the diocese, Wigan, went to the bishop himself. Though Hall and his successors appointed curates to care for the day to day needs of Wigan and regularly preached when in residence there, the parish could command only a fraction of their attention. Featherstone appears to have been an unsatisfactory priest to have had charge of one parish, let alone two, and in 1665 was presented at Hall's Primary Visitation as 'a person of scandalous life and conversation'.²⁹⁵

The attitude adopted by individual patrons or local magistrates was also important. A patron's wish to avoid a lengthy interregnum could be decisive in

²⁹³ See above, pp.71-72.

²⁹⁴ Hall (ed.), *Memorials of the Civil War*, p.236.

speedy replacement. Thus the only two clergy to be replaced during August 1662 were Robert Fogg, the curate of Bangor-is-y-coed, whom the restored Rector, Dean Henry Bridgeman, had been trying to remove for some time, and Robert Hunter of Knutsford, where it appears the inhabitants themselves chose the minister.²⁹⁶ Martindale, whom Peter Venables was so eager to replace, recalled how within two days of the sentence of deprivation 'the intended new vicar would have been viewing the house as one that was sure to have it, had not some friends dissuaded him from it, as yet too early'. Despite this attempt to avoid unseemly haste, Venables had his man installed in the vicarage just a month later.²⁹⁷ In contrast to this are cases where an ejected Nonconformist could be deliberately obstructive, or perhaps delay his departure with the connivance of local men of influence. According to Calamy, Peter Atkinson, curate of Ellet Chapel in Cockerham parish 'had so much favour with the gentry that he preached quietly at his chapel for a considerable time after the Act of Uniformity took place'.²⁹⁸ The younger John Angier was officially instituted as Vicar of Deane in October 1662, but in the following year had to take action against his predecessor in the Consistory Court to evict him from the parsonage house and glebe land.²⁹⁹ Elsewhere the change of personnel must have had only a slight impact on the life of a parish. Though Randal Guest was officially ejected as Rector of Pulford in August 1662, his handwriting appears in the parish registers until the end of the following year by which time a new rector had been instituted -- none other than his own son George.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁵ Cheshire RO, EDV 1/34.

²⁹⁶ Presumably, the people did not want to be without a pastor and Hunter may have been unpopular.

²⁹⁷ Martindale, *Life*, p.164; Bagley, *Lancashire Diarists*, p.49.

²⁹⁸ Quoted in Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, p.18.

²⁹⁹ Cheshire RO, EDC5 (1663) 21.

³⁰⁰ Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, p.238.

The process of ejection and replacement was a protracted one, and it would hardly be surprising if many clergy remained unsure of their position. On 20 November 1662, for example, William Moore petitioned Sheldon for 'presentment' to the living at Whalley. Moore had in fact been vicar there for eight years, but was fearful that his title might be challenged despite the Act of 1660 for confirming ministers, that he had preached a loyal sermon in Chester on the occasion of the coronation, that he had represented Ferne at his installation as bishop, was a chaplain to the Earl of Derby, the Lord Lieutenant, and, finally, that he held Frewen's licence to preach throughout the northern province.³⁰¹ Bishop Hall's influence on the process was felt in two ways: his hard-line attitude towards those in Presbyterian orders and his encouragement of firm action by both ecclesiastical and civil authorities against conventicles. Something of both of these approaches has been seen in the passages quoted from Newcome's diary.³⁰² They can now be looked at in a little more detail, along with his more positive policies aimed at winning dissidents back to the Church.

The Act of Uniformity required all clergy to have been ordained by a bishop, to give their 'unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained and prescribed in and by the book entitled the Book of Common Prayer ... together with ... the form and manner of making, ordaining and consecrating of Bishops, Priests and Deacons', to acknowledge the unlawfulness of taking up arms against the king 'upon any pretence whatsoever', and to repudiate the Solemn League and Covenant.³⁰³ This was a blanket condemnation of all that the clergy who had

³⁰¹ HMC, *Kenyon*, p.70. Moore's fears may have been increased by the decision of the Scottish Parliament that all clergy required episcopal institution: Hutton, *Charles II*, p.179.

³⁰² See above, p.120.

³⁰³ Kenyon, *Stuart Constitution*, pp.378-382.

actively supported Parliament in the Civil War had stood for. Yet these requirements were not quite so clear cut as might at first appear, and those involved in their enforcement, be they bishops or secular magistrates, exercised a certain latitude in how narrowly they interpreted the Act's provisions. George Hall was not only a bishop himself, but the son of a bishop. Though his father's devotional writings were prized by many Puritans, the defence of *Episcopacie by Divine Right*, published in 1640, was not. It had aroused fierce controversy at the time with a typical seventeenth century exchange of tracts for and against in which the contributions became increasingly bitter and personal in tone. The disputants on the anti-episcopal side had been five ministers, who wrote under the corporate pen-name of Smectymnuus (made up from the initial letters of their names), and John Milton. The last contribution from Hall's side was *A Modest Confutation*, published anonymously in February 1642. When Milton answered this in his *Apology for Smectymnuus*, he believed that one of the Joseph Hall's sons (Robert, Edward, or George) could have been the author of the *Confutation*, though this has never been proved.³⁰⁴ Nevertheless, the tract reveals the resentment felt in Hall's circle at the treatment he had received. The controversy had not been forgotten more than twenty years later, despite the momentous events that had filled that interval. A poem entitled *The Loyal Nonconformist* was answered in verses that contained these lines:

Stand up, Smectymnuus and bear thy trial;
Thy monstrous title puts me to a pause:
Was ever any Non-conformist Loyal?
Loves he the King who disobeys his laws?³⁰⁵

Presumably the author, though writing in 1665, expected the reference to Smectymnuus to be instantly recognised. It is highly improbable that George Hall

³⁰⁴ Huntley, *Joseph Hall*, chapter 9.

would have forgotten the bitter controversy, and this would explain the ferocity with which he denounced the Covenant and all those who had taken it. It would also explain why he took a harder line than any of his episcopal colleagues over the matter of re-ordination of clergy who had previously been ordained by a presbytery, for his father's book had been occasioned by the upheavals in the Scottish Church after 1637 and was aimed especially at those who abandoned episcopacy when orthodox Protestant bishops could be had.

Both the Act and the revised ordinal insisted on episcopal ordination, but did not specify how this was to be understood where someone was already in presbyterian orders. No conscientious Presbyterian could accept an interpretation of this second rite which invalidated his previous ministry, and a few bishops appear to have recognised their scruples by offering a conditional re-ordination.³⁰⁶ Hall, however, allowed no ambiguity. Calamy says of Thomas Porter, who did finally conform: 'The Bishop of Chester would not give him orders, till he solemnly renounced his former ordination from his father and the classis.'³⁰⁷ Indeed, in at least some cases Hall demanded that renunciation in writing, something no other bishop is known to have done. Matthew Henry gave the text of the declaration his father was expected to subscribe, describing his former orders as a pretence and declaring that he renounced them in a spirit of penitence.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁵ Quoted in Bate, *Declaration of Indulgence*, p.51.

³⁰⁶ Bramhall, Archbishop of Armagh, and Cosin, Bishop of Durham are examples. Cosin was following the precept of his earliest patron, Bishop Overall: A.J. Mason, *The Church of England and Episcopacy* (Cambridge, 1914), pp.79, 217-18 & 232-33.

³⁰⁷ Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, p.396.

³⁰⁸ M. Henry, 'Life of Philip Henry', p.659.

In contrast with this, Hall appears to have been readier to try and win back into the fold those who would accept episcopal ordination. Thomas Risley was a fellow of Pembroke College, Oxford, who had a long struggle with his conscience. By St Bartholomew's day he had not conformed, but in the following November he finally accepted ordination at the hands of Bishop Reynolds of Norwich, the one 'Presbyterian' to have accepted Charles II's offer of a bishopric. However, Risley still felt unable to meet the other requirements for holding office in the restored Church and retired to the family home near Warrington. There, says Calamy, 'he had ... good offers made him by Dr Hall and Dr Sherlock [Rector] of Winwick, but a regard to conscience hindered his acceptance.'³⁰⁹ In 1666 Hall was prepared to licence Lawrence Fogg as curate of Prestwich. Fogg had first been ordained by the ministers of the Cambridgeshire Association in 1658 and at the Restoration was Rector of Hawarden. He re-introduced the Prayer Book as early as 1660 and was episcopally ordained the following year, but resigned in July 1662 rather than take the oaths prescribed in the Act of Uniformity. He did this four years later only after receiving a satisfactory explanation of their import from none other than Lord Chief Justice Bridgeman, Hall's patron at Wigan.³¹⁰ It is not improbable that Hall played some part in this. Both instances show that he took a more favourable attitude to those whose main hesitation concerned some aspect of the restored Church other than episcopacy. Here he seems to bear out Clarendon's contention that churchmen's attitudes reflected 'their own fancies, and the observations which they had made in the time of confusion'.³¹¹

³⁰⁹ Quoted in B. Nightingale, *Lancashire Nonconformity: the churches of Wigan, Warrington, St Helens, &c.* (Manchester, 1892), pp.254-55.

³¹⁰ Burne, *Chester Cathedral*, p.142.

³¹¹ See above, p.95.

Hall was one of those who not only saw the use made of lectureships by Puritans to subvert the Church in the 1630s, but also made a similar use of them to maintain some elements of Anglicanism within the Cromwellian church. As bishop, his practice shows that he felt orthodox preaching and lectureships ought to be encouraged and that he should lead by example. A few days after his death, Matthew Anderton, a Chester alderman, wrote to Sir Joseph Williamson, 'Hee is very much lamented, having been a most excellent & constant preacher & very Charitable.'³¹² From Roger Lowe's diary it is clear that Hall preached regularly at Wigan as well as Chester.³¹³ The full text of only one sermon by Hall from this period is extant, one preached before the House of Lords in 1666 in the wake of the plague and fire in London, but the subjects of two others are known: the attack on the Covenant reported to Newcome, and one heard by Lowe 'against atheisticalness'.³¹⁴ Only one of these three was devoted to attacking the Nonconformists; they were not even singled out for special criticism among the sinners who had provoked God's wrath against London. Lowe, a Presbyterian sympathiser, would not have gone repeatedly to hear Hall if his sermons had lacked the positive content that the Bishop hoped would keep people loyal to the restored church.

Hall did not only rely on his own efforts in this field. According to a letter written to Archbishop Sancroft in 1682 by Zachary Cawdrey, Rector of Barthomley:

In the year 1664 Dr Hall then Lord Bishop of Chester sett up a week day Lecture at Tarvin foure miles from Chester: His Successor Bishop Wilkins continued it & added two more one at Namptwich another at Knutsford. Our present Lord Bishop Dr Pierson approved and countenanced them; and justly,

³¹² Public RO, SP29/245.

³¹³ Lowe, *Diary*, entries for 24 July 1664, 28 July, 13 August and 20 August 1666, and 7 April 1667.

³¹⁴ George Hall, *A Fast Sermon preached to the Lords in the High Court of Parliament Assembled on the Day of Solemn Humiliation for the continuing Pestilence* (London, 1666); Newcome, *Diary*, p.121; Lowe, *Diary*, p.30.

for they brought & kept many in the communion of the Church who otherwise had passed over into the hands of separation. The authorised Church service was constantly read before the Lectures & generally it was read intirely without variation or omission, and the attendants were a sort of serious pious Gentlemen & Communalty who kept in the Communion of the Church of England.³¹⁵

Cawdrey himself, who had been sequestered in 1647 for using the Prayer Book and restored to his parish in 1660, was one of the lecturers.³¹⁶ His letter was occasioned by a dispute over the lectures in the highly charged partisan atmosphere of the Exclusion Crisis and subsequent Tory reaction, but there is no reason to doubt his account of their origins and purpose, or that the initiative had come from Hall himself. It was in line with the approach adopted by other bishops, and not only his successors at Chester. For example, Bishop Sparrow of Exeter reported to Sheldon within a few months of his appointment:

I have in several churches set up Catechising my self, and all the Clergy in the City joyne with me, and they persuade me it will have good successe, divers of the moderate Presbyterians seem well satisfied, and the Loial party more.³¹⁷

If Sparrow and Hall both gained a reputation as persecutors, they clearly accepted in practice as well as in theory the argument advanced by various writers that the purpose of coercion was to enable people to hear and ultimately freely choose the truth.³¹⁸

Equally clearly, however, the slow rate at which ejected clergy were replaced meant that it was some time before all had orthodox conformist ministers in their parish churches, while different clergy and parish officials will have handled the re-

³¹⁵ Tanner 34 f.26.

³¹⁶ Robert Speake (ed.), *Barthomley: the story of an estate village* (Keele, 1995), pp.83-86. On his return Cawdrey brought with him furnishings for the pulpit and altar.

³¹⁷ Quoted in A. Brockett, *Non-conformity in Exeter, 1650-1875* (Manchester, 1962), p.31.

³¹⁸ Mark Goldie, 'The Theory of Religious Intolerance in Restoration England', in Ole Peter Grell, Jonathan I. Israel & Nicholas Tyacke (eds), *From Persecution to Toleration: the Glorious Revolution and Religion in England* (Oxford, 1991), pp.331-368. Goldie sums up the argument: 'If coercion is to be a pastoral tool, it is vital that force be married with edification and argument.' p.350.

introduction of the Prayer Book liturgy in varying ways depending on their own preferences and what they felt their parishioners would accept. This may be illustrated from the insights into life at Manchester Collegiate Church provided by Newcome's diary. As early as 25 May 1662, while Warden Heyrick was still undecided about whether or not to conform, 'Mr Johnson read the common prayer at large ... and in the afternoon ... baptized, & of 8 or 9 children crossed all but 3 which he spared with much adoe.' Even on 5 October, six weeks after the Act of Uniformity came into force, Newcome seemed surprised to hear 'that Mr Browne most audatiously would adventure to administer the sacrament, and that he threatened to read the rubricke for kneeleinge'. In the following April, however, 'seeing an opportunity', he did receive the sacrament, and it may be taken that Kenyon and Jackson, the clergy officiating that day, did not insist on kneeling reception as the Prayer Book required.³¹⁹

Roger Lowe's diary shows these things from a layman's point of view. One Sunday in 1668 the curate at Ashton publicly rebuked him for not standing at the Gospel reading. While it shows the boldness of some clergy in insisting on the full ceremonial conformity of the laity, it may also be inferred that such a demand had not been made during the previous five years covered by the diary. Lowe's reaction was to threaten to worship in future at a conventicle. Because the entry comes at the end of the period of personal activities covered by the diary it is not known whether the threat was carried out, but it shows how the efforts of an over-zealous clergyman could be counter-productive.³²⁰

³¹⁹ Newcome, *Diary*, pp. 88-89, 128-129, & 174.

³²⁰ Lowe, *Diary*, p.35.

Churchwardens' accounts and visitation records also reveal the erratic pace at which full Anglican worship was restored. The accounts for Childwall show a Prayer Book was purchased in 1661, but some of the items required by its rubrics only appeared much later. A surplice was not provided until 1663, a fair linen cloth for the altar not until 1665. Prestbury, by contrast, did not pay 'for a new Common Prayer Booke' until 1664, but since they had paid for a surplice and hood for the minister two years earlier, and even for an organ -- so loathed by many Puritans -- in 1663, it is more than probable that an emended copy of the pre-war Prayer Book had been in use up until then or that a revised one had been donated at no cost to the parish. At Wilmslow, where the restored Rector had shown his eagerness to return to 'normality' in 1660 by 'writing a coppie of the Regester booke unto the Bishops court for three years last past', there is no mention in the accounts of either surplice or Prayer Book, but he is hardly likely to have done without them. More probably he had kept them hidden away during the years when he was sequestered. At Whalley it was necessary only to wash a surplice in 1660, not make one. Undoubtedly leadership by the clergy or pressure from outside could both make a difference. Fogg's claim to have met the requirements of the Prayer Book since 1660 despite resigning his living in 1662 is supported by the accounts for Hawarden which show that a Prayer Book and the Book of Homilies, a 'carpet' and linen cloth for the communion table, a surplice and hood for the Rector, and a new stone font and cover had all been bought by 1661. In Clitheroe, by contrast, little seems to have happened until a visit from the apparitor in connection with the Archbishop's visitation in the autumn of 1662. Only then do the accounts list payments for a surplice, two Prayer Books, the Book of Homilies, a table of degrees, 'other necessaries belonging to the Church', and 'for washing communion table cloaths'.

Indeed, the apparitor seems to have been especially active and received a number of payments for himself, perhaps exploiting the fears of local officials.³²¹

Even by 1665, when Hall conducted his own primary visitation, there is evidence from many parishes of inadequate compliance with the standards and requirements of the revived Anglican worship. In Farndon, just south of Chester, Frewen's visitors in 1662 had found no font, surplice, cloth for the altar, Prayer Book or communion plate.³²² In 1665 Hall's visitors likewise found that 'a cover for the font, a carpet for the communion table, a common prayer booke for the clerke, a booke of canons, a table of degrees, the 39 articles, a pap[er] booke for the names of strange preachers', and other requirements were all lacking. At Shotwick, on the Wirral, the wardens were presented

for want of a Carpett for the Communion table, alsoe a Cup C[h]alice, and Flagon for the Sacrament, which were lost in the late Warrs; alsoe a booke of homilies, booke of Canons, table of degrees, a blacke herse cloth, and lockes to the chests.

When they came to Huyton, east of Liverpool, there were complaints 'against John Lowe clerk Vicar there for not reading divine service as he ought but omits & sleights the prayers as his pleasure is to the great displeasure of the parishioners'.

According to the records of the correction court,

He submitted himself & promised reformation & was warned to read the publique prayers etc. according to the Rubricks & soe certifie under the hands of the Churchwardens that presented him & of the best of the Parish at Chester 27th March next.³²³

³²¹ Childwall accounts at All Saints' Church, Childwall; Wilmslow and Prestbury accounts in J. Earwaker, *East Cheshire, Past and Present* (London, 1877), Vol.1, pp.101-17 & Vol.2, pp.224-30; Hawarden accounts, Flintshire RO, P/28/1/42; Whalley and Clitheroe accounts, Lancashire RO, PR8 & PR1962.

³²² A.T. Thacker, 'Chester Diocesan Records and the Local Historian', *THSLC*, 130 (1981), 149-85 (p.171).

³²³ Visitation Correction Book 1665, Chester RO, EDV 1/34.

If in this case the church courts were successful in enforcing conformity (and a clergyman could, as a last resort, be threatened with deprivation) they more often than not proved an ineffective stick to use alongside the carrots of lectures or a welcome back to the fold, as Hall soon discovered, while lay magistrates were frequently reluctant to use the more effective weapons which were in their hands.

The weakness of the church courts in dealing with those who had scant regard for their authority was discussed in the previous chapter.³²⁴ It is unsurprising that they were used less and less in the fight against dissent. Using the Chester Consistory Court papers as a guide to trends,³²⁵ it appears the highest number of prosecutions brought by the church authorities (office cases) was in 1663. They represent twelve of the 126 cases from that year for which papers survive. Eleven of the twelve concerned issues of uniformity and church discipline, as did a further four office-promoted cases initially brought by private individuals. Neither as a total nor as a proportion was this figure equalled again, and between 1669 and 1672 none of the office cases concerned narrowly religious rather than moral offences. This might be put down to the more relaxed attitude to dissent of Wilkins, who was bishop by then, but this would be a mistake. The same trend has been found in other dioceses:

Perhaps 75% of office business in the courts of Oxford and Peterborough dioceses in the early 1660s concerned religious observance. Yet from about 1667, the impetus began to fade in Oxford, where business declined by 40%, and in Peterborough the courts increasingly concerned themselves with moral regulation.³²⁶

³²⁴ Above, pp.89-90.

³²⁵ Above, p.3.

³²⁶ Spurr, *Restoration Church*, p.45, summarising M.D.W. Jones, *The Ecclesiastical Courts before and after the Civil War: the office jurisdiction in the dioceses of Oxford and Peterborough* (unpublished Oxford B.Litt. thesis, 1977), pp.47-50.

While in 1665 Hall feared that his attendance at the Oxford session of Parliament would delay the correction business arising from his recent visitation, picturing himself 'like a George on Horseback, with a sword lifted up', less than two years later he confessed, 'I am still sick of several incorrigible nonconformists who continue to preach in many parts of my diocese,' and complained that 'the impotency of jurisdiction makes any activity useless'.³²⁷ In his last letter to Sheldon, written on 4 August 1668, he frankly admitted to doing little more than going through the motions of imposing ecclesiastical discipline:

My removall shortly to Cheshire is not my choice, but punishment... While I am conscious of the impotency of jurisdiction, and so can be content to do as little as may be, I yet see an absolute need of shewing my-selfe not asleep to all matters of censure, and as they use to say, the smell of a catt in the house, doth keep away some mice, though destruction be done upon none, so possibly some little service may be done, by my appearing neare our busy nonconformists.³²⁸

Hall did go to Oxford in the autumn of 1665 and served on the committee of the House of Lords which recommended the passing of the Five Mile Act, just as he had supported the Conventicle Act in the previous year.³²⁹ His letters show him becoming increasingly aware both of the need for the support of the secular magistrate and of the fact that the magistrate often proved a broken reed. The same letter that complained of the 'incorrigible ejected nonconformists' bewailed the fact that they continued to be active 'notwithstanding my certificates' because even 'the most active justices' were 'so remisse and languid in putting laws in execution'.³³⁰ Again, it was not only bishops of Chester who faced this problem. Sparrow

³²⁷ Bodl. MS Add C305 ff.52, 58 & 60; letters written on 16 September 1665, and 5 April and 31 May 1667.

³²⁸ Bodl. MS Add C305 f.64.

³²⁹ *LJ*, vol.XI, pp.613, 620, 695, 697; Simon, *Restoration Episcopate*, p.132.

³³⁰ Bodl. MS Add C305 f.58.

complained that in Devon ‘the Justices were spirit faln, & no man almost durst appear against the Factions’.³³¹

That the various repressive statutes were applied in a sporadic and patchy manner has been shown by Anthony Fletcher³³² and can be demonstrated for the north-west from various sources other than Hall’s letters. Fletcher looked at evidence from several counties, including Westmorland and Lancashire, and the pattern he found there would appear to be true of Cheshire as well. His conclusion was that persecuting zeal depended almost entirely on a small number of individual magistrates such as Sir Daniel Fleming in Westmorland and Sir Roger Bradshaigh in Lancashire. Certainly both these men despaired of their associates no less than the bishop did. In April 1664, for example, Fleming wrote to Sir Henry Bennett giving an account of legal proceedings against some Quakers in Kendal, and commenting on how it had been necessary ‘to spurr on the magistrates of this towne to this good work’.³³³ On another occasion he wrote of ‘a great conventicle of Independents, etc. to the number ... of two hundred’, and continued:

So soon as I heard thereof, I drew a warrant against so many of them as wee could discover and got the mayor of Kendall and some other country justices to joyne me therein, though some of our fellow justices refused, which gives some encouragement here unto the fanatickes.³³⁴

The Lancashire justices, in their assize week meetings at the Sheriff’s Table do not even appear to have discussed the enforcement of religious legislation until 1669, and then only in response to pressure from the King.

³³¹ Quoted in Brockett, *Nonconformity in Exeter*, pp.30-31.

³³² Anthony Fletcher, ‘The enforcement of the Conventicle Acts, 1664-1679’ in W.J. Sheils (ed.), *Studies in Church History, 21: Persecution and Toleration* (Oxford, 1984), pp.235-46. He deals with the north-western counties on pp.237-40.

³³³ HMC, *Le Fleming*, p.33.

³³⁴ *ibid.* p.68.

This Table doth therefore in obedience to his Majesties command unanimously agree and resolve that to the utmost of their powers they will hinder and suppress all such meetings and conventicles and put the Laws in strict execution against the persons occasioneing, comeing to or frequenting such unlawful assemblies and meetings. And bring the offenders to condigne punishment. And compel an obedience to the said act. And duly punish all such as shall offend against that Lawe.³³⁵

This was not a universal sentiment among the county elite, however. Martindale, who had been ministering in two of the chapelries where Bradshaigh had been most concerned with nonconformist activity, recalled how

Even such high Episcopall men as Dr Howarth and Mr Moseley, justices of the peace, were engaged to me, and paid me nobly to teach in their houses, though they knew I preached publicly in two neighbour chappells, Gorton and Birch.³³⁶

Sir Richard Hoghton had written to Bradshaigh at the end of 1665 to urge greater leniency in dealing with Thomas Jolly whose treatment under the Five Mile Act he thought to be 'without a precedent', and in the debates on the Second Conventicle Act in the House of Commons Bradshaigh, who was eagerly promoting the bill, was opposed by another Lancashire member, Colonel Birch, who 'excused the meetings of such conscientious people, as living farre from the other church, their chappells not being provided; and particualrly instanced several chappells in Manchester parish'.³³⁷ One Manchester chapelry which was provided with a minister was Denton. This was John Angier senior, yet he never conformed. 'It's true,' wrote his friend and biographer Oliver Heywood, 'warrants were now and then issued out, to apprehend Mr Angier, but the worst men had no heart to meddle with him, but profest they would not see him for a hundred pound.'³³⁸ Bradshaigh's letter book provides other instances of local officials such as parish constables turning a blind

³³⁵ B.W. Quintrell (ed.), *Proceedings of the Lancashire Justices of the Peace at the Sheriff's Table during Assize Week, 1578-1694* (LCRS, vol.121 - 1981), p.126.

³³⁶ Martindale, *Life*, p.193. Martindale earned a living teaching mathematics.

³³⁷ 'Sir Roger Bradshaigh's Letter Book', *THSLC*, 63 (1911), 120-73 (pp.151 & 156).

³³⁸ Heywood, *Life of John Angier*, p.83.

eye to nonconformist activity,³³⁹ so it comes as little surprise to find that he so eagerly supported a law which would enable a single J.P. to act alone and imposed stiff penalties on recalcitrant magistrates or lesser officials.

In Cheshire the prime mover of persecution was Sir Geoffrey Shakerley, the governor of Chester Castle, of whom one letter writer in 1670 admitted that 'little would be done here under the Act if it were not for him' and complained that the local justices 'refused to commit 2 notorious Nonconformists, although declining to take the oath of allegiance'.³⁴⁰ More than once Shakerley himself complained that 'the city swarms with cardinal Nonconformists, and they are so linked with the magistracy by alliance, that it is very difficult to bring them to punishment'.³⁴¹ A final instance of the problems caused by the reluctance of many to become involved in the policy of persecution may be taken from east Cheshire where Sir Peter Leicester complained in his charge to the grand jury in 1668:

There is not a man I can heare of as yet, that ever made known any of these preachers or their private meetings to any Justice of Peace in authority accordinge to their duty, to the end they might be punished; though there be hundreds that knew it.³⁴²

Hall's correspondence reveals ways in which he tried to circumvent these problems. His earliest surviving letter, dated 31 March 1663, is one addressed to the Mayor of Chester and sent with the *significavit* against the ejected ministers of St Oswald's and St Michael's for unlawful preaching.

³³⁹ 'Bradshaigh's Letter Book', pp.157-58.

³⁴⁰ *CSPD 1670*, pp.278-79.

³⁴¹ *CSPD 1666-67*, p.12; see also *CSPD 1664-65*, p.461. Even Shakerley, though, apparently became tired of the activities of over-zealous informers, telling them that a particular conventicle only need be denounced every few months, not each time it met: Craig W. Horle, *The Quakers and the English Legal System, 1660-1688* (Philadelphia, 1988), p.258.

³⁴² Sir Peter Leicester, *Charges to the Grand Jury at Quarter Sessions, 1660-1677*, ed. by E.M. Halcrow (Chetham Society, 3rd series, vol.5 - Manchester, 1953), p.47.

Mr Mayor

Being inform'd of unlawful conventicular Assemblies held in the City of Chester, to which Mr Harrison and Mr Cooke have adventur'd to preach, I have done my duty in Certifying you thereof, not doubting but you will doe your part, that such as owne not the Authority of the Statute [the Act of Uniformity] may feele the penalty of it. The preachers are the only persons I can take notice of, who must have you proceed against the other persons unlawfully assembled, as the Law directs, assuring my selfe that you will endeavour the preservation of the peace by a due execution of the Lawes, unto which all sober minded people submit as doth

Sir
your affectionate friend
& Servant
Geo. Cestriens³⁴³

This letter perhaps already suggests a nagging doubt that the city authorities would not act as Hall felt they should, and certainly acknowledges his dependence on the co-operation of the secular power. Subsequent letters show the same frustration with them as Shakerley expressed. By 1665 he was trying to put pressure on the city officials through Clarendon and expressed his obligation to the Lord Chancellor for a letter he had sent them. 'Since that letter to the Maior of Chester,' he told Sheldon, 'some of their cheefs have been with mee, and with a faire colour put upon their former remissnesse, have promised better activity for the future.' The same letter, however, indicates that Hall had also tried to get the local justices to adopt a more robust attitude by nominating John Wainwright, his diocesan chancellor, for the Commission of the Peace. Clarendon had turned the suggestion down, much to Hall's annoyance, who could not see why the Lord Chancellor had objected to someone he did not know.³⁴⁴ The later letters from Hall and Shakerley already quoted show the effect of Clarendon's rebuke to the city magistrates to have soon worn off, and there is no evidence of any further efforts by Hall or his successors to

³⁴³ Chester RO, ML/3/390. Cooke was the minister Walton had hoped to persuade to conform, and whom Hall had so far failed to replace (above, pp. 116, 127).

³⁴⁴ Bodl. MS Add C305 f.52; letter of 16 September 1665. Bodl. MS Add C305 f.68 is an undated letter, clearly written just before the one quoted. In it he is still hopeful that his nominations

influence the composition of the local bench. Hall lapsed into an attitude of weary resignation, and Wilkins deprecated persecution.

None of this means that the persecution was any less real to its victims, but its proponents were not only hampered by a lack of local co-operation, but by other pre-occupations, faults in the framing of statutes, and by the erratic course of government policy.

Churchmen felt themselves beset by enemies on every side. At no time in the seventeenth century did the fear of popery disappear, and for many it remained a greater danger than Protestant dissent. The scale of the problem of Roman Catholic recusancy came home to Hall in the wake of his visitation in 1665, and is referred to in one the letters in which he also talked about his efforts to get the city authorities to take tougher action against Nonconformists.

I finde in most parts of my diocese a numerous list of papist recusants, scarce any presentment but brings a new troop of them, not without a complaint from many parishes, that they have been often presented but in vaine. I confesse I am at a stand, and know not in the present condition of Times, whether I should take cognizance of them, or no. It may be imprudent to undertake a prosecution of them to no issue, and it is great scandall and offence to let them alone, though I wish the Sectaryes were but as quiet, and as yet inoffensive, as they are. To make pecuniary mulcts upon them is base. To proceed by church-censures is vaine, to leave them unobserved, is to multiply them.³⁴⁵

Hall had, in fact, published an anti-popish satire, *The Triumphs of Rome over Despised Protestancie*, in 1655. The work had been provoked by Roman Catholic exploitation of Protestant divisions and was republished in 1667, demonstrating his renewed awareness of the need to protect the Church of England's back while it dealt with Protestant dissent. The letter to Sheldon also implies that while he hoped the

to the Commission will be accepted and reports how the Mayor 'is handsomely shaken up' by Clarendon's letter and reminded of his duty towards the King, the Church, and the Bishop himself.

latter might yet be driven back into the fold of the Church, recusancy was a problem which he could hope only to keep confined and controlled. A couple of years later, while complaining about the lack of action by magistrates against Nonconformists, he reported: 'A great number [of recusants] 1500 were presented at the Assize in Lancaster but whether with purpose of any further prosecution I know not.'³⁴⁶ If this shows the familiar doubt about effective or resolute action being taken, it also indicates that there was much more willing co-operation with measures aimed at popery, and other evidence points in the same direction. In 1667 Fleming reported that in Cumberland and Westmorland 'most of the magistrates are very hot against them [popish recusants]',³⁴⁷ while in the period from 1661 to 1678 (i.e. before the hysteria over the Popish Plot) there were 998 presentments of Roman Catholics at Cheshire Quarter Sessions for non-attendance at church. This contrasts with a figure of 332 Quakers and a mere 179 others. This last figure may include further Roman Catholics or Quakers not clearly identified in the records, and also some who were indifferent to all religion, as well as Protestant Dissenters.³⁴⁸

Irreligion and superstition were, indeed, other foes with which churchmen had to contend. In a report on the January 1666 Quarter Sessions, Bradshaigh not only dealt with three Presbyterians arrested at a conventicle and the case of a Prayer Book 'stolen out of Bolton Church, torn in pieces, and thrown in the street channel', but also 'examined four reputed witches'.³⁴⁹ Cases of alleged witchcraft also came

³⁴⁵ Bodl. MS Add C305 f.68.

³⁴⁶ Bodl. MS Add C305 f.58.

³⁴⁷ *CSPD 1666-67*, p.461.

³⁴⁸ P.J. Challinor, 'Restoration and Exclusion in the County of Cheshire', *BJRL*, 64 (1982), 360-85 (p.362).

³⁴⁹ *CSPD 1665-66*, p.225.

before the Consistory Court, and in 1662 one where a horse was brought into Ratcliffe church for a parody of the rites of baptism and communion.³⁵⁰

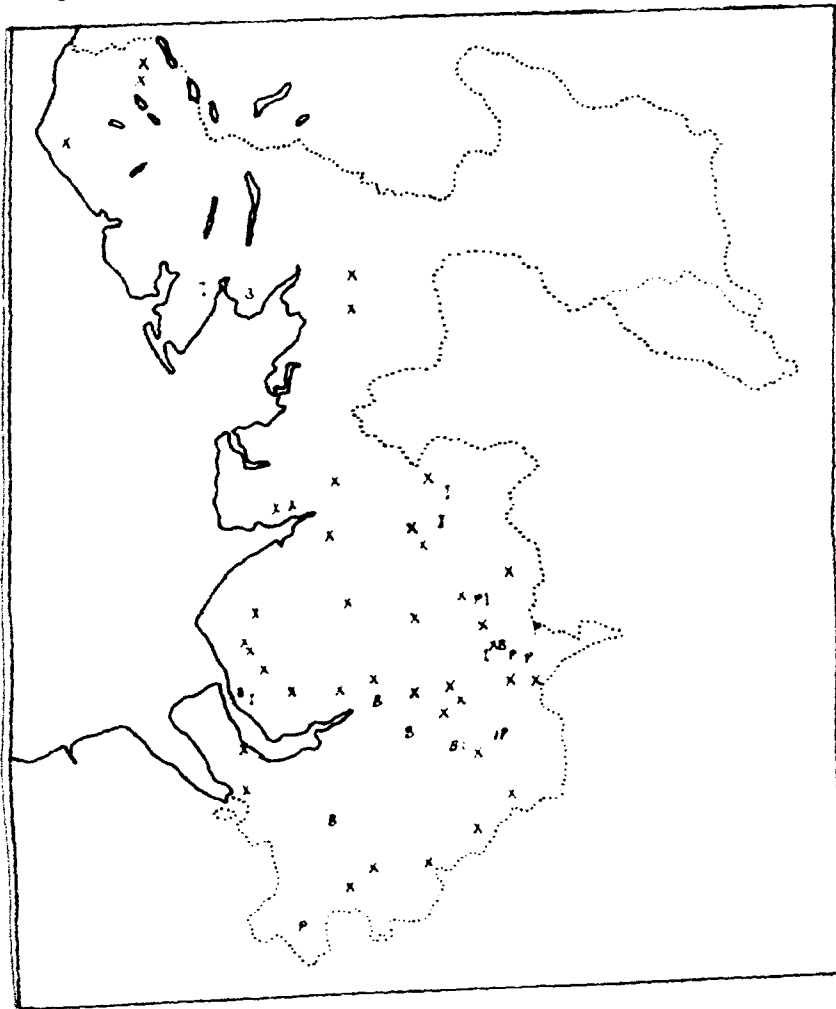
These other challenges not only distracted the attention of the authorities away from the struggle with Protestant Nonconformity, they could affect it in other ways as well. Protestant unity against common foes was a recurring theme of writing and preaching in this period, Anglicans and Dissenters each urging the other to overcome their scruples and work together. In 1669 Sheldon ordered a survey of conventicles in every parish, and the responses are extant for the whole of Chester diocese except Boroughbridge deanery in Yorkshire.³⁵¹ Very broadly, these show that where Roman Catholics and Quakers were most numerous other types of conventicle were rare, as can be seen in maps 3-6. In part this may have been because mainstream Protestants in these areas felt that in-fighting was a luxury they could not afford. To take a particular case, Peter Aspinwall was one of the few signatories to the Address of the Lancashire Ministers to the King of December 1660 who subsequently conformed. He had described himself as 'Minister of formby where now more people goe openlie to Masse then to our Church'.³⁵² For him, there was a greater foe to be faced than bishops or Prayer Book.

³⁵⁰ Cheshire RO, EDC5 (1661) no.38, (1662) nos.5a & 63, (1668) no.5; Addy, *Sin and Society*, pp.66-67 & 124-26.

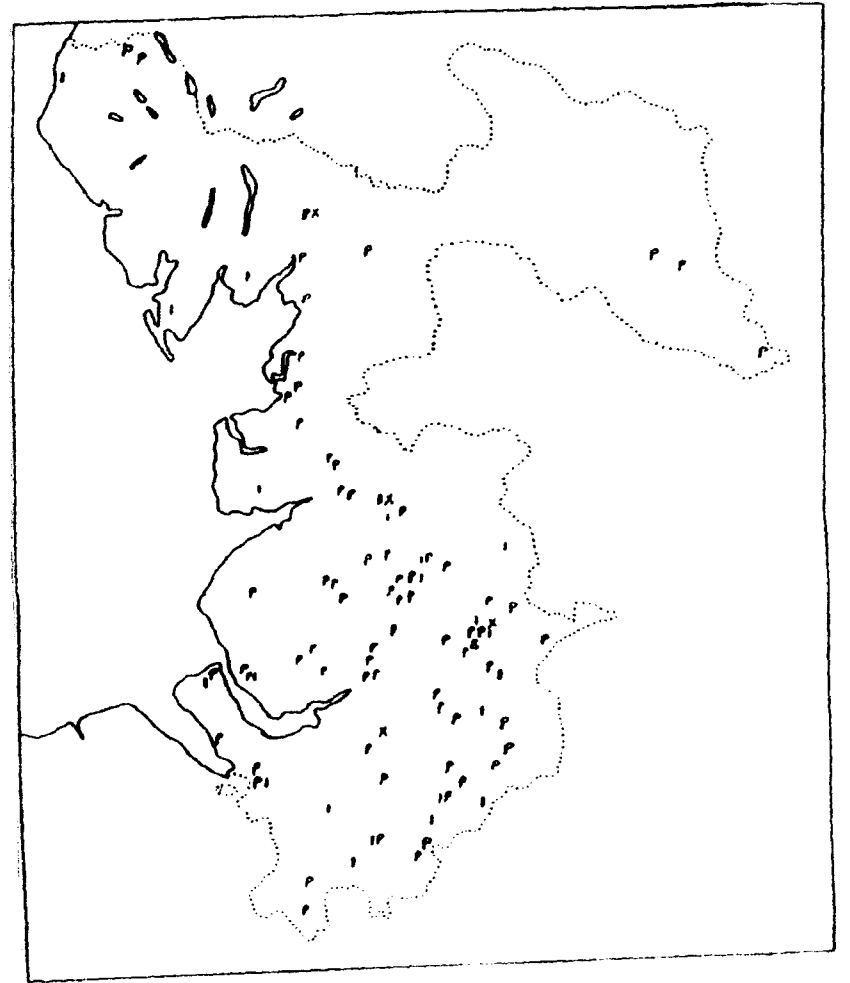
³⁵¹ Lambeth Palace Library, Tenison MSS, vol.639, pp.287(back)-294(front) printed in G. Lyon Turner, *Original Records of Early Non-conformity under Persecution and Indulgence* (London, 1911), Vol.1, pp.168-75.

³⁵² Bate, *Declaration of Indulgence*, Appendix 1, p.iv. It is unclear whether Aspinwall felt that popery had increased since the King's return.

Map 3: Protestant Nonconformist conventicles, 1669.



Map 4: Licensed Nonconformist places of worship, 1672.

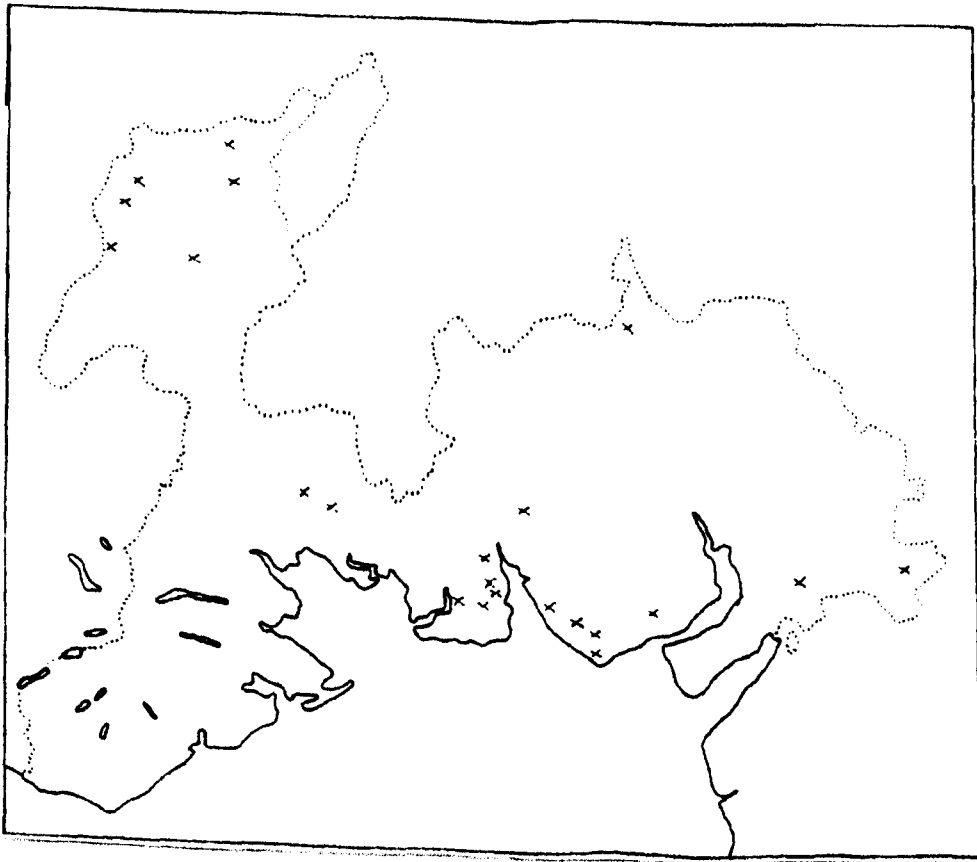


Key to maps 3 & 4:

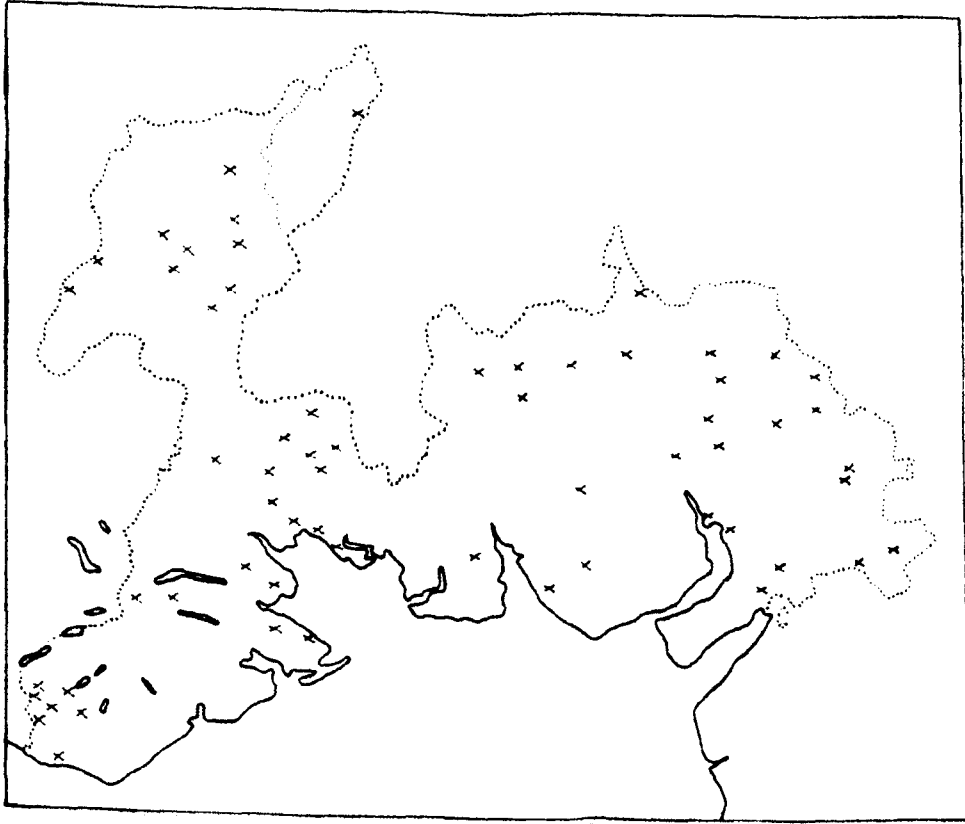
B = Baptist
P = Presbyterian

I = Independent
X = Unspecified

Map 5: Roman Catholic conventicles, 1669.



Map 6: Quaker meetings, 1669.



Enforcement of the law was further hampered by ambiguities in some of the statutes, though these gave individual magistrates some latitude in how strictly to interpret them, just as bishops themselves had shown in relation to the Worcester House Declaration and the Act of Uniformity. The Five Mile Act had been hurriedly pushed through at the brief Oxford session of Parliament in 1665. In his diary Philip Henry noted five points where the legislation was vague. The one which immediately concerned him was 'what miles are to be understood, reputed miles or measured miles'. By the former measure he lived only four miles outside his previous parish, by the latter it was 'five miles and threescore yards'. Another problem was the definition of a borough or corporate town. On the whole the Act caused a great flurry among ministers in the short term but resulted in few prosecutions. No town in Cheshire apart from Chester itself was a parliamentary borough, nor was Manchester, the largest urban centre in the diocese, so the impact of the Act may have been more limited here than elsewhere, though it remained a potential threat to any, such as Henry, who returned to their old haunts.³⁵³

Similar problems could arise even with the second Conventicle Act, a more carefully considered piece of legislation than the first. In a case in Manchester in 1671 the magistrates felt compelled to suspend judgement until they had taken expert advice. Firstly, they were unsure whether the accused could be convicted of being at a conventicle when it was not known who the preacher had been. Secondly, since the case concerned an incident prior to the one for which the defendants had already been convicted, could it be counted as a second offence, for which the Act laid down a stiffer penalty? This smacks of an attempt to avoid having to take punitive action.

³⁵³ P. Henry, *Letters and Diaries*, p.72; M. Henry, 'Life of Philip Henry', p.666.

Henry Booth, later to be a leading Whig, even claimed that the Act was only aimed at 'Quakers and others of that sort'.³⁵⁴

Linked to the problem of interpretation of the law was that of government policy. Charles's preference for a laxer religious settlement was notorious, and by the later 1660s was causing those who favoured a strict policy serious alarm. When Margaret Fell was released from prison, Fleming observed that it was becoming general policy to comply with the Nonconformists.³⁵⁵ In similar vein Shakerley reported on a conventicle he had broken up at Bosley:

Their insolence is grown to such a height that some of the chief of the female disciples said openly that the King tolerated their meeting, and that they therefore wondered I disturbed them; it will much lessen his Majesty's authority in his subordinate magistrates, if some severe course be not speedily taken to restrain these confident expressions and practices.³⁵⁶

Such reports of Nonconformists believing they enjoyed royal favour are found in many parts of the country at that time and their confidence must have been strengthened in the north-west when Wilkins, one of the architects of the abortive comprehension bill of 1668 was nominated as Hall's successor. It must, then, have gladdened Shakerley's heart when the King issued his proclamation of 1669 for stricter enforcement of the laws against Dissenters and supported the progress of the new Conventicle Act through Parliament the following year. This, however, was a tactical ploy on Charles's part, designed to impress the Cavalier House of Commons and coax money out of it. Charles did not himself want the odium of being a persecutor. As a consequence, Shakerley sent a series of letters to London asking for advice on how to proceed in implementing the tougher policy but received no replies. 'I want the advice solicited in former letters,' he wrote in July 1670, 'or I

³⁵⁴ HMC, *Kenyon*, p.90; Challinor, 'Restoration and Exclusion', p.362.

³⁵⁵ HMC, *le Fleming*, p.58.

shall be at a loss how to preserve the public peace.’ Not that the situation was any better after the issue of the Declaration of Indulgence in 1672. He was convinced that the Nonconformists were going beyond what their licences allowed and bewailed how

Our northern spirits must grow faint, when they breathe out so many requests, and cannot obtain a word in answer, especially being almost overspread and lost in the foggy mists of our new licensed teachers.³⁵⁷

The survey ordered by Sheldon in 1669, the year after Hall's death, and the licences issued under the Declaration of Indulgence provide an opportunity to assess the impact of persecution. Maps 3 and 4 show the distribution of conventicles in 1669 and 1672 and may be compared with Map 2, which showed the places from which ministers were ejected in 1662. The geographical distribution of Protestant conventicles at both dates is much the same as that of ejected ministers. This might suggest that the persecution had succeeded in preventing any significant spread of Nonconformity, but it has already been noted how little headway Puritan beliefs and practices had made even in the Interregnum. The pattern certainly shows once again that Presbyterians, at least, with their stress on a properly constituted ministry and the central role of preaching would find it difficult to spread beyond the areas where their clergy were based. It also suggests that the Five Mile Act had little effect in scattering them to new areas.

Map 5 and 6 show the location of Roman Catholic conventicles and Quaker meetings reported in 1669. While it is probable that in districts where Roman Catholics were numerous, some potential Dissenters stayed within the Church of

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CSPD 1668-69, p.354.

England in order to maintain a show of Protestant unity, yet it is also possible that the small number of dissident clergy in the north of the diocese indirectly helped the growth of more radical forms of dissent there. This was the heartland of the Quaker movement, and a higher proportion of the other conventicles are described as Independent or Baptist than further south. The Quakers, of course, were entirely lay led, and Francis Howgill, following his arrest in Kendal in 1663, gave disillusionment with clergy who had changed their views with every change of ecclesiastical regime as the principal reason for this.³⁵⁸ One possible implication is that the more principled stand taken by some sequestered or ejected clergy would have secured the loyalty of the laity.

What is impossible to tell is how near the attempted suppression of Dissent came to achieving success. An informer in the Independent congregation in Furness reported in June 1664 that they were going to continue meeting despite the passing of the first Conventicle Act, but also that they were fast running out of money through payment of fines, provision of support for prisoners, and declining numbers as some less brave souls fell away.³⁵⁹ A year later, Hall might have been surprised to know how close Henry Newcome had come to submitting.

August 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th. The Bishop in and about the town in his visitation. Dr Mallory, my friend was in town August 8th, and mentioned me to the Bishop, which might have been a temptation to me... But God saved me from the occasion by calling me out, that very hour, to visit one that was sick, as far as Ardwick Green; and when I came back I found the Bishop taking horse and going away.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁷ CSPD 1668-69, pp.394, 396, 404; CSPD 1670, pp.248, 261, 273, 313; CSPD 1672-73, p.300.

³⁵⁸ See the account of his trial at Appleby Assizes in Joseph Besse, *A Collection of the Sufferings of the People called Quakers* (London, 1753), Vol.2, p.16.

³⁵⁹ CSPD 1663-64, pp.623-24.

³⁶⁰ Newcome, *Autobiography*, p.152.

It is probable that a more vigorous and consistent application of the policy of suppression would have reduced Dissent to a small hard core, but neither the King nor the majority of local magistrates were ready for this, despite the constant chivvying by Hall and others. The Bishop would no doubt have found it ironic that the Lord Chancellor who had refused to accept his nominations for justices of the peace was later to write of the parliamentary session of spring 1664:

And they passed likewise another bill against frequenting of conventicles, which was looked upon as the greatest discountenance the parliament had yet given to all the factions in religion, and if it had been vigorously executed would no doubt have produced a thorough reformation.³⁶¹

Only occasionally does the evidence give a glimpse of the strength of Dissent. In law even half a dozen people meeting together for worship other than according to the Book of Common Prayer constituted a conventicle, so not every reference to one indicates a significant level of Dissent. In 1669 the clergy were asked to report on the number and rank of Dissenters in their parishes, but only a few provided such details. One was the Rector of Walton who told of

Two conventicles of Independents held in Toxteth Parke, the usuall number of each is betwixt 100 & 200 some of them husbandmen, others merchants, with several sorts of Tradesmen. Another Convent of Papists consisting of about the better part of 100 persons, of Divers qualities.³⁶²

The presentments of Roman Catholic recusants regularly include a number of gentlemen and esquires, who provided leadership and a degree of protection for their communities, but Protestant gentry seem to have stayed well clear of conventicles. Despite the Clarendon Code, the line between Anglicans and other Protestants was more blurred than that between Anglicans and Roman Catholics. Humbler laymen such as Roger Lowe would attend both the established Church and a Nonconformist

³⁶¹ Clarendon, *Life*, p.1115.

³⁶² Turner, *Original Records*, pp.171-72.

meeting. Gentry might turn a blind eye to such meetings, employ a Nonconformist chaplain within the privacy of their own homes, or tolerate partial conformity within the establishment -- as they had when sympathetic to Puritan clergy in the days of Laud -- but they were generally no longer prepared to patronise outright separation.

Not that this was the aim of the majority of Nonconformists, those broadly described as Presbyterians. Philip Henry was not alone in feeling uneasy about the King's Declaration of Indulgence. He believed

The way were for those in place to admit the sober non-conformists to preach sometimes occasionally in their Pulpits, which would in time wear off præjudices & mutually strengthen each others hands against the common enemy the Papist, who will fish best in troubled waters - wee are put thereby in a Trilemma either to turn flat Independents, or to strike in with the conformists, or to sit down in former silence & sufferings, till the Lord shall open a more effectual door.³⁶³

In the end this was something the Lord declined to do, but Henry and those who felt like him were the ones who for a few years had captured the establishment, and still dreamed of a place within it. The Act of Uniformity had driven most of them out of the Church, but on all sides this was hoped or feared to be a merely temporary state of affairs.

With the appointment of John Wilkins, Chester gained a bishop who shared Henry's hope for a more comprehensive Church, and his approach must be considered next. A comparison of maps 3 and 4 might suggest that his episcopate saw an increase in Nonconformity, but this is not necessarily so. Map 3 shows only those conventicles which incumbents knew about and were prepared to report; map 4 shows all those which sought licences at a time when it was safe to come out into the open and, indeed, necessary to do so in order to gain the protection of the King's

Declaration. The meeting place, however, could be a single room in a modest dwelling where only a few Dissenters could gather, or a barn or similar structure capable of holding several dozen. In any case, it will be clear from the foregoing discussion both that the persecution may have grown in intensity in 1669 and 1670, and also that Wilkins could no more restrain those magistrates who were zealous persecutors (or, in their own eyes, zealous upholders of the law), than Hall had been able to spur the more recalcitrant into action. However, in passing on the instructions for the survey of conventicles made in 1669, he omitted the part of the letter he had received from Sheldon about reporting civil magistrates who did not cooperate in their suppression.³⁶⁴

Wilkins' attitude towards Nonconformists was one of the main objections to his promotion in 1668, and continued to be a cause of criticism, so that Lloyd felt bound to defend his record when preaching at his funeral. It is worth quoting the relevant passage at some length, for it suggests Wilkins' views were moulded by his experience and family background, much as Hall's had been. In Wilkins' case, however, the effect was to produce a man who always sought something closer to the broader church of the pre-Laudian era than anything the zealots of the Personal Rule, the Interregnum, or the Restoration wished to impose.

No doubt [claimed Lloyd] that goodness of Nature, that true Christian Principle, which made him willing to think well of all men, and to do good, or at least no hurt to any, might and ought to extend it self to them amongst others. But besides, he was inclined to it by his education under his Grandfather Mr Dod, a truly pious and learned man; who yet was a dissenter himself in some things.

The preacher proceeded to deny that Dod 'had any delight in contradiction, or could find in his heart to disturb the peace of the Church for those matters.' Wilkins'

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P. Henry, *Letters and Diaries*, pp.249-50.

‘Relation to this man, and conversation with those of his Principles’, he suggested, ‘might incline him to hope the like of others of that way... and to reduce them to the Unity of the Church; in which his grandfather lived and dyed.’ On this basis, he sought to explain Wilkins’ behaviour during the Interregnum, at the Restoration, and as a bishop, and claim that it had been consistent.

As for himself, he was so far from Approving their [the extreme Puritans’] ways, that in the worst of times, when one here present bewailed to him the Calamities of the Church, and declared his Obedience even then to the laws of it: He encouraged him in it, he desired his friendship, and even protected both him and many others, by an interest he had gained, and made use of chiefly for such purposes.

How he demeaned himself ... in the next times since, ... I appeal to you that conversed with him in those days, What zeal he hath expressed, for the Faith, and for the unity of the Church: How he stood up in defence of the Order and Government: How he hath asserted the Liturgy, and the Rites of it: He conformed himself in every thing that was commanded. Beyond which, for any man to be vehement, in little and unnecessary things, whether for or against them, he could not but dislike; and as his free manner was, he hath oft been heard to call it Fanaticalness....

Sure I am, that since he came into the Government of the Church,... he so well became the Order, that it out-did the expectation of all that did not very well know him. He filled his place with a Goodness answerable to the rest of his life; and with a Prudence above it, considering the two extrems, which were nowhere so much as in his Diocess. Though he was, as before, very tender to those that differed from him; yet he was, as before, exactly conformable himself, and brought up others to Conformity, some Eminent men in his Diocess. He endeavoured to bring in all that came within his reach, and might have had great success, if God had pleased to continue him.³⁶⁵

Turning the clock back to the situation that had prevailed in practice if not in law in James I’s reign was much easier said than done. One contemporary, alluding to Wilkins’ scientific work, thought he ‘might as soon get to the Moon in one of his own Chariots as accomplish the less probable project of union with the Dissenters’.³⁶⁶ Churchmen of all shades of opinion were now much more aware of the significant differences between them, even if they believed their own positions

³⁶⁴ *Ch.Sh.*, 3rd series, vol.11 (1914), pp.29-30.
³⁶⁵ Lloyd, *Funeral Sermon*, pp.45-51.

were unchanged. This may be illustrated by two stories relating to Thomas Morton, who was Bishop of Chester from 1616 to 1619, before being translated first to Lichfield and then to Durham, dying in 1659 at the age of ninety-five. Morton was a Calvinist in theology and viewed with suspicion by Laud for his failure to impose vigorously enough the new orthodoxies of the 1630s. In consequence he was one of those bishops remembered with respect or even affection by many with Puritan or Nonconformist sympathies. In April 1659, Newcome recalled,

Mr Heyricke and I went to Stockport to give old Mr Pogit a visit,... As he sat in his parlour, he told us among other things, That Bishop Moreton, in that very room ... did say to him and some others, about non-conformity, that they despised the Common Prayer; but it had converted more than all their preaching could do or would do, or to that purpose. Which expression we much wondered at, from so learned a man and so great a divine as he was.³⁶⁷

At the same time as this visit, Morton himself was writing a lengthy preamble to his will, believing it right 'in this last and worst age of the Church for all bishops to leave some testimony of faith to the world ... that so neither their names may be traduced after their death, nor any weak brother misled by fathering any false opinions upon them.' He then claimed to have always held 'that the succession of bishops in the church of England had been legally derived from the apostles', and attacked 'our perverse protestants at home' and their 'impious' rejection of episcopacy.

Seeing therefore I have been, as I hear, so far misunderstood by some among us as to approve of their ordination by mere presbyters, because I once said it might be valid in case of necessity, I do here profess my meaning to be, that I never thought there was any such necessity in the church of England to warrant it, where (blessed be God for it) there be so many bishops still surviving.³⁶⁸

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Quoted in Shapiro, *Wilkins*, p.301.

³⁶⁷

Newcome, *Autobiography*, p.103.

³⁶⁸

Mason, *Church of England and Episcopacy*, pp.165-66.

The trauma of civil war might create a nostalgia for the church of forty years earlier, but it had also exposed fault lines that existed even then and given them a relatively greater significance than the old divisions between Calvinists and Arminians.

The immediate prelude to Wilkins' promotion to the episcopate had been his part as the chief negotiator on the conformist side of a plan of comprehension incorporated into a bill presented to Parliament in the spring of 1668. Like the Worcester House Declaration, this would have made optional the various ceremonies which had been objected to by Puritans for decades. The question of Presbyterian ordinations had proved the most difficult one to resolve. In the end, it was proposed that ministers with such orders should be allowed to hold posts in the Established Church after the laying-on of hands by a bishop with the words

Take thou legal authority to preach the Word of God and to administer the Holy Sacraments in any congregation of the Church of England, where thou shalt be lawfully appointed thereunto.

Even this was not entirely to the liking of Richard Baxter but, he recorded, 'Dr Wilkins still insisted on this, that their consciences must be satisfied who took them for no ministers who were ordained without bishops.'³⁶⁹ This would accord with Lloyd's account of Wilkins' approach: personally conforming 'in everything that was commanded', defending 'the Order and Government [of bishops]', yet not pressing what he deemed 'little and unnecessary things'. He therefore advocated an ambiguous formula that could be understood either as re-ordination by those on one side, or as a mere ratification by the bishop of the exercise of spiritual authority derived from that earlier Presbyterian rite. In Parliament, however, Sheldon organised his allies in the Commons to dispose of the proposed bill, and while Charles recommended that the members should 'sincerely think of some course to

beget a better union and composure in the minds of my Protestant subjects in matters of religion' the House instead demanded that he 'send out a Proclamation to put the laws against nonconformists in execution'.³⁷⁰

This was the proclamation that so pleased Shakerley and finally prodded the Lancashire justices into action, but Wilkins believed the policy of persecution was futile. A number of contemporaries recorded variant forms of a saying from Wilkins' table-talk. According to Thomas Woodcock, an ejected fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge,

He was always for the Church of England taking in the Dissenters: for he said, they had set it up as a Topp on the Toe, which would not spinn or stand no longer than it was whipt by penall laws; but he would have it stand on the broad Basis, and then it would stand without whipping.³⁷¹

Woodcock also made notes on a sermon by Wilkins:

He pres'd much to moderation, and for that gave 2 reasons (1) Because no man is infallible, one man may mistake as well as another (2^{ly}) the world is mutable and it might come to their turn to be above that now are undermost. He often said if Dissenters were not taken in, popery would invade us.³⁷²

Many, of course, were convinced that the rigorous suppression of Dissent would prevent the wheel of fortune from turning again, and this was what led to the defeat of the Comprehension Bill in 1668 and the success of the Conventicle Act of 1670, despite Wilkins' opposition to it in the House of Lords. The fear of popery, though, was more widely shared, and was a conviction that probably made Wilkins unhappy with the royal Declaration of Indulgence as a way forward.

³⁶⁹ *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, III, p.37.

³⁷⁰ Sykes, *Sheldon to Secker*, p. 73.

³⁷¹ 'Extracts from the Papers of Thomas Woodcock (ob. 1695)', ed. by G.C. Moore-Smith in *The Camden Miscellany, Vol. XI* (Camden Society, 3rd series 13, 1907), 51-89 (pp.54-55). Other forms of the saying are given in Shapiro, *Wilkins*, pp.178-79 & 302-03.

³⁷² 'Papers of Thomas Woodcock', p.63.

How much difference did Wilkins' approach make in the diocese? Did he, as Lloyd claimed, bring others to conformity? The answer must be that the degree of hostility felt by Nonconformists to the person of the bishop was much reduced, and never regained the intensity it had under Hall, even after Wilkins' death, but his attempts to win them back met with only limited success. An indication of this is given in the *Autobiography* of Henry Newcome. He had known all about the draft Comprehension Bill before it had been presented to Parliament and felt confident enough to call on the new bishop at his lodgings in London only three months after the latter's appointment and before his first visit to the diocese. 'The Bishop,' he wrote, 'received me very courteously, and used me kindly, and we had a deal of free discourse.'³⁷³ There is no hint, however, that Newcome contemplated giving up his Nonconformity as he had been tempted to do three years earlier.

Martindale likewise welcomed the new bishop's very different approach, but gives little indication that many Nonconformists were in a mood to give much ground:

Bishop Wilkins, observing what a great company of drunken Ministers there was in his diocese, and especially near Wigan, his then residence, was resolved to turn such out, or, at least, to suspend them *ab officio*, and to fill the places with better men; and having a good opinion of some of us, that he took to be moderate Nonconformists, he proposed terms to us, to which we returned a thankful answer; showing our willingness to comply in anything that would not cross our principles, and instancing, in particular, what we could do. But the Archbishop of York, by his Visitation, took all power out of his hands for a year, soon after which (if not before) this honest Bishop Wilkins died.³⁷⁴

Though Martindale put the blame for ultimate failure on the Archbishop, he clearly thought Dissenters could now negotiate from a position of relative strength; but

³⁷³ Newcome, *Autobiography*, pp.167-68 & 179. Later (p.202) he wrote, 'I received the sad news of the death of the learned, worthy, pious and peaceable Bishop of Chester, Dr John Wilkins. He was my worthy friend.'

³⁷⁴ Martindale, *Life*, p.196.

where Martindale felt they were standing on a point of principle, Wilkins may sometimes have thought they were being 'vehement in little and unnecessary things'. There was little real chance of a return to the days when Presbyterians were so fearful of the sects that, according to Newcome

If it had then been said to us, well, you shall be eased of this power, and rid of the bloody Anabaptist, but you must have Bishops, and ceremonies, again, we should then have said, with all our hearts.

'Affliction by law', he had come to think, was not as bad as the situation that threatened in 1659. 'Then we lay at the mercy of a giddy, hot-headed multitude. A Munsterian anarchy we escaped far sadder than persecution.'³⁷⁵ It may well be the case that a less disciplinarian approach by the bishop and the continuing rumours of a royal indulgence were inclining some Dissenters to feel that a certain level of persecution was a price worth paying to avoid compromise over things for which they had already suffered much. In this they were like those of their persecutors who felt justified in their unyielding stance because of what they had themselves suffered during the Interregnum. This was to opt for the third choice in Philip Henry's 'trilemma' -- sitting down in silence and sufferings, till the Lord opened a more effectual door. Henry is reputed to have had several interviews with Wilkins, but was not moved to conform.³⁷⁶

Nevertheless, there were some ejected clergy who again took up posts within the national Church during Wilkins' time as bishop of Chester. On 16 July 1670 Matthew Anderton wrote from Chester:

The fanatics taken at unlawful meetings since May were proceeded against at the quarter sessions held at Nantwich, and the fines paid; Mr Tildesley, a great

³⁷⁵ Newcome, *Diary*, p.xxix, & *Autobiography*, pp.118-119.

³⁷⁶ Urwick, *Nonconformity in the County of Chester*, p.10, quotes a pupil of Henry who wrote: 'Bishop Wilkins sent twice for him, with a design to draw him over to conformity.'

leader of the Presbyterians in Lancashire, and Mr Colly, a Nonconformist, both conformed, which may be instrumental in bringing in many of the faction.³⁷⁷

This suggests that Anderton believed the two had been brought back into the Church by the intensified persecution, but in a letter written to Baxter just ten days later, Wilkins' curate John Rawlet put the winning over of '3 or 4 NonConformists' (of whom Tilsley was the only one 'of Note') to the persuasive powers of the Bishop. Calamy was later to claim that William Colly 'was at length brought into Churton-heath-Chappel by Bishop Wilkins's soft Interpretation of the Terms of Conformity'.³⁷⁸

The situation at Deane, in the Manchester deanery, is the one about which most information is available. Tilsley had been the vicar there until 1662, and had still not left the vicarage in the following year. His replacement was the younger John Angier, son of the Nonconforming curate of Denton. Angier was not 'drunken', as Martindale suggested those conforming clergy whom Wilkins wanted to replace were, but he had been convicted and suspended by the Consistory Court for conducting no fewer than thirty-eight clandestine marriages. In a letter full of self-pity, written just after Wilkins' death, Angier told how he had been one of the first to seek episcopal ordination at the Restoration, despite the estrangement from his family this had involved. 'I lived in good repute with Bishop Hall to his very dying day,' he claimed, 'and had that good Bishop lived, the first preferment, whether King's Preacher's place or whatever that fell, was promised to mee.' Without mentioning the business of the clandestine marriages or his unsuccessful appeal from Chester to York, he presented his removal as the outcome of a

³⁷⁷ *CSPD 1670*, p.335.

conspiracy by a minority of parishioners and claimed, 'Ever since the last Bishop [Wilkins] came in to be their friend, they bragged that matters should go on their side, in spite of Bradshaw and Kenyon.' Taken on its own, this is a highly tendentious account of what happened in Deane, and was intended to win support for the writer following Wilkins' death and Bridgeman's resignation as Lord Keeper. Its value is as a counterpoise to a view of Wilkins and his policy derived wholly from his admirers, and for the light it sheds on the kind of local parish politics which must have lain behind each such case. Describing the situation in Deane at the time he wrote, Angier claimed that his replacement had not read prayers for eight or nine months, and was a mere cypher to allow Tilsley as lecturer to subvert the Established Church.³⁷⁹

This last may be the most significant point when it comes to evaluating the success of Wilkins' policy. Was it really true that Tilsley, Colly and the others 'conformed', as Anderton had been led to believe? Shapiro and Spellman suggest that the schemes of Wilkins and other Latitudinarians were ultimately doomed to failure because they expected Nonconformists to recognise that the Church could rule on adiaphora and need not always leave them open to individual choice.³⁸⁰ It is doubtful whether those who accepted a licence from Wilkins ever saw themselves as under an obligation to accept the forms and structures of Anglicanism, even while he was alive. Tilsley, for example, was not listed among the clergy who appeared before the bishop during his visitation in the summer of 1671. In 1675 he petitioned

³⁷⁸ CCRB, p.96; Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, lists William Bell, William Colly, Bradley Hayhurst and John Tilsley as ejected ministers licensed by Wilkins and James Bowker, former curate of Caton, as ordained by him: see entries under their names.

³⁷⁹ Cheshire RO, EDC5 (1670) no.41; Sheils, *Cause Papers at York*, p.34; HMC, *Kenyon*, pp.94-95.

³⁸⁰ Shapiro, *Wilkins*, p.152; Spellman, *The Latitudinarians*, pp.38-44.

the King to protect him from prosecution by Roger Kenyon under the Five Mile Act. Bradshaigh countered by denying that he had ever really conformed. Though he claimed to have made the required declarations before the Bishop, he had not done so in church as the law required. Even worse,

Since he was licensed he has declared he is of the same judgement and principle he ever was, that he never wears the surplice in church when he officiates, uses not the cross in baptism, reads not the Litany, [and] omits the rites, ceremonies, forms and orders comprised in the Book of Common Prayer.³⁸¹

Tilsley was finally ejected once more in 1678. Bell, too, was soon in trouble again for Nonconformity, losing his licence in 1674. For such men, Wilkins might be respected for his person, but not for his office. Oliver Heywood told a story of when he and John Angier senior visited Sir John Crewe of Utkinton, a sympathetic layman. 'Mr Crew showed them the Picture of Dr Wilkins, who (saith he) is to be our Bishop of Chester; but (said he) Mr Angier is my Bishop.'³⁸² Angier, too, avoided attending any bishop's visitation, and in 1672 even licensed his parsonage as a Nonconformist meeting house and took part in Presbyterian ordinations.

The Church and the succession crisis: Pearson

As Charles yielded to parliamentary pressure and withdrew his Declaration, the character and policy of the new bishop were inevitably of concern to those clergy and laity who had welcomed Wilkins' sympathetic attitude towards partial conformists. Crewe, for example, was anxious about the future of the Cheshire

³⁸¹ CSPD 1675-76, pp.201-02, 209-10, 518-20.

³⁸² Heywood, *Life of John Angier*, p.86.

lectureships, which had expanded from the one established by Hall to three under his successor. He met Pearson soon after his consecration, and wrote to his mother:

I was lately with the bishop of Chester, to obtaine an acquaintance,... He is a well temper'd person, & allows of the lecture att Tarvin, & sayes preaching never did harme however some persons might abuse itt, and that att this time there is need of itt to instructt the people,... He spoake very soberly & well. He is a strick't churchman, & a great schollar.³⁸³

Pearson's manner seems always to have attracted people. The same impression had been created on Baxter at the Savoy conference.³⁸⁴ Yet he did not give unqualified support to the lectures. Though they were useful 'att this time', circumstances might change; the 'strick't churchman' recognised other situations in which preaching might be abused. In fact, Pearson is the hardest of Chester's bishops in this period to pin down on the issues of persecution and comprehension, and his attitude shifted with the changing political situation. His *Exposition of the Creed* showed a concern to uphold traditional orthodoxy; his shorter tracts of the 1660s had argued against the need for further reform of the Church of England and rejected Presbyterian and Independent ordinations. But strictness was not the same as unyielding rigidity, and he would consider concessions made by proper authority if he felt they would make for a stronger or safer Church. Since, however, his episcopate covered half the period under review, from the last days of the Cabal ministry, through the ascendancy of Danby, the Popish Plot and Exclusion crises and the Tory reaction to the accession of James II, it was not always the same potential threat to the Church that loomed largest.

Lloyd preached his funeral sermon for Wilkins a few days after Pearson had been nominated as his successor, and he took the opportunity of paying the new

³⁸³ *Ch.Sh.*, 3rd series, vol.11 (1914), p.40.

³⁸⁴ Above, p.32.

bishop a brief compliment: '[Bishop Wilkins] having given full proof of his intentions and desires, it pleased God to reserve the fruit for other hands, from which we have great cause to expect much good to the Church.'³⁸⁵ Perhaps this, like Sir John Crewe's visit, was an attempt to nudge Pearson in what the preacher conceived to be the right direction. This may not have been too difficult. He lacked the temperament to be a persecutor, having set out his approach in the *Letter against Promiscuous Ordinations*:

I cannot take any delight as to the differences in matters of religion, but in the composure of them only: and if I can understand myself, nothing can ever alter that temper, by which I have been so long inclined to a due enlargement and indulgence for such as are ready to afford a rational compliance. But I hope that no such facility of nature or opinion shall ever reduce me to that weakness, as to betray the great and everlasting concerns of the church.³⁸⁶

One of his first acts was to collate Lawrence Fogg to a vacant prebend at the cathedral, and this was noted in the Chapter Act Book as an example of his moderation towards a 'penitent dissenter'.³⁸⁷ Similarly in 1675 he instituted Samuel Edgley, who had been ejected as curate of Thornton-le-Moors in 1662, as Vicar of Acton, while in the same year Henry Newcome was relieved to find he bore no ill will against his son, who had been presented to the living at Tattenhall by Bishop Dolben of Rochester³⁸⁸

At the same time as showing this consideration towards former Dissenters or their families, Pearson gave his support to another attempt at comprehension. Parliament had promised to consider such a measure on behalf of Protestant Dissenters when it forced Charles to withdraw his Declaration of Indulgence and

³⁸⁵ Lloyd, *Funeral Sermon*, p.51.

³⁸⁶ Pearson, *Minor Works*, vol.2, p.232.

³⁸⁷ Cheshire RO, EDD 3913/3/2, p.116.

³⁸⁸ Newcome, *Autobiography*, p.214.

passed the Test Act. Bishop Morley of Winchester, who had, in the past, opposed measures to broaden the settlement of 1662, proposed that the declarations of unfeigned assent and consent to everything in the Book of Common Prayer and the explicit repudiation the Covenant be dropped from the Act of Uniformity. There were certainly some Dissenters who were prepared to use the Prayer Book and live without the Presbyterian discipline, but who could not endorse the establishment in the strong and unqualified terms of these statutory declarations. Morley's bill passed the Lords with a substantial majority on 19 February 1674. The bishops were divided, but Pearson was among its supporters. There can be little doubt that it was inspired by a renewed fear of popery, and Pearson must have been aware of how strong Roman Catholicism was in his own diocese. This fear was fuelled by suspicion of Charles's motives for introducing his Declaration of Indulgence, the conversion of the heir presumptive, and his marriage to a Roman Catholic princess who might be expected to produce sons to continue their line. Morley's bill did not radically alter the polity or worship of the Church of England, but did allow for greater Protestant unity against the common enemy, and it may be presumed that Pearson supported it on those grounds.³⁸⁹ His main scholarly work after becoming bishop dealt with the early history of the bishops of Rome, to challenge exaggerated claims for their authority, and with St Cyprian, who in the third century had asserted the independence of local episcopates from the Bishop of Rome.³⁹⁰

In April 1675 Tillotson wrote to Baxter about another proposal to bring in a comprehension bill which he had discussed with Seth Ward, who would in turn raise it with Pearson. Tillotson himself felt it stood little chance of success, so did not

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Swatland, *House of Lords*, pp.183-84. The bill was lost with the prorogation.

want his name associated with it, and nothing further seems to have happened. It would need, he believed, 'the Concurrence of a considerable part of the Bishops, and the Countenance of his Majesty', but saw little reason to expect them.³⁹¹ The situation, indeed, had not stood still. Mary of Modena appeared incapable of bearing healthy children, while Charles was moving back into close alliance with the Anglican cavaliers. In January Danby had convened a meeting of bishops, of whom Pearson was one, and government ministers to advise the King on how to deal with the various threats to 'the Church of England as it is now established by law'. It is not known what part Pearson took in the discussions, or how wholeheartedly he supported the recommendations made to the King for the rigorous enforcement of the existing laws against recusancy and Nonconformity. According to the report made by Alberti, the Venetian ambassador,

The bishops of Salisbury and Winchester, the lord keeper, the treasurer, Lauderdale and Coventry supported the project. The archbishop of Canterbury, the bishops of Chester and Rochester and Secretary Williamson gave their silent consent and the measure was presented to the Privy Council for approval.³⁹²

Pearson may not have been a persecutor by nature and the curate of Over even accused him of being 'condescending to the Presbyterian faction'.³⁹³ If Alberti's information was correct, Pearson may have simply bent to the prevailing wind on this occasion,³⁹⁴ but he had made clear in the debates at the Savoy

³⁹⁰ *Annales Cypriani* was published in 1682, *Dissertationes de Serie et successione Primorum Romae Episcoporum* posthumously in 1688.

³⁹¹ CCRB, pp.173-74. The editors wrongly identify the Bishop of Chester at this date as Wilkins.

³⁹² CSPD 1673-75, pp.548-50; CSPV 1673-75, pp.316-17, 337, 353, 357. The so-called Compton Census of 1676 was by-product of this renewed attempt to suppress dissent. Unfortunately the returns survive for only two parishes in Chester diocese, so cannot be used for a comparison with the 1669 survey or 1672 list of licences.

³⁹³ Cheshire RO, EDC5 (1676) no.4. Abraham Smith, the curate, was drunk at the time.

³⁹⁴ Burnet claimed Pearson 'was too much in the power of those whom he trusted': Foxcroft (ed.), *Supplement to Burnet's History*, p.214.

conference that he believed laws which did not command something inherently sinful ought to be obeyed. The laws that commanded the King's subjects to adhere to the Church of England and follow its practices were of such a kind. Pearson would not necessarily have seen any inconsistency in requiring obedience to the existing laws, even if he thought proper authority could relax them (as in Morley's bill of the previous year) or that the penalties for disobedience were harsh. The Calendar of State Papers for this period does not contain the mass of material on the attempted suppression of Dissent in the north-west which it does for the period from 1662 to 1672, and Pearson's one surviving letter which touches on the subject makes it clear that the old problem of getting the magistrates to act persisted. However, there is no evidence that he tried to put pressure on them in the way Hall had done.³⁹⁵ The letter itself was occasioned by the need to gain Sancroft's support for a magistrate's son who was seeking a fellowship at Oxford. Within his diocese, Pearson appears to have been more concerned with leading erring sheep back into the fold than with exacting retribution from the Church's enemies:

Mr Entwistle ... is the most zealous & active man for the Church in all these parts, being equally industrious to bring back the Papists & to suppress the Nonconformists, in which he hath had very great successes, & that of late. Such friends wee have but few, & those very necessary in this Country, which is as it were the stage whereon a numerous party of each separation hath acted these many yeares together. Wherefore, I conceiving that He, who is so true a friend to us might reasonably expect from us some favour in the education of his son, which may be an acknowledgement of his readinesse at all times to serve the Church, have presumed to represent his request.³⁹⁶

³⁹⁵ By way of contrast, the Lancashire justices, having resolved in August 1679 to enforce the laws against both recusants and Dissenters and require wardens to inform on all absentees from church, 'humbly recommended to the Reverend Father in God, John Lord Bishop of Chester, ... that the Minister of each parish Church and parochiall Chappell within this County may publish this order.' Quintrell (ed.), *Proceedings of the Lancashire Justices*, pp.139-40.

³⁹⁶ Tanner 38 f.71.

This was written from Wigan in August 1679, by which time the fear of popery was again uppermost in people's minds. The one execution in the north-west in connection with the Popish Plot had taken place in Chester the previous month. It was alleged that Fr John Plessington had been hastened to the gallows through the vindictiveness of a Protestant landowner whose son had been unable to marry a wealthy Catholic heiress because of the priest's influence.³⁹⁷ Whether or not this was so, in the crisis triggered by Oates' supposed revelations Cheshire became one of the most deeply divided parts of the country, though it is well-nigh impossible to disentangle the various strands of religious and political differences and other local rivalries. Pearson himself avoided being closely identified with any one faction, but seems to have provided little leadership even for Churchmen.

In the Parliament of 1679 the gentry of Cheshire could still come to a consensus on their representatives, choosing Henry Booth and Sir Philip Egerton: the one a supporter and the other an opponent of Exclusion. In the subsequent two Parliaments, however, the county was represented by two Whigs, despite there being, in 1681 at least, a full-blown contest. The defeated Tories, or 'The Loyall Gentry, Authodox Clergie, Ffreeholders, and Inhabitants of this County', as they described themselves, countered with 'An Adresse' recommending certain things to the care of their members of Parliament. These made no direct mention of the vexed question of the succession, but asked for things with which the Whigs could not openly quibble. Thus the first point was 'that the Popish plott bee duly and dilligently prosecuted,... and such further Lawes provided as may extirpate Popery and all other heresies and schismes.' The sting, of course, was in the last six words. In similar vein, the second point called on Parliament to

³⁹⁷ J.P. Kenyon, *The Popish Plot* (London, 1972), pp.246-47

preserve inviolable the person of the King and the peace of our Church, in doctrine and worshipping, ordering of priests, administration of the sacraments, and other rights, as they are at present by Law established; and that you would invigorate the execution of those wholesome Laws already made for that end.

The third demand was for thankful acceptance of Charles's willingness to agree limitations on a popish successor; the fourth and fifth dealt with 'better repairing of highways' and 'supplies necessary for supporte of the Government'.³⁹⁸ John Morrill comments: 'In the petition, as in most of their declarations and private letters in the 1680s, the Cheshire Tories were Anglican loyalists first, and defenders of the crown second.'³⁹⁹ This was to be of special importance in the next reign and under the next bishop, whose priorities appeared to be the other way round, but in 1681 it was a less obvious distinction to make. The Address carried thirty-eight signatures, headed by that of Sir Geoffrey Shakerley, but including eight clergy, among them James Arderne, Vicar of Davenham, who would become Dean of Chester the following year. Three of the other clerical signatories were already members of the cathedral chapter and two had been collated to their prebends by Pearson, but none appears to have been among his close associates. While the Bishop remained above faction, the new Dean, who displayed a more combative personality,⁴⁰⁰ became the effective clerical head of the Cheshire Tories. This is seen in the events surrounding a visit to Chester by the Duke of Monmouth and in the furore over the Tarvin lectureship.

³⁹⁸ Philip Grey Egerton, 'Papers Referring to Elections of Knights of the Shire for the County Palatine of Chester, from the death of Oliver Cromwell to the Accession of Queen Anne', *JCAS*, 1st series vol. 1, part 2 (1852), 101-112 (pp.105-06).

³⁹⁹ J.S. Morrill, 'Parliamentary Representation', *VCH Cheshire*, Vol.2 (Oxford, 1979), 98-166 (p.117)

⁴⁰⁰ One of his first acts was to enter a formal Protestation in the Chapter Act Book insisting that under its charter 'a large power is given to the Deane of this Church, as laso in other cases by the Lawes of this Realm to all deanes more than in late yeares has been observed and practis'd in this Cathedral' and denying that the prebends could exercise this power on his behalf. He also asserts the

Monmouth came to the north-west in September 1682. As the candidate of the more extreme Whigs to succeed Charles on the throne, he was a highly controversial figure. When he visited Chichester in 1679 there had been a riot when Bishop Carleton refused to contribute wood for bonfires in his honour. When he went there again in 1683 he was treated to a sermon comparing rebellion to witchcraft but left before it was over.⁴⁰¹ His appearance at Chester had a similar effect, though Pearson apparently found it prudent to remain in Wigan, where he had spent the summer.⁴⁰²

Arderne, Bishop Cartwright was later to tell James II, 'was daily affronted for his zeal in his service by the Whigs'.⁴⁰³ Perhaps this was why he also thought it best to leave the city, for the citizens gave Monmouth an exuberant welcome. Having arrived on a Saturday evening, the Duke attended morning service in the cathedral the next day. As dean, Arderne will have selected the preacher, Lawrence Woods, one of the petty canons, who delivered a sermon 'telling him of his duty ... and that God would blast all the wicked and mischievous devices against the King'. Despite this, when Monmouth won a horse-race at Bromborough a couple of days later he sent the prize plate as a gift to the Mayor of Chester's baby daughter, for whom he had stood godfather,

at which news the people grew so mad that all the streets were full of bonfire, the church doors were broken open to ring the bells, contrary to the Dean and ministers orders, and nothing was heard in the streets but a Munmouth, a Munmouth.⁴⁰⁴

independence of the Cathedral as being 'neere or in, though not part of, the City of Chester': Cheshire RO, EDD 3913/3/3, p.50.

⁴⁰¹ Robert T. Holtby, 'The Restoration to 1790', in Mary Hobbs (ed.), *Chichester Cathedral, an historical survey* (Chichester, 1994), pp.101-118 (p.106).

⁴⁰² *Ch.Sh.*, 3rd series, vol. 25 (1928), p.12; *CSPD 1682*, p.389. The Earl of Derby, as Lord Lieutenant, also kept his contact with Monmouth to a minimum: J.J.Bagley, *The Earls of Derby, 1485-1985* (London, 1985), p.116.

⁴⁰³ Cartwright, *Diary*, pp.74-75.

⁴⁰⁴ HMC, 7th report, p.533.

Another contemporaneous report gives more details of the attack on the cathedral.

[The mob] furiously forced the doors of the cathedral church and destroyed most of the painted glass, burst open the little vestrys and cupboards, wherein were the surplices and hoods belonging to the clergy, which they rent to rags and carried away; they beat to pieces the baptismal font, pulled down some monuments, attempted to demolish the organ, and committed other most enormous outrages.⁴⁰⁵

The targets are those which might have been selected by Roundhead soldiers forty years earlier. Given the attitude of the Dean and the majority of the Chapter, it is not surprising that the cathedral was the focus of the mob's attention, but it is interesting that the palace, which adjoined it, remained unscathed, for the deanery and Matthew Anderton's house also suffered broken windows.⁴⁰⁶ Pearson, it would appear, was held in sufficient respect for his equally vulnerable property to escape the attention of the rioters, and the sequel showed that he still tried to be a pastor to all groups within his diocese. As the Tory Reaction gathered force, the grand jury presented no fewer than thirty-two of the Whig gentry for promoting sedition and instigating the riot. Among them was Sir Willoughby Aston, whose diary has survived. Even when bound over to keep the peace by Jeffreys (who held the post of Chief Justice of Chester at the time) he continued to call on Pearson and even dine with him.⁴⁰⁷

The vengeful Tories did not have only Whig gentry or dissenting ministers in their sights. They also targeted conforming clergy whom they suspected of Whig or Nonconformist sympathies. 'By the 1680s,' comments Mark Goldie, 'a tone of bellicose exasperation had entered into the Anglican voice, some now asserting that

⁴⁰⁵ Quoted in Burne, *Chester Cathedral*, p.153.

⁴⁰⁶ St Peter's Church, where Thompson was Vicar and the bells had not been rung was also a target for the mob: *CSPD 1682*, pp.391 & 394; John Miller, *After the Civil Wars: English Politics and Government in the Reign of Charles II* (Harlow, 2000), p.275.

⁴⁰⁷ Extracts from Aston's diary are in *Ch.Sh.*, 3rd series, vol. 60 (1965), p.47.

the time for persuasion was over, and coercion must do what argument had failed to do.⁴⁰⁸ The Dean and his associates directed particular attention to Zachary Cawdrey and the lectureships at Tarvin, Nantwich and Knutsford. In a series of letters to Sancroft, Cawdrey, Pearson and Arderne each set out their version of events.

In the first of these, written on 24 October 1682, Cawdrey attempted to gain the Archbishop's ear ahead of Arderne, appealing to him as one 'who had formerly beene witnes to my sufferings for Loyalty and Conformity'. He explained how the Dean had publicly criticised him during a sermon before Jeffreys, 'the secular judge', at the assizes, but had refused to have the matter settled by Pearson. Cawdrey went on to claim a better record than the Dean's for winning over Nonconformists: 'I dare freely assert that for one line which he hath writt for Conformity I have writt forty, for one Dissenter that he hath brought into the Church by rationall conviction of the lawfulness of conformity I have brought in ten.' He concluded by giving an account of the Cheshire clergy, most of whom were conscientious though a minority affected the way of life of the 'looser gentry' and resented their more diligent colleagues.⁴⁰⁹

At the beginning of May 1683 Cawdrey again wrote to Sancroft requesting the position of chaplain, which he believed would afford him some protection from his critics, and giving the history of the lectures.⁴¹⁰ The gentlemen who had been defeated in the 1681 election were now in the ascendant and had used their position on the Grand Jury to petition Pearson to suppress the lectures. They had even gone so far as to present the lecturer at Tarvin for holding a seditious conventicle and, so

⁴⁰⁸ Goldie, 'Theory of Religious Intolerance', p352.

⁴⁰⁹ Tanner 35 f.117.

Cawdry believed, were sending informers to Barthomley church to find further fault with his own sermons.⁴¹¹

Sancroft promptly wrote to ask for Pearson's account of the affair. He replied:

I received your Letter of the 8th of this month, in which I finde your Grace very much concerned for Mr Cawdry, & am my selfe very much concerned, as not knowing by my owne conversation with him any change of principles in him, nor any sufficient ground to make a judgement in that case.

As for the difference between the Deane & him, it is well known. The Deane preaching before the Judges did speake of a Clergy-man who had delivered, in the Pulpit, that as S. Paul said, Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, so he might say, Neither conformity nor nonconformity, availeth any thing, but a new creature. Afterwards the Deane being asked who the Clergy-man was, answered it was Mr Cawdry, whom he heard speak those words at a Lecture some years since.

As for the noise, which your Grace observes, I can give you this account. My predecessor Bishop Wilkins did set up three Lectures in Cheshire to be performed by the Ministers of the Diocese in three distant Churches. These I permitted till of late; when those of the Gentry who have bin more than ordinarily entrusted with the management of the affairs of the Government, did often declare that those Lectures were great obstacles to them in the legal execution of their office. Hereupon I did first cause one of those Lectures to cease, & after that a second, & at last was induced to do as much for the third. Now in every of these Lectures Mr Cawdry had a part, & was reputed the chief & was known to be highly esteemed by those Gentlemen who have not bin of late entrusted by the Government. Your Grace may imagine what opinion might be raised of him by these means.

Besides while these things were agitated, in this great ferment, a Booke came forth in print (of which he is reputed the Author) moving the people to prepare for Martyrdome. This the same persons did look upon as a reflection on the Government, & a fomenter of jealousies. Whereupon a neighbour-minister did write first one & then another booke against it, chargeing him with betraying the rites of the Church & aspersing the King's friends. This, my Lord, has made the noise high, which could be no otherwise in a Country so divided, & must continue so long as the divisions last at this heighth. More than this I cannot say of my owne knowledge; neither can I give your Grace any further account by which you may frame a perfect judgement in this matter.⁴¹²

⁴¹⁰ Quoted above, p.136.

⁴¹¹ Tanner 34 ff.18 & 26.

⁴¹² Tanner 34 f.27.

Pearson's account is in substantial agreement with that in Cawdrey's own letters, except that Cawdrey insisted the Dean had deliberately distorted the import of his own sermon by selective quotation. Cawdrey made no mention of his book, which reflected widespread fears about the accession of a popish king, and said all three lectures had been shut down at once, though the one at Tarvin was then briefly reprieved.⁴¹³ In either case, it would appear that Pearson closed them only reluctantly and under considerable pressure, that this pressure was the result of bitter divisions among the county elite, and that he felt a good deal of sympathy for Cawdrey. Pearson the scholar preferred winning arguments to fights, and Sancroft himself was torn between his sympathy for a fellow-sufferer from Civil-War Cambridge and the man he had himself put forward for Dean of Chester. Above all, though Pearson seems to have interviewed Cawdrey and given him a sympathetic hearing, he did not feel in control of the situation. The agenda was being set by more militant elements.

Pearson was not alone in finding himself under such pressure. His former colleague in Cambridge and at the Savoy Conference, Anthony Sparrow, now Bishop of Norwich, had long enjoyed a reputation as a rigid high-churchman and a persecutor, but even he encountered a similar situation. In 1682 the Privy Council were informed that

In Norwich the people are distinguished into 3 parties, the violent Tories and the violent Whigs, as they are called, and the moderate, who are for the present government in church and state, but go soberly to work.⁴¹⁴

Sparrow was now reckoned among the moderate and he found

⁴¹³ Another minor but interesting difference is that Pearson (or his Tory informants) attributed the origin of all the lectures to Wilkins with no mention of Hall, whose credentials as an enemy of dissent were impeccable. Peter Shakerley refers to a controversial order signed by Pearson in a letter to Jenkins of 9 October 1682. This may be the order suppressing the lectures: *CSPD 1682*, p.465.

some clamouring against me for prosecuting schismatics, and some who profess great loyalty and zeal for the church, as loud complaining because we do not proceed violently beyond the rules of law.⁴¹⁵

The last reference to the dispute at Chester is in a letter from Arderne to Sancroft of 3 April 1684. He now claimed that Lawrence Fogg was also spreading 'the infection of Whiggisme' by his preaching, and assured the Archbishop, 'Mr Cawdree ... is another man from what he was when your Grace knew him.'⁴¹⁶ Cawdree died in December of the same year, just three months after preaching at the funeral of the Whig Lord Delamere.

Among the surviving cause papers from the Consistory Court there is a final surge of cases relating to Dissenters, briefly rising to the level of two decades earlier, though now dealing with lay rather than clerical Nonconformity. Six cases from 1683 deal with absence from church, all but one of these relating to Chester itself while in the sixth, from Liverpool, citizens of Chester stood surety for the convicted absentees. Four of the cases came from St Peter's parish, where the Rector was William Thompson, one of the signatories of the Tory address of 1681, which would again suggest that it was these men who were making the running in the renewed attempt to suppress Dissent. The growing interest in enforcing the Five Mile Act and other legislation against Dissenters in Lancashire also reflected the Tory dominance of the Commission of the Peace after 1683 rather than any initiative by the bishop.⁴¹⁷ It may well have been the demand by lay magistrates for information about non-attenders at church that led to a considerable increase in the numbers who

⁴¹⁴ *CSPD 1682*, p.54.

⁴¹⁵ Tanner 36 f.228.

⁴¹⁶ Tanner 32 f.15. Unfortunately much of this letter is now illegible. In another letter Arderne said Jeffreys had commended his sermon; Peter Shakerley accused Fogg of failing to pray for the Queen and Duke of York: *CSPD 1682*, pp.388-89 & 434.

were excommunicated, yet their status was a testimony to the failure of spiritual penalties to move those who rejected the Established Church.⁴¹⁸ The experience of William Stout of successive vicars of Lancaster showed that Anglican clergy in the north of the diocese were as divided in their approach during 'this hot persecution time' as their colleagues further south.⁴¹⁹ As for Pearson, his last extant letter, written in April 1685 and expressing his hope of attending the new Parliament, is concerned only with standards of clerical behaviour and makes no mention of the violent suppression of Dissent. It was against his inclinations and beyond his control.

The last few years of Charles II's reign provide a parallel with its opening. In both periods a strong tide of reaction was flowing. In the 1660s this was against the nightmare of the previous twenty years; in the 1680s it was against the apparent return of that nightmare. An important difference was that at the start of his reign Charles had tried to stem the tide of reaction and create a broadly based church and government. In the 1680s, by contrast, he went with the current, exploiting it to strengthen the monarchy. The driving force largely came from lay politicians, whether in the Cavalier Parliament or on local grand juries and commissions of the peace. Churchmen on both occasions were divided. In the earlier period the point at issue for them was how far they should try to re-create the church for which a king and an archbishop had died. The first three bishops of Chester after 1660 all worked for restoration of the old church and supported measures which clearly separated conformists and Nonconformists. Yet this process also had a social and political

⁴¹⁷ Quintrell (ed.), *Proceedings of the Lancashire Justices*, pp.33 & 145-46.

⁴¹⁸ Addy, *Sin and Society*, p.71.

⁴¹⁹ *The Autobiography of William Stout of Lancaster, 1665-1752*, ed. by J.D. Marshall (Chetham Society, 3rd series, vol. XIV - Manchester, 1967), p.78.

side. Parish accounts regularly include payments for setting up the royal arms in the church, and in Prestbury the return of the old order locally as well as nationally was emphasised by displaying the arms of the local gentry as well.⁴²⁰ When Sir Peter Leicester drew up lists of local Dissenters he made a special note of those who had served in the parliamentary armies.⁴²¹ In the 1680s the boundaries of the national Church were clearly defined and not seriously in question, so that the points at issue were more clearly political. There is no reason to doubt either Cawdrey's or Arderne's commitment to the established Church; their difference was over the relative threats posed by political radicals or a popish successor, and Cawdrey's real offence was political. In this strife within the church which political divisions had created, Pearson tried, somewhat ineffectually, to be a moderating influence.

The bishop as an agent of royal policy: Cartwright and James II

The bitter contest between Whig and Tory carried over into the new reign. Though the Tories were triumphant, there were disturbances in Chester at the elections.

The windows of some loyal citizens were all broken: part of their cry was "Down with the Parsons," "Down with the Bishops." Sir G. Shakerley was knocked down in the street; lost his hat and wig: and the persons of some of the Reverend Clergy were likewise affronted.⁴²²

⁴²⁰ Earwaker, *East Cheshire*, vol.2, p.225.

⁴²¹ Chester RO, DLT/B11 pp.115-120: 'A Catalogue of all the Papists, Quakers, & other sectaries (by other Sectaries I understand all such as are enemies to our Government by Bishops, refusinge to heare our Common prayer booke read, and not Conformable to the Ceremonies of our Church of England, whether Independents, Anabaptists, or Presbyterians) within the Severall Parishes of Bucklow Hundred; with their adiacent Chappellryes.'

⁴²² Egerton, 'Papers referring to Elections', p.108.

It is unclear whether any of the animosity of the Whigs was now directed against Pearson personally, but the writer would probably have mentioned it if this had been the case. Despite his hopes of attending the 1685 Parliament, Pearson's health now declined rapidly. The appointment of Cartwright as his successor signalled major political and religious re-alignments as James returned to his brother's policy of 1672, trying to aid Roman Catholics, forge an alliance with the Protestant Dissenters, and undermine the privileged position of the Church of England. The new bishop was seen as an instrument of this policy. 'If the Church of England had noe better men in itt then he, we should before now have been heathans and worshipped the Devill,' asserted Lord Cholmondely's secretary. He was 'a shame to his Gown'.⁴²³

The highlight of Cartwright's episcopate was a visit to Chester by the King himself. Two days after James's departure, the Bishop drew up his will. It begins with a lengthy preamble which goes far beyond conventional phraseology to take on the nature of an *apologia pro vita sua*. As such it is worth quoting in full as giving the self-assessment of a controversial and much maligned man and a starting point for trying to understand his behaviour as bishop:-

I, Thomas Cartwright, by the undeserved mercy of my Heavenly ffather, & by the calling of my Holy mother, the Church of England, which is truly Catholicke, & by the Signall bounty of my regall Master, King James the Second (whom God long preserve for the good of this church & these kingdoms) Bishop of Chester, for which I kissed his Majesties hands 22 August, 1686, & was consecrated at Lambeth, 17 October following. Being now in perfect health & memory (praised be God for it) & having been honoured with his Majestye's presence in this palace the 27th, 28th, 29th, & 30th of August last past, & yet mindful of my mortality in the midst of my greatest Satisfaction which the Earth could afford me, as I allwaies desire & hope to be, doe make & ordaine this my last Will & Testament in manner & forme following. *Imprimis*, I bequeath my Sinfull but penitent soule to Almighty God, my most merciful Saviour & Redeemer, in full and perfect assurance of a glorious Resurrection to a blessed immortality through faith in his passion, meritts, & intercession; & my body to the Earth, to be decently buried at his,

⁴²³

Cheshire RO, DCH/K/3/7: letter of Thomas Slater to William Adams, 6 October 1687.

hers, or their discretion whom God shall ordaine by his Providence to do me that last good office by the Book of Common prayer, & according to the Rights of the Church of England, into which I was ordained a Priest when she was at the lowest, on 11th December, 1655, by Dr Robert Skinner, then Bishop of Oxon, of which I have ever since lived a faithful & obedient Sonne, & by God's grace did ever & doe nowe resolve to dye a true member, & I am well assured that his Majestye is as well pleased that I and others should be faithful to our God in this way of Worshipp, as to him in our allegiance. God make me & them better Christians & better Subjects & more thankful to God & the King.⁴²⁴

In this essentially private document we find a man at once fiercely loyal to both his reformed Church and his Roman Catholic king. Few among Cartwright's contemporaries or, indeed, among later historians have had much sympathy with this position, seeing an inevitable conflict of interest, especially in the latter half of James's reign. In consequence, Cartwright's religious views have been regarded as hypocritical and his political views as a mask for selfish and unprincipled ambition.

That he was an ambitious man is clear from his protracted but determined quest for a bishopric. In a first draft for his *History*, written while James was still securely on his throne, the exiled Burnet wrote:

Cartwright was made bishop of Chester, who is a man of parts, and had good beginnings of learning, but he is a most illiberal person, and a brutal ill-natured man. He has valued himself now for many years upon his carrying the king's authority above all restraints of the law, which, according to his divinity, are only rules to which the king submits as long as he thinks fit; but the divine authority that is in him is above all law, and can warrant him to break through all of them when he thinks fit to exert his authority to the full. This is good for the present occasion, so it is no wonder that it recommends him now at court. He is an exact flatterer, and though it is not likely that he, being a married man, will change his religion, yet he will contribute as vigourously to advance popery as if he were of that religion.⁴²⁵

In essence, this appraisal has been accepted by the majority of later historians. W.A. Speck, for example, describes Parker and Cartwright as 'time-serving bishops who were not averse to his [James's] flirtations with Catholicism'. On the other hand,

⁴²⁴ Sanders, 'Thomas Cartwright', p.25.

Norman Sykes remarked 'that Cartwright's principal offence was political rather than ecclesiastical', and went on to comment, 'In episcopal administration during his brief tenure of his see, the evidence of his Diary suggests that he did not fall below the standards of the age in ordination, confirmation and visitation.' Even more positive is the comment in the Annual Report of the Friends of Lambeth Palace Library for 1998 on their recent acquisition of a manuscript sermon by Cartwright which it describes as 'a spirited appeal for charity and peace, and an end to faction and anathemas which had prevailed throughout the era of the Civil War and Commonwealth'. The Report even suggests, 'It was perhaps Cartwright's attachment to tolerance and concord which made him, of all Anglican clergy, the most favoured of James II.'⁴²⁶ This view reflects modern ecumenism and the readiness of recent historians at least to consider the possibility that James, however authoritarian he may have been in his approach to politics, had a genuine commitment to religious toleration. It ignores the view expressed in one of Cartwright's earlier sermons, which called for 'a holy violence' to be used against Dissenters.⁴²⁷

Other sermons by Cartwright set forth the views on royal authority attributed to him by Burnet.⁴²⁸ It may be that the expression of such views while Cartwright was regularly in James's company in Edinburgh misled the future king as to how far the majority of Anglicans would be ready to comply with royal wishes that threatened the legal privileges and safeguards of their Church. Though later historians might reckon that 'Cartwright had no claim to represent an English

⁴²⁵ Foxcroft (ed.), *Supplement to Burnet's History*, p.215.

⁴²⁶ W.A. Speck, *Reluctant Revolutionaries: Englishmen and the Revolution of 1688* (Oxford, 1989), p.223; Sykes, *Sheldon to Secker*, p.31; *Lambeth Palace Library Annual Review* (1998), p.9.

⁴²⁷ Goldie, 'Theory of Religious Intolerance', p.331.

party⁴²⁹ this need not have been obvious to James and so may have contributed to his fatal miscalculations as king. On the other hand, the genuineness of Cartwright's personal commitment to the Church of England seems beyond reasonable doubt: it is demonstrated by deeds as well as words. Someone who was no more than an ambitious young man on the make would not have sought out a bishop to ordain him in December 1655, the same month that John Evelyn experienced 'the mournfullest day that I in my life have seen -- or the Church of England herself, since the Reformation -- to the great rejoicing of both Papist and Presbyter'.⁴³⁰ In 1689, as he lay dying in Dublin, with nothing left to lose in this life and heaven to gain in the next, he was, according to the testimony of his personal servant, 'somewhat short' with those who sought a death-bed conversion to Rome, insisting, 'I have done already what I hope is necessary for my salvation.' Although James personally met Cartwright's funeral expenses, it seems that the presence of an English Protestant bishop was not entirely welcome in the exiled King's overwhelmingly Irish and Catholic court. One diarist recorded: 'Bishop of Chester, Cartwright, the Ecclesiastical Commissioner, died a Protestant and would not endure the priests... the Irish were glad he was gone.' According to another report his death was 'not without suspicion of poyson'.⁴³¹

A conversation recorded by Dr George Clark of All Souls' College, Oxford, which probably took place during the meal mentioned in Cartwright's diary on 23 October 1687 throws light on Cartwright's willingness to comply with James's policy, despite his own Anglican convictions:

⁴²⁸ These are discussed in §7 below.

⁴²⁹ Keith Feiling, *A History of the Tory Party, 1640-1714* (Oxford, 1924), p.299.

⁴³⁰ Evelyn, *Diary* for 25 December 1655.

I well remember after dinner, as we were drinking a bottle of wine, he asked me why the gentlemen of the Church of England were so averse from complying with the King, who meant to give them a better security than the Test and Penal laws. Says he: Would not anyone who has a bond part with it for a judgement? And the King will give the Church a judgement for their security.⁴³²

At the end of the day, Cartwright not only believed the king's will to be supreme, he also trusted James.⁴³³ This at least suggests he acted with more integrity than some of the others who implemented royal policy, as the rest of Clark's account shows:

Lord Chief Justice Wright, who was by, though one of the Commissioners, could not contain himself, but answered: My Lord, the Church of England has a statute, which is better than a judgement, and would anyone part with a better security for a worse?⁴³⁴

On one occasion Cartwright went so far as to say that Jeffreys and Sunderland would deceive the King. His tongue was apparently loosened by drink, and he was reprimanded by James over the incident, but it reveals both how he saw in others about the King the self-seeking hypocrisy of which he was accused himself and also how divided among themselves the agents of royal policy were.⁴³⁵

In the month before Cartwright's nomination to Chester, James had established his Ecclesiastical Commission, and although Archbishop Sancroft and the Earl of Rochester were among those appointed to it, its purpose was clearly to subject the Church more firmly to royal control, and in particular to curb expressions of anti-popery. Cartwright himself was not appointed as a Commissioner until 13 October 1687, and while Sancroft pleaded ill-health to avoid taking any part in its

⁴³¹ Wood, *Athenae Oxoniensis*, vol.4, col.255; Bridgeman, *Wigan*, pp.374-75; *HMC - Marquess of Ormonde*, vol.8, p.363; Luttrell, *Historical Narration*, vol.1, p.526.

⁴³² *HMC, Leybourne-Popham*, p.266

⁴³³ Evelyn felt that James was more open and honest than his brother, and concluded, 'in this confidence, I hope that the Church of England may yet subsist.' Evelyn, *Diary* for 2 October 1685.

⁴³⁴ *HMC, Leybourne-Popham*, p.266. Cartwright expressed similar views in his speech to the Fellows of Magdalen College: J.R. Bloxham, *Magdalen College and King James II, 1686-1688* (Oxford, 1886), pp.114-17.

⁴³⁵ Luttrell, *Historical Relation*, vol.1, p.433; BL, Add MS 34515 f.54: Newsletter.

proceedings, Cartwright showed no such reluctance and effectively acted as its head in dealing with the recalcitrant fellows of Magdalen College, Oxford. Long before that, on 4 April 1687, James took the decisive step of issuing his Declaration of Indulgence, followed three months later by the dissolution of his uncooperative Tory Parliament. Sykes wrongly states that the Declaration was actually drafted by Cartwright, but the passage in the diary to which he referred dates from more than two weeks after the Declaration and what he in fact claimed to have prepared was an address of thanks to James 'for the care he had of us, and the gracious promise he hath made to protect us in his late gracious declaration'. This was subscribed by Cartwright himself, Parker of Oxford, Crewe of Durham and Sprat of Rochester, who were later joined by Barlow of Lincoln. Cartwright failed, however, in his efforts to secure the signatures of White of Peterborough or Mews of Winchester.⁴³⁶ He presented the address on 29 May, a day chosen by the King and especially suitable for demonstrations of loyalty to the restored monarchy. His diary proudly records James's grateful response:

My Lord, I could expect no less than such a loyal address as this from a prelate of such approved loyalty as you have been, and am fully convinced that, where my Bishops are loyal, the Clergy of the Church of England will easily be ruled by them in any thing relating to my service; and I do assure them that whilst they continue in their duty they shall never find me unmindful of my engagements to them, but ready to make good all that I have promised them, and to stand by them as long as I live...⁴³⁷

The King's optimism was misplaced, however. The Dean and Chapter of the vacant see of York declined to make an address, 'though advised to it by the Bishop of Chester and others from above', and when James came to Chester that summer he gave 'a severe reprimand to the Governor for not promoting the address', as

⁴³⁶ Sykes, *Sheldon to Secker*, p.31; Cartwright, *Diary* for 20 April 1687, pp.47-48; HMC, 7th Report, p.504. The address was prepared after a hint from Sunderland that James expected it.

⁴³⁷ Cartwright, *Diary*, p.57.

Cartwright had indeed urged him to do. On the other hand, he did succeed in coaxing the Mayor and Corporation of Wigan to make an address.⁴³⁸

The memoirs of Thomas Comber, who was Precentor of York at the time, throw further light on what happened there, and the crude pressure which Cartwright tried to apply:

The Dean having received a letter from the Bishop of Chester to desire our Chapter to address the King, I knowing the design was to encourage him to go on in oppressing the Church by flattery & vile compliance, opposed it so that none of the Chapter (the Dean excepted) would sign it.

In consequence, Comber believed, the Bishop

mortally hated me, & by a fals accusation to King James (as Mr Froud told me) endeavoured to Ruine me, & turn my Brother out of his place in the Post office but not being able to prove his charge, he was forced to recant before two or 3 lords.⁴³⁹

Given that around this time Cartwright, in a private interview with James, commended his resolution of taking 'an effectual course to make others weary of their obstinacy', this story is not improbable, but, like the episode of Cartwright's attack on Sunderland and Jeffreys, it may have caused the King to doubt his most loyal bishop's abilities.⁴⁴⁰

Much of Cartwright's most significant work in support of royal policy clearly took place on a national stage rather than in his own diocese. Despite the contempt with which so many other senior churchmen regarded him, he had a more significant part to play at this level than any other Restoration bishop of Chester, with the possible exception of the short-lived Ferne. As the only bishop on whom James

⁴³⁸ Cartwright, *Diary*, pp.58, 61-62, 75; *The Memoirs of Sir John Reresby: the complete text and a selection from his letters*, ed. by A. Browning (2nd edition, London, 1991), p.581.

⁴³⁹ Thomas Comber, *Autobiographies and Letters*, edited by C.E. Whiting, vol.1 (Surtees Society 156 - Durham, 1946), p.18.

could absolutely rely, he came to be needed in every trouble spot, despite his obvious limitations. This is why he was given the leading role in bringing the high Anglican bastion of Oxford to heel, and why he was even considered for translation to London, where the suspension of Bishop Compton had failed to stem the flow of anti-popish sermons. From the newsletter that reported this, it would appear the idea was dropped because of the practical difficulties in removing Compton altogether:

There is at present a design of transferring the Bishop of Chester to the Bishoprick of London, and consequently the Bishop of London must be deprived; this the Bishops that must concur in it, will not do. This frightens the Clergy of London mightily; for besides the consequence of such an unheard-of practice, if they had another Bishop they could no more carry on jointly the opposition [they] make to Popery; by which they have raised a spirit against it, all over the Nation.

The same letter goes on to tell of another idea for forcing the Church back into line:

The most dangerous and the most plausible proposal is that of calling a convocation of the Clergy, and laying before them H[is] M[ajesty]'s supremacy in its full extent; which the Jud[g]es will determine; particularly as to the dispensing power; and commanding the Clergy to acknowledge it (as Henry the 8th did) under the pain of a *Praemunire*, that is, of losing their Livings and Personal Estates. It must be acknowledged that there are Laws about the supremacy so unhappily worded, that a kind Judge will have a fair occasion to shew Zeal for H[is] M[ajesty]'s service. This proposal was at first declined as a too early extremity, but it is now received again.⁴⁴¹

There is no clear evidence that Cartwright was connected with this second idea, though another newsletter, from September 1688, reported that 'the Bishop of Chester ... declares the Test to be illegal because it was never passed in Convocation'.⁴⁴²

It is possible to detect a similar move in one aspect of Cartwright's activities as a diocesan bishop. Immediately after the King's stay in Chester, he conducted a

⁴⁴⁰ Cartwright, *Diary* for 29 April 1687, p.51.

⁴⁴¹ BL, Add MS 34515 ff.40-41: newsletter dated 8 December 1687.

⁴⁴² HMC, *Marquess of Downshire*, vol.1, p.301. Cartwright's alleged line of argument is not developed.

formal visitation of the cathedral. Each question in the 'Articles and Interrogations' he directed to the Dean and Chapter explicitly referred to the relevant cathedral statute. The statutes had originally been given by Henry VIII when the diocese was established, as stated in Article 31, so it comes as a surprise to find articles 29 and 30 asking

What foundation, Grant or Charter have you for the erecting and incorporating of your selves into the Society of a Dean & Chapter, by whom was the same made or by whom Confirm'd?

What Laws & Statutes have you for the Ordering & Governing of your Society, and the Rents, Revenues & Things belonging to the Church? By whom were they made? are they Confirm'd under the greate Seal of England? ... are they in any part contrary to the Law & Statutes of the Land or to the Doctrine & Discipline of the Church now establish't?⁴⁴³

The questions may be perfectly innocent, and are not without precedent, for though the articles for Pearson's visitation of the cathedral in 1675 are not extant, ten years earlier Hall had made his primary visitation of the Consistory Court and had asked:

What ancient formes and stiles of this Court have been time out of mind observed?... What statutes or rules have you for ordering proceedings in your Court, and by whom were they made?⁴⁴⁴

When the ecclesiastical courts had only just been re-established after a break of many years in which precedents may have been lost or traditional procedures forgotten, when their standing and that of canon law needed to be clarified by Parliament, and Archbishop Sheldon had just issued new 'Orders and Rules that Proctors may not use delays in expediting causes' such a question was obviously necessary. Twenty-two years later the restored Church functioned on a legal basis that was largely unquestioned, even if some, including the King, wanted it altered. Cartwright's questions may have been merely routine, but it is possible that he was testing the waters in case James wanted to use a *Quo Warranto* campaign to bring the Church to

⁴⁴³ Cheshire RO, EDA 2/3, ff.132-34.

⁴⁴⁴ Cheshire RO, EDA 2/3, f.24.

heel. This legal device had been used during the Tory Reaction of the early 1680s to purge borough corporations,⁴⁴⁵ and was being used against them once more as James tried to oust the Tories from their power bases. Just a few weeks later James certainly told Cartwright and his fellow commissioners to consider using it against the fellows of Magdalen College, and it is possible the idea was being talked about when Cartwright was at court earlier in the summer. Although the evidence does not exist to come to firm conclusions, it is certainly possible that Cartwright was preparing a weapon that James could use against churchmen less conspicuously loyal than himself.

In what other ways did their bishop's stance directly impinge on the clergy and people of the diocese? Most obviously, it meant they received a firm lead by word and example in what genuine loyalty meant, not that they always took the lesson to heart. From Cartwright's diary it appears that much of his first visit to the diocese, during the winter of 1686-87, was spent on administrative business, but he certainly met with a number of the Roman Catholic gentry and apparently even had a couple of their priests as dinner guests on one occasion. On 31 January

Mr Morrey preached in the cathedral, and I admonished him to mend his prayer, in which he gave not the King his titles, and to be wary of reflecting so imprudently as he did upon the King's religion, which he took thankfully and promised amendment.

On 6 February 'Dr Wroe preached an excellent sermon on the King's inauguration, which I requested him to print, as highly seasonable,' but later in the month he gave 'a severe admonition' to another preacher who had presumed to deliver 'a sermon of

⁴⁴⁵ Dean Arderne had proposed its use against the corporation of Chester: *CSPD 1682*, pp.438-39.

the duty of governors, before my Lord Clarendon and Lord Derby, instead of a Lenten sermon'.⁴⁴⁶

When he came back to the diocese in the summer, much of his time was devoted to prominent Roman Catholic visitors to the region: Lord Chief Justice Allebone, Bishop Leyburn (the Vicar Apostolic), and the King himself. On 12 August he was in Lancaster for the assizes. The entry in his diary reveals the latent hostility towards the royal policy of admitting Catholics to office:

I went with Judge Powel to the Church; Sir Richard Allebone and the Catholics went at the same time to the school-house, where they had mass and a sermon... I heard Sir Richard Allebone give the charge, in which he took notice that no protestants but myself, my Lord Brandon, and Sir Daniel Fleming, came out to meet them, which was a great disrespect to the King's Commission.⁴⁴⁷

While in Lancashire Cartwright himself either visited or received visits from many of the Roman Catholic gentry, who at this time provided a quarter of the actual and three-quarters of the active justices in the county.⁴⁴⁸ These proportions, like the poor attendance at the assizes, indicate the level of passive resistance that was developing, despite the example being set by the Bishop.

On the King's arrival in Chester later in the month, Dean Arderne delivered a fulsome speech of welcome. The speech so exactly reflects Cartwright's sentiments that it is hard to believe he did not have a hand in its composition.⁴⁴⁹ It expressed 'loyal joy in beholding the face of that mighty and wonderful King' and went on to gratefully acknowledge that James 'preserved that altar from being overthrown at

⁴⁴⁶ Cartwright, *Diary*, pp.23, 30, 31 & 35.

⁴⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p.71.

⁴⁴⁸ J. Hilton, *Catholic Lancashire*, p.44.

which he does not worship.' He then observed, 'T'were to be wished true that all who enjoy this protection had returned suitably their thankful addresses.' Everyone, he said, could unite 'to believe and adhere to a Prince of whom we have had experience that he will no sooner recede from his promises than he would fly from an enemy in the field.' He concluded by assuring the King that 'several' of his brethren would 'continue to advance among your subjects the strictest principles of a mannerly, peaceful and active loyalty.'⁴⁵⁰

In the following year the Dean, like most of the clergy in the diocese, would fail to display active loyalty and evade reading the second Declaration of Indulgence,⁴⁵¹ while James, confronted by William of Orange, would fly from an enemy in the field; but the day after the King's arrival the Bishop or the Dean were, apparently, willing to co-operate with James by making the Cathedral available to him for the ceremony of touching for the king's evil. This presumably used the pre-Reformation Latin form, which had been reprinted in 1686. It provided a potent and popular demonstration of the divinity that hedged a legitimate king, and it is surely no accident that James made use of it during his progress that summer in the two counties which had shown significant support for the illegitimate Monmouth, Somerset and Cheshire.⁴⁵² Cartwright recorded the occasion in his diary:

August 28. I was at his Majesty's levee; from whence, at nine o'clock, I attended him into the choir, where he healed 350 persons. After which he went to his devotions in the Shire Hall, and Mr Penn held forth in the Tennis Court, and I preached in the Cathedral.⁴⁵³

⁴⁴⁹ A passage in the *Diary* for 14 October 1687, mentioning criticism of the Dean and Bishop for their 'zeal in the Address', could either be about this speech or the Address of Thanks for the Declaration of Indulgence: p.85.

⁴⁵⁰ The speech is printed in Burne, *Chester Cathedral*, pp155-56.

⁴⁵¹ Speck, *Reluctant Revolutionaries*, p.222.

⁴⁵² It was alleged that one man had brought his daughter to be touched by Monmouth during his visit to the region in 1682: *CSPD 1682*, p. 423.

⁴⁵³ James touched another 450 people two days later: Cartwright, *Diary*, pp.74-75.

There is certainly no note of embarrassment in this brief entry, and since Cartwright presented the Mayor and Recorder of Wigan to the King later in the day, it is likely that he had encouraged the twenty-one 'persons within this town and parish of Wigan' whom the churchwardens' account book recorded as going 'to be touched for the King's Evil by King James the second att Chester city'.⁴⁵⁴ This contrasts with Bishop Ken of Bath and Wells, who was not actually present when James had touched at Bath Abbey, yet clearly felt the need to justify himself for having even allowed the ceremony to take place, as his subsequent letter to Sancroft (written two days before the healing ceremony at Chester) shows:

When his Majesty was at Bath there was a great healing; and without any warning, unless by a flying report, the Office was performed in the church between the hours of prayer. I had not time to remonstrate, and if I had done so it would have had no effect but only to provoke; besides I found it had been in other churches before, and I know of no place but the church capable to receive so great a multitude as came for a cure, upon which consideration I was wholly passive.

However, 'being well aware what advantages the Romanists take from the least seeming compliances', he had preached on the following Sunday on the 'common work of charity'. 'It was,' he wrote, 'the best expedient I could think of to prevent giving scandal to our own people, and to obviate all misrepresentations the Romanists might make of such a connivance.'⁴⁵⁵

James's last word to Cartwright on leaving Chester was an order 'to enquire out a chapel in the city, where it might be spared, and give notice of it to my Lord Sunderland.' It is hard to imagine Ken either being given or accepting such a commission. In a private interview James had also discussed with Cartwright suitable candidates for the next Parliament. In both these things Cartwright's

⁴⁵⁴ Bridgeman, *Wigan*, p. 571.

⁴⁵⁵ The full text of the letter is printed in Strickland, *Lives of the Seven Bishops*, pp. 226-27.

behaviour certainly contrasts with that of Bishop Trelawny of Bristol, whose letters show that he resisted attempts to secure a church and its endowments in Bristol for the use of Roman Catholics and used his influence in Cornwall, where his family estates were, to secretly encourage those opposed to the repeal of the Test Acts by any future Parliament.⁴⁵⁶

At the King's departure from Chester, Cartwright was, apparently, well-pleased with himself. The diary lists many gifts he received from Cheshire gentry while James was his guest, and its tone, like that of the preamble to his will, written at the same time, swells with pride. Yet there were more ominous straws in the wind, some of which he may have noticed. For example, the Dean's speech had referred to 'myself and several [rather than 'all'] of my brethren' continuing to work for James's cause. The accounts of Thomas Jolly and Henry Newcome, who were among the Nonconformist ministers who waited on Rowton Heath to see James as he entered Chester, indicate that Dissenters in the north-west were also divided on how to view the King's activities, and Newcome was much relieved not to have to make a speech on their behalf.⁴⁵⁷ When a third prominent Roman Catholic, Bishop Leyburn, visited the region, Cartwright spent some time with him in Lancashire during September, brought him to Chester in his own coach, and entertained him at the palace, inviting the Dean to join them.⁴⁵⁸ It would seem from the silence of the diary that the invitation was not taken up. The limits of even Arderne's loyalty were being reached,⁴⁵⁹ and he was not alone. According to Clarke's recollections:

⁴⁵⁶ Tanner 28/1 f.139 & 29 f.147.

⁴⁵⁷ Jolly, *Note Book*, p.85; Newcome, *Autobiography*, p.265.

⁴⁵⁸ Cartwright, *Diary*, p.p.79-80.

⁴⁵⁹ Arderne had left Chester on a plea of sickness during the King's visit and does not appear to have returned until October: Cheshire RO, EDA 2/3 ff.131-32; Cartwright, *Diary*, p.77.

Dr Cartwright ... would have had his Chancellor and Consistory meet Leybourne when he came thither, but the Chancellor honestly refused it, as being against the law to acknowledge anyone that acted by authority of the See of Rome.⁴⁶⁰

Since the chancellor of the diocese was a 'good friend' whom Clarke visited 'several times' as these events were unfolding, his story is probably reliable, although the incident is not mentioned in Cartwright's diary. In fact, dissent from the regime seems only to have been mentioned by Cartwright when he or others had successfully rebuked it. Otherwise, he seems to have been unwilling or unable to recognise it, or its strength. This was a failing he shared with the King himself.

Cartwright is also reported by Clarke to have always referred to Leyburn and the Roman Catholic clergy as the King's bishop and the King's priests.⁴⁶¹ It was in this capacity rather than as agents of the see of Rome that he received them and spent so much time with them, both in his diocese and at court. Obviously, few others saw things in this light, but it did not prevent Cartwright from defending his own church from those who were not the King's clergy, even if they enjoyed his indulgence. This is shown by the case of Darwen chapel in the parish of Blackburn. Shortly before James's visit, Cartwright received an angry letter from Francis Price, the Vicar. In it he claimed that the Independents had obtained a licence under the Declaration of Indulgence for a meeting place in Darwen, but had then demanded the keys to the chapel. On Price's refusal to hand them over until three J.P.s agreed that this was the intention of the licence, they had broken in, taken the parochial chapel over for their own use, and prevented Price's curate from conducting Anglican worship. He asked that Cartwright raise the matter with the King himself, and to

⁴⁶⁰ HMC, *Leybourne-Popham*, pp.265-66. Rumour claimed that Cartwright's wife and daughter showed less deference to Leyburn than he did: Cheshire RO, DCH/K/3/7.

⁴⁶¹ *ibid.*

have a notice fixed to the chapel door forbidding its use by any minister who did not hold the Bishop's licence. He then tactfully concluded by promising to abide by the King's own ruling on the matter. This approach seems to have been successful, both in moving Cartwright to act and in gaining a favourable response from James. The letter is now among the state papers and in October the Darwen Nonconformists, having overplayed their hand, had their licence withdrawn entirely, while the Anglican clergy were granted 'the quiet and full possession of the said Chapel ... without any hindrance or molestation'.⁴⁶²

While in Chester, James had gone to pray at the shrine at Holywell. It was his belief that this act of piety was rewarded by the conception and birth of the Prince of Wales, an event which hastened the final catastrophe of his reign. Up to this point everyone, including James himself, had assumed that his reign would be a relatively short one (he was a relatively old man in poor health) and that he would be succeeded by his Protestant daughters. This belief had led James to push forward with measures on behalf of his co-religionists more quickly than he might otherwise have done, and encouraged his subjects to live in passive obedience, knowing that natural causes would soon remove their 'oppressor'. The prospect of a Catholic heir now convinced the King that his policies had divine approval and many of his previously loyal subjects that their religion and liberties faced a permanent threat. This was why James re-issued his Declaration of Indulgence and ordered it to be read from every pulpit, and why the great majority of churchmen felt the point had come to make a stand. It was the issue that served to highlight Cartwright's isolation among his episcopal colleagues and his lack of influence over his own clergy.

⁴⁶² *CSPD June 1687 - February 1689*, pp.34, 65 & 85-86.

Richard Hatton, Vicar of Deane, was in a dilemma. When he wrote on 30 May asking advice from Roger Kenyon, he was reluctantly intending to read the Declaration, while saying nothing which might suggest he agreed with its contents:

Sir, I humbly desire your opinion on whether it be convenient to say anything at all to it, or noe. I would carry myselfe as inoffensive in this concern as I could, that I might neither expose myselfe to be informed against by some busybody Romanist, nor to the censure of any Nonconformist, as if the meer publication of the declaration, did testify any concurrency therewith. I know not well what to resolve upon, but am inclinable to think that the safest way will be to be silent. The clergy are enjoyned ... in the declaration to read it upon two Sabbath dayes, unless I mistake the sence of it, and that it does give a liberty to read it upon either day. I cannot well understand why it should be read twice. Sir, ... I have had a very great esteeme of you since I have understood of your christian carriage and resolution against the takeing off the penall laws and test, notwithstanding the temptations you had to the contrary... Our poor distressed Church is hardly beset on every hand. I hope that God, in his due time, will give her a gracious deliverance.⁴⁶³

This is the letter of a frightened and isolated man. A few days later Kenyon received a letter from one of the Cheshire gentry telling him how the clergy there were drawing strength in refusing to read from one another and from the example of the seven bishops, but still hoped for reassurance that their Lancashire brethren would take the same stand.

The clergy of this county, as far as I can perceive, generally agree not to read the declaration, notwithstanding the Bishop's monition, as well as order. For avoiding of schism, among other reasons, as I am told, they choose rather to follow the Metropolitan, accompanied with soe many other Bishops of approved integrity and learning, with approbation of both Universitys, and the generality of the clergy of the kingdom, in the substantialls of the petition, then their own diocessan, dissenting from that nationall synodical body (if I may so, in this case, call them) recconing it a strange task to be enjoyned, with their owne hands, to pull the Church fence... Besides, they are jealous lest their flocks should, like the doctors at London, when he began to read it, all goe out... I am in paine till I know how some clergymen of your county acquitt themselves in this particular.⁴⁶⁴

It is clear from this that Cartwright was trying to put pressure on his clergy to comply. It seems probable that very few did, and even fewer with any enthusiasm.

⁴⁶³ HMC, *Kenyon*, pp.190-91.

⁴⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p.191.

An Address 'to the King's most Excellent Majesty' from the 'Clergy of the County Palatine of Chester who published the late gracious Declaration in their Churches for Liberty of Conscience' stresses duty rather than inclination as the motive for having read it.⁴⁶⁵

The precise steps Cartwright took to secure compliance are not known, but the term 'monition' suggests some sort of warning of disciplinary action. In the event he could do very little against near universal disobedience. In his *commendam* of Barking the registers record that on 17 June 'Mr Chisenhall [the curate] was turned out for not reading the Declaration, and Mr Hall was appointed his successor by the Bishop of Chester,' but even in Wigan, in Cartwright's absence, bonfires were lit and the bells rung when news came of the acquittal of the seven bishops.⁴⁶⁶ His actions were obviously of interest to his brother bishops, and the Bishop of Carlisle wrote declaring his own intentions to Sir Daniel Fleming, and seeking to discover what Cartwright was up to in Chester diocese:

I should be glad to hear what orders the clergy about you have received from your Bishop. As to the reading of the Declaration, I believe it will scarce be read by any in this diocese, for I am resolved to concur with my brethren above in the matter of their late Petition, and so -- it is believed -- will the rest of the Bishops except a very few. Sixteen or seventeen of the twenty-four they reckon upon. Lincoln and Hereford they look upon as doubtful, the remaining five, viz., Durham, Rochester, Chester, St.David's, and Lichfield, they despair of.⁴⁶⁷

So much did Sancroft and his close associates despair of Cartwright and Watson of St David's that they were deliberately left out of the discussions at which they

⁴⁶⁵ *Palatine Note-Book*, vol.3, (Manchester, 1883), pp.49-50.

⁴⁶⁶ F. Sanders, 'Historical Notes on the Bishops of Chester: XVI, Thomas Cartwright, A.D.1686-1689', *CDG*, 7 (1892), 6-9, 44-47, 62-64 (quotation from Barking registers on p.62); J.A. Hilton, 'Wigan Catholics and the Policies of James II', *NWCH*, 1 (1969), 97-110 (churchwardens' accounts relating to the release of the bishops are quoted on p.105). One of the gentry in the Wigan area opposed to royal policy was Sir Edward Chisenhall, but it is not known if the curate at Barking was a relative.

⁴⁶⁷ HMC, *Le Fleming*, p.227.

decided on their plan of action. 'Saturday I dined at Lambeth,' wrote the Earl of Clarendon,

where likewise dined the Bishops of London, Ely, Peterborough, Chester and St Davids. The last two discomposed the company, nobody caring to speak before them. Quickly after dinner they went away. Then the archbishop and the rest took into consideration the reading of the declaration in the churches, according to the order of council: and, after a full deliberation, it was resolved not to do it... [and] to petition the King in the matter.⁴⁶⁸

Burnet attributed James's shock at receiving the petition of the seven bishops to Cartwright's having failed to warn him of what was planned:

The king was much surprised at this, being flattered and deceived by his spies. Cartwright, bishop of Chester, was possessed with a story that was too easily believed by him, and was carried by him to the king, who was very apt to believe everything that suited his own designs. The story was that the bishops intended by a petition to the king to let him understand that orders of this kind used to be addressed to their chancellors, but not to themselves: and to pray him to continue that method.⁴⁶⁹

Any reconstruction of Cartwright's part in these events is conjectural, and it is by no means certain that he and Watson simply turned up uninvited to the dinner at Lambeth.⁴⁷⁰ In fact, it is possible that they were actually invited by the conspirators so that their meeting would arouse less suspicion and that the idea that there was only a minor procedural objection was brought into the conversation during the meal. The Archbishop may have hoped that the court bishops would be willing to cooperate in such an apparently trivial act of opposition and could then be drawn further away from the King. Alternatively, Burnet's analysis of Cartwright's and James's tendency to believe what they wanted to hear is correct, and it was a weakness Sancroft and his colleagues may have been trying to exploit. The same trait was probably what led Cartwright to attend the bishops' trial, no doubt

⁴⁶⁸ *The Correspondence of Henry Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, and His Brother, Lawrence Hyde, Earl of Rochester*, ed. by S.W. Singer (London, 1828), vol.2, p.171.

⁴⁶⁹ Burnet, *History of James II*, p.258.

expecting a conviction and hoping the light of his own loyalty would shine brighter against the clouds of sedition. The outcome was somewhat different, as he became a target for the scorn of the mob who derided him as 'the wolf in sheep's clothing' and 'the man with the Pope in his belly'.⁴⁷¹ It is also possible that James came to trust him less as a result of the misleading information he had conveyed. He was certainly one of the bishops whom James demanded on 2 November should deny any part in asking William to intervene, but by then the King was not unreasonably suspicious of everyone, and his adherents were having to think of their own safety.

On 18 October Cartwright was one of several of James's supporters to secure a general pardon under the great seal for any offences they may have committed. James himself was desperately trying to win back supporters whom he had alienated over the previous two years, but when hints were dropped to the Earl of Derby that he could be restored to his lieutenancies in Cheshire and Lancashire, he chose to contact one of the recently imprisoned bishops for advice on the situation in London rather than Cartwright, who had ecclesiastical responsibility for the same area and had been seen as close to the King. In the chaos following William's landing and James's flight, rumours abounded. The first mention of Cartwright's flight is in a letter from Pepys to Lord Dartmouth, the Admiral, on 10 December. It was affirmed by several other writers the next day, though on 13 December one of Roger Kenyon's correspondents told him that Cartwright had been arrested. This proved untrue, for Cartwright had made his way in disguise to France, where he conducted services for the few Protestants at the exiled court and where his loyalty was

⁴⁷⁰ The traditional day for the archbishops to have an open table for guests was Tuesday, not Saturday, and such a day would hardly have been chosen for a conspiratorial gathering: Carpenter, *Cantuar*, p.246.

rewarded when James nominated him to succeed Seth Ward as Bishop of Salisbury. It was, perhaps, in hopes returning to claim his prize that he accompanied James to Ireland, where he died.⁴⁷²

Cartwright had grown up in the years of civil war and revolution. From that early experience of chaos and uncertainty he had turned to the traditional Church and the legitimate dynasty, and continued steadfast to both. In many ways his view of himself as an agent of the royal Supreme Governor of the Church is more akin to that of a Tudor than a Stuart prelate. He did not share only a Christian name with Thomas Cranmer. Like him he had theological convictions of his own, but felt morally bound to defer to the will of his sovereign. Like him he served under a ruler who supported -- if somewhat erratically -- the reformed Church of England, and also under one who owed allegiance to the Pope. Mary demanded far more of Cranmer than James did of Cartwright, for the latter was never required to renounce his Protestant convictions. In consequence of this, he never seems to have felt any real conflict of loyalties. Yet ironically, if the story of his death-bed rebuttal of the Roman clergy and the rumours of poison had gained greater circulation, then he too may have been remembered not as the creature of a popish tyrant but as a Protestant martyr.

Wilkins was the only other Bishop of Chester in this period whose loyalty to the Church of England was seriously questioned, but he too was working in the light

⁴⁷¹ T.B. Macaulay, *The History of England from the Accession of James II*, (Everyman's Library edition, London, 1906), vol. 1, p. 798, citing the report of the Dutch ambassador.

⁴⁷² *CSPD June 1687 - February 1689*, p. 323; Bagley, *Earls of Derby*, p. 119; HMC, *Report X*, appendix 5, p. 228; HMC, *Report XV*, appendix 1, p. 134; HMC, *Hastings*, vol. 2, p. 205; HMC, *Kenyon*, pp. 210-11; Wood, *Athenae*, vol. 4, col. 253. Wood derived his information from Cartwright's servant.

of convictions shaped by his early experiences. Where Cartwright went against most of his contemporaries in believing a reformed church was safe under the protection of a Catholic king, Wilkins differed from most senior churchmen in believing it would be more secure in alliance with the very people whom they thought responsible for its overthrow in the 1640s. The majority of the men being considered therefore took a narrower view, and worked to rebuild a church which conformed to the pattern for which they had suffered during the Interregnum, and which they believed should enjoy the protection of a sympathetic government, for, in the words of one preacher, 'They were the same hands and principles that took the crown from the King's head and the mitre from the bishops'.⁴⁷³ This commonly held conviction led Walton and Ferne to strive for the rebuilding of the church alongside monarchical government, Hall to persecute those who had helped pull the mitre from his father's head, and Pearson to devote his scholarship to the defence of a reformed episcopal church while accepting the measures more decisive men of action from the government told him were needed for their common defence.

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Quoted from a sermon of Robert South in Beddard, 'Restoration Church', p.167.

§5 'THE OFFICE AND WORK OF A BISHOP'

When the archbishop consecrated a new bishop, he said (following the adoption of the revised ordinal in 1662): 'Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Bishop in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands.' This wording had been advocated by Pearson among others during the debates in Convocation in 1661,⁴⁷⁴ but what did the office and work of a bishop actually involve? The Ordinal itself and the canons of 1604 each laid various obligations and responsibilities on the shoulders of a bishop, while the expectations of the government and of contemporaneous society brought many more. Pearson was criticised by both Cartwright, his successor at Chester, and Burnet for devoting too much time to his studies to the neglect of day to day administration,⁴⁷⁵ but he could have retorted that this was necessary if he was, 'with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine', as he had promised to do at his consecration.⁴⁷⁶ Hall's letters show him to have found a tension between his diocesan and national responsibilities. In 1663, his attendance at Parliament prevented him from visiting Sir Peter Leicester to return a treatise on the immortality of the soul written by the baronet:

[I was] loath to dismisse your booke till I had scribbled some animadversions upon it: and I have blotted a Sheete of Paper which my straitnes of tyme & speedy iourney to London will hardly allow me to transcribe or looke over; I must therefore returne your booke (unaccompanied with it, as I intended) with my many thanks for the satisfaction I have received.⁴⁷⁷

Two years later Hall hoped that he might be excused attendance at the Oxford session of Parliament in order to concentrate on the disciplinary business arising

⁴⁷⁴ Few records of the Convocation survive, but the story that Pearson proposed this wording was current by the 1680s, being mentioned Humphrey Prideaux in 1688, and has never been disputed: Paul F. Bradshaw, *The Anglican Ordinal: its history and development from the Reformation to the present day* (London, 1971), p.92.

⁴⁷⁵ Tanner 30 f.180; Burnet, *Reign of James II*, p.158.

from his recent visitation of the diocese. 'I see many inconveniences unavoidable in my journey thither,' he told Sheldon.⁴⁷⁸ Again, he could have cited the charge given in the consecration service that 'such as be unquiet, disobedient and criminous' within his diocese he should 'correct and punish'.⁴⁷⁹ Preaching at Wilkins' funeral, Lloyd spoke of the 'multiplicity of business' which fell to the bishop's lot, and claimed, 'He [Wilkins] impaired by it, a Body which seemed to have been built for a long Age, and contracted those Infirmities that hastened his death.'⁴⁸⁰

The last chapter dealt in detail with the various bishops' attempts to uphold or modify the religious establishment, and the limitations on them in those attempts. This one will look at the whole range of their activities to see what the demands on their time were and, where the evidence permits, to see if there were any variations in their approach and priorities. Insofar as this is possible, the picture that has already begun to emerge will be confirmed. Hall appears as hard-working and dedicated to the reconstruction of the Church; Wilkins stands out as something of a maverick among his episcopal colleagues; Pearson sometimes seems out of his depth among more forceful or worldly-wise characters; Cartwright is the loyal servant of the crown. Despite these differences, however, none of them significantly changed the way the institution of episcopacy functioned, a way that demanded men who were fit and active yet all too often was the responsibility of men who were sick or elderly.

The diary kept by Thomas Cartwright for the first year of his episcopate gives an invaluable close-up of how a bishop's time might be spent, though it would be

⁴⁷⁶ BCP, p.428.

⁴⁷⁷ Cheshire RO, DLT/B67, p.256.

⁴⁷⁸ Bodleian MS Add C305 f.52.

⁴⁷⁹ BCP, p.429.

wrong to assume that these twelve months were typical of a year in the life of any Restoration bishop. To take the most obvious instance, Cartwright was regularly at court and in contact with the king in a way that was not the case with any of the other bishops of Chester in this period. On the other hand, Parliament was never in session during Cartwright's time, yet previous bishops all had to devote much time to parliamentary business. For Cartwright's second year in office and for the careers of his five predecessors it is possible to get only intermittent glimpses of their activities through letters, encounters with other diary-keepers, and records such as the Journals of the House of Lords and the diocesan archives. This chapter will therefore first look at the different activities that occupied Cartwright's time during the year covered by the diary and then go on to see how the picture that emerges can be amplified from other sources.

Cartwright commenced his diary on 11 August 1686, the day on which James II promised to nominate him as Bishop of Chester. There are brief entries for two more days in August and eight in September. From 3 October it provides a daily record until 25 October of the following year, when he was in the midst of dealing with the Magdalen College affair as a member of the Ecclesiastical Commission. If it was continued in further volumes, these are now lost.⁴⁸¹ It thus gives some indication of Cartwright's activities on a total of four hundred days, twenty-six of them in the period prior to his consecration. It is not a record to compare with those

⁴⁸⁰ Lloyd, *Funeral Sermon*, p.37.

⁴⁸¹ *The Palatine Note-Book*, vol.1 (1881), p.15, reprints a letter from a certain John E. Bailey claiming, 'A man who kept so complete an account of his doings for fifteen months would not suddenly cease the habit. Is anything known of the missing portions? One of my friends has a copy of the Camden edition, in which a former owner has thus written: "Charles Leslie, *Answer to King*, p.iii, quotes a passage from Cartwright's Diary alluding to March 14th, 1689; but the Diary as here published ends October 25th, 1687.'" His enquiry elicited no response, and no other references to a continuation of the diary have been discovered. Hunter, the editor of the Camden edition, simply notes after the final entry on p.93, 'Here the Diary ends, the volume being filled.'

of Pepys or Evelyn for either vividness or detail, and would appear to have been kept primarily as an aide-mémoire, listing those with whom he had official dealings, to whom he wrote letters or with whom he dined, and other sources are needed to put flesh on the bare bones. Only indirectly does it reveal the man himself, as in the tendency noticed in the previous chapter to record personal triumphs but pass over rebuffs. For the present purpose, though, its outline sketch of episcopal routine will be sufficient.

The fifteen months covered by the diary divide into five shorter periods: three in London or the south-east separated by two in Chester and the north. A significant amount of time, therefore, was spent in travelling. Thirty-seven days were taken up on journeys between London and his diocese, though on eight of these he remained in the same place. The breaks on a journey did not necessarily offer the opportunity for a complete rest, however. On his first journey to his diocese he travelled on the York coach, leaving the Strand on 28 October and travelling in company with his successor as Dean of Ripon and others. That night they stopped at Stevenage, where he wrote a couple of letters, one of them to the chancellor of the diocese. The next day they reached Stamford, where they stayed two nights and Cartwright was invited to preach before the mayor. Three more days travel brought the party to York. Here he also spent two nights, but as well as meeting with dignitaries from the Minster he collected the rent on the property in the city owned by the bishops of Chester, licensed a curate, and received a circular letter from the Ecclesiastical Commission. He entered his diocese at Ripon on 5 November, eight days after setting out.⁴⁸² The journey was unusual in following the Great North Road to enter the diocese in Yorkshire. On every other recorded occasion, Cartwright and his

predecessors travelled directly between London and Chester, sometimes using the stage and sometimes their own coach.⁴⁸³ On this particular visit to his diocese, he came first to the north-east as he had affairs to wind up in Ripon and Durham where he had held livings before his elevation to the episcopate. The breaks on the journey, however, and their use for sending or receiving letters or for preaching are typical. Any long journey on seventeenth-century roads was a tiring business, and the diary mentions such hazards as a broken axle on the coach and inns of variable quality and expense.⁴⁸⁴

In the period covered by the diary, Cartwright spent one hundred and thirty-seven days in the diocese on his first visit and seventy-two on his second. He set out on that first visit just eleven days after his consecration, much sooner than any of his predecessors. On his return he spent one hundred and two days in and around London or Windsor. The final period in the capital was a mere six days before he set out for Oxford, a week before the diary ends. For rather more than half the period covered by the diary, then, Cartwright was in his diocese, and the account of his first journey north indicates that diocesan business demanded his attention even when he was elsewhere. His activities in these two centres of a bishop's life, London and his see, can now be examined in more detail.

⁴⁸² Cartwright, *Diary*, pp.9-10.

⁴⁸³ A news-letter of July 1687 refers to 'the coaches of the Bishops of Durham and Chester': HMC, *Downshire*, vol. 1, p.253. Cartwright bought two new horses that month before setting out again for Chester. It seems that he travelled north in his own coach but returned in October on the stage-coach. The King had to lend him one to go to Oxford, 'my coach not being in town': Cartwright, *Diary*, pp.68, 83-84.

⁴⁸⁴ The 'Four Crosses' at Castle Bromwich was 'dear' but the 'George' at Whitchurch offered 'excellent accommodation, and cheap': Cartwright, *Diary*, pp.42, 68 & 72.

On at least forty-eight days he was at court in Windsor or Whitehall. 'I was at the King's levee,' is a phrase that runs like a refrain throughout the diary. It first appears in the entry for 7 October 1686.⁴⁸⁵ It was only later that day that Jeffreys, the Lord Chancellor, sealed the royal assent to his election and for his *commendams* at Wigan and Barking, but Cartwright was already using his position at court on behalf of his diocesan clergy by petitioning Rochester, the Lord Treasurer, for the arrears of stipend owed to the King's Preachers for Lancashire. Few of the entries, however, give details of what was discussed in his meetings with various courtiers, though he was evidently concerned to promote royal policy in a variety of ways, as becomes clear in the entries for April 1687. He arrived in London from Chester on the 7 April and was at court on all but three days for the remainder of the month. The first Declaration of Indulgence had just been issued, and Cartwright was drawing up the address of thanks to the King. He also reported to the Jesuit Father Petre and the Roman Catholic Earl of Peterborough a discussion among the bishops about James's real attitude to persecution and toleration and records trying to persuade Sir Thomas Grosvenor, one of the members of Parliament for Chester, to support the repeal of the penal laws against Roman Catholics. Again, he appears to have given Petre copies of the papers he had read to Grosvenor as well as reporting the conversation to the King himself. He took his seat in the House of Lords at the purely formal meeting on 28 April when the prorogation was extended, but was presumably ready to argue for the court's position whenever the Houses should reassemble for business.⁴⁸⁶ The final period in London described by the diary was

⁴⁸⁵ *ibid.*, pp.3-4.

⁴⁸⁶ *ibid.*, pp.43-50.

dominated by his appointment to the Ecclesiastical Commission and preparations to go to Oxford in that capacity.⁴⁸⁷

Cartwright was a 'court bishop' in a sense that applies to none of the other bishops of Chester in this period, for he was an active courtier and a political agent of the crown. On the other hand, in the peculiar circumstances of the reign of a Roman Catholic king he never preached before the monarch (as Wilkins and Pearson regularly did) nor even, during these few months, before Princess Anne, though he did attend St George's Chapel with her when he was at Windsor.⁴⁸⁸ The other activities which occupied his time when away from the diocese more often accorded with those of his predecessors and, as already suggested, were frequently part and parcel of his diocesan responsibilities.

It will be convenient to consider these activities under three main headings -- spiritual functions, administrative tasks, and social activities -- though there is some overlap between them.

Ordination and confirmation were the two rites which could be administered only by a bishop. According to the diary, Cartwright conducted ordinations at the conclusion of each of the Ember Weeks for which he was in Chester. Thus he ordained twelve deacons and eight priests on the fourth Sunday of Advent 1686, three deacons and seven priests on the second Sunday in Lent 1687, and a further eleven deacons and eight priests at two separate services the following Michaelmas.

⁴⁸⁷ *ibid.*, pp.83-86.

⁴⁸⁸ On 3 July 1687 and probably a week later as well: *ibid.*, pp.65 & 67. He had preached to leading courtiers at Windsor shortly before his nomination as a bishop: Evelyn, *Diary* for 11 July 1686, vol.IV, p.518.

There were, apparently, no Trinity ordinations, Cartwright being in London at that time. He carefully recorded the names and qualifications of all the ordinands, and the parishes in which they were to serve. On each occasion a couple of the candidates were from neighbouring dioceses and were ordained on the authority of letters dimissory. On one occasion he also ordained a priest in Westminster Abbey, but there is no indication whether the man was to serve in Chester diocese or elsewhere. This was only a week after Cartwright's own consecration, but during the extended stay in London between the two periods in the north he also participated in the consecration in Lambeth Palace chapel of Thomas Watson as the new bishop of St Davids.⁴⁸⁹ No fewer than seven of the twenty-four deacons had to be confirmed in Cartwright's chapel prior to their ordination, which may be an indication of how haphazard the administration of that latter rite could be. It was normally done during a bishop's triennial visitation of his diocese, or at other times as he travelled about. Pearson's movements, however, had been restricted by poor health for several years, and his last visitation of the diocese had been conducted in 1677. This will be at least part of the reason why Cartwright found no shortage of candidates for confirmation on his travels around the diocese in addition to those confirmed on the eve of ordination. He records holding confirmations in Richmond, Chester (twice), Tarvin and Whitegate (both in Cheshire), and Lancaster, and laid his hands on nearly 1,800 candidates in the course of ten months.⁴⁹⁰ On no occasion, however, did he conduct a confirmation outside his own diocese.

⁴⁸⁹ For ordinations see Cartwright, *Diary*, pp.8, 19-20, 33-34, 64, 78, 80-81. The proportion of graduates had risen to somewhere between 75% and 84%, about 10% higher than among the diocesan clergy in 1662: see above, p.111.

⁴⁹⁰ For confirmations, *ibid.*, pp.12, 19, 21-22, 27-28, 72, 81.

He records preaching nineteen sermons during the period of the diary, in addition to the charges given to ordinands. There is no significant difference in this aspect of his ministry between the times when he was in the diocese and the times when he was elsewhere. Seven sermons were delivered in his cathedral, one in Wigan, and two elsewhere in the diocese. Nine were preached outside the diocese, two of them in his other *commendam* of Barking. He also records being invited to preach at the Sons of the Clergy festival in December 1687, but could not commit himself since, he explained, he was not master of his own time and did not know whether he would be in London then.⁴⁹¹

Diocesan administration, of course, had to go on throughout the year. The bishop could more easily deal with administrative tasks while he was in the diocese since he was more accessible to petitioners and could choose to act in person rather than through his officials, but he did not entirely escape these aspects of his work during his visits to London. Cartwright gave licences or deeds of institution to sixteen clergy while he was in the north, but a further three while he was outside his diocese. Of the six leases he granted on property or impropriations, half were dealt with while he was in Chester and half while in London. As bishop he had the right to preside in his own Consistory Court, or to settle disputes privately in person. On his first visit to the diocese, when he was mainly resident in Chester itself for four months he presided in the court (which usually sat twice a week) seven times, i.e. for about one fifth of its sessions. On his second visit to the diocese he did not attend at all. However, on this occasion he spent more time away from his cathedral city and while he was there had other priorities, notably entertaining the King and conducting a formal visitation of the cathedral. It is an indication of the limitations of the diary,

⁴⁹¹ *ibid.*, p.85.

however, that it tells little of the visitation process, such as how long he spent on preparing the visitation articles and injunctions, or how far this was delegated to officials. Disputes over pews were regularly brought for the bishop's personal arbitration. The diary records eight such cases, at least one of which was brought to him in London when the Mayor and aldermen of Preston asked him to prohibit the erection of a gallery in the church there. Other matters referred to him in London might be sent back to the courts at Chester or Richmond to deal with, as with two cases of marriages within the prohibited degrees.⁴⁹² Cartwright also regularly praised or rebuked clergy, parish officials or lay-folk whom he encountered in his travels around the diocese. For example, during February 1687 he encouraged Richard Wroe to print a sermon he regarded as 'excellent' and 'highly seasonable' but gave 'a severe admonition' to a Mr Peake whose sermon before the Earls of Clarendon and Derby he thought quite inappropriate and 'rebuked, as they deserved,' various ladies 'for talking and laughing in the church'.⁴⁹³ In the following September he was in Liverpool, where he 'commanded the churchwarden to set the communion table altar-wise against the wall'.⁴⁹⁴

The diary carefully lists all those to whom he wrote letters. Few of the 142 he records have survived, and the diary generally gives no indication of their contents. Similar numbers of letters were written wherever he happened to be, and it is known who about three-quarters of the recipients were. In some categories of recipients, such as other senior clergy or members of his family, the numbers written from Chester, from London, or while on his travels, were much the same. However, while in Chester he only needed to write to diocesan clergy or officials four times,

⁴⁹² *ibid.*, pp.53 & 65.

⁴⁹³ *ibid.*, pp.31-32, 35; above, pp.192-93.

but eighteen such letters were sent while he was away from the diocese along with another three to local lay magistrates. On the other hand, the four to senior judges or government ministers were all written when he was away from London, two from Chester and two from Oxford. Clearly these reflect people with whom he needed to remain in touch while at a distance.

In all this activity, and especially the strictly episcopal functions, Cartwright did not, in Sykes' view, 'fall below the standards of the age', and it doubtless gave the bishop some satisfaction to record that a certain 'Mr Allford [sent] to ask me forgiveness for some ill reports he had made before my coming to Chester, which he was now convinced were false and groundless.'⁴⁹⁵

The diary also relates other aspects of his life. His dining companions are listed as carefully as are his correspondents. During his first visit to the diocese he listed twenty-seven occasions when he was entertained by other clergy or gentry and seventy-three meals where he was the host. These figures in themselves indicate that entertaining was an important part of a bishop's role in local society and it will be considered more fully when looking at the evidence for the social activities of the other bishops.⁴⁹⁶ Insofar as it is possible to identify his guests at these meals, they are fairly evenly divided between those occasions when they were mainly diocesan officials or clergy and those when they were predominantly gentry and other local dignitaries or else a more mixed group. During this period the Earls of Tyrconnel and Clarendon both passed through Chester as the former replaced the latter as Lord

⁴⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p.79.

⁴⁹⁵ Sykes, *Sheldon to Secker*, p.31; above, p.185; Cartwright, *Diary*, p.26. Like a number of more personal or sensitive passages of the diary, this is written in shorthand characters.

⁴⁹⁶ Below, p.245.

Deputy of Ireland, and the bishop was expected to wait upon both, although it was Sir Geoffrey Shakerley, the governor, who entertained them. These meals were not only social occasions. It is reasonable to assume that the affairs of the diocese would be discussed when he was eating with men such as the chancellor or the dean, or the affairs of the parish when one of the curates from Wigan was with him. Other meals might provide the opportunity for pastoral work among the county elite, as when he dealt with the delicate matter of Sir Thomas Grosvenor's relationship with his Roman Catholic wife, who was threatening to enter a convent.⁴⁹⁷ During the period in London which followed this stay in Chester he recorded seventy-five occasions when he ate in company, but he was the host at less than half of these, and sometimes the guests were only members of his extensive family. Away from his diocese, entertaining was a less significant function, but once again meals at Lambeth, where he dined a couple of times, and with other bishops, courtiers or politicians must have been occasions when church business was discussed.

Brief mention should be made of two other matters on which the diary touches. He recorded four sittings for Kneller to have his portrait painted.⁴⁹⁸ Other entries chart a growing acquaintance with Pepys, whom he first met in April 1687. By the following month he was Pepys' guest at dinner, and in the autumn was being asked to persuade Pepys to get a commission in the navy for a merchant seaman.⁴⁹⁹ The diary does not explicitly state that he was becoming involved in Admiralty

⁴⁹⁷ Cartwright, *Diary*, pp.23-24.

⁴⁹⁸ On 24, 27 and 28 June and 18 July 1687. If the painting was ever completed, it has not survived. John Ingamells, *The English Episcopal Portrait, 1559-1835: A Catalogue* (London, 1981), gives an exhaustive list of extant portraits. Wilkins was painted by Mary Beale in 1672 and Pearson by William Sonmans in 1675, while an engraving by Loggan dated 1683 claims to be done from life. Given the fate of the Kneller portrait (and the Sonmans only survives as an engraved copy) it is likely there were more, at least of those bishops who were in office any length of time.

⁴⁹⁹ Cartwright, *Diary*, pp.49, 50, 54, 85.

business, though he certainly was by the eve of the Revolution.⁵⁰⁰ Having one's portrait painted was common enough for anyone of rank, though sitting for Kneller again marks Cartwright out as a court bishop. Though the acquaintance with Pepys was actively sought by Cartwright, the involvement of bishops in aspects of secular administration was nothing new.

How does the detailed view of Cartwright's activities revealed by his diary compare with what can be known of his predecessors' patterns of work? The division of time between London and the diocese was not untypical, though variations in the pattern were determined by the circumstances prevailing at any particular time, such as the length of parliamentary sessions. All the bishops seem to have generally resided at Chester or Wigan unless required to be elsewhere on particular business. Cartwright's diary makes it clear that he left his diocese the second time when 'one of the King's messengers brought me a letter to attend his Majesty's service in London', and though there is nothing so explicit about his first return to the capital, it coincided with James's first Declaration of Indulgence and the task given to Cartwright of organising a loyal address in response.⁵⁰¹ In July 1671 Rawlet informed Baxter that Wilkins, who had just completed his diocesan visitation, was with him in Wigan '& like to continue here this summer, if not cald away to London: for there is murmuring of the convening of the Parliament before the time appointed'.⁵⁰²

Walton remained in London for nine months after his consecration. This was the time of the Savoy Conference and the first session of Convocation. None of

⁵⁰⁰ See above, p.55.

⁵⁰¹ *ibid.*, pp.47, 82.

the bishops went down to their dioceses until the summer of 1661, partly to avoid provoking unrest until the restoration of the church was assured. He spent September and October in Chester, returning to London for the opening of the second session of the Cavalier Parliament at the end of November. This was the point at which the bishops were allowed to resume their seats in the House of Lords, while Convocation reconvened at the same time. He died only ten days after the start of the session, which continued throughout Ferne's brief tenure of the see and so explains why he never left London.

Fairly regular sessions of Parliament were held throughout the 1660s. Hall consequently spent one or two extended periods in London each year⁵⁰³ but only two references place him there when Parliament was not in session. He attended the House of Lords for its one sitting in July 1667, and remained in London for a preaching engagement at his old parish of St Botolph's, Aldersgate, in August.⁵⁰⁴ He may have accepted the invitation to preach before it was known that Parliament would be further prorogued. Given the time that would have been taken by a journey to Chester and back, it is likely he then stayed in London until Parliament reassembled on 10 October. The same is probably true of the adjournment between 7 December and 6 February, for Pepys met him at a dinner party on 5 January.⁵⁰⁵ Other evidence, however, such as his own letters or the letters and diaries of others, invariably place him in his diocese in all the longer prorogations or adjournments of Parliament.

⁵⁰² *CCRB*, vol.2, p.96.

⁵⁰³ In October 1665 he was in Oxford, but only because Parliament was meeting there on account of the plague.

⁵⁰⁴ Bodl. MS Add C305 f62.

⁵⁰⁵ Pepys, *Diary*, vol.9, p.10. The journey would have taken even longer over snowy or muddy roads in the short winter days.

Wilkins and Pearson were likewise regularly in London for parliamentary sessions, but these were increasingly irregular, and they were sometimes taken there by other official duties instead, such as preaching at court or Danby's meetings with various bishops in January 1675 about the enforcement of religious legislation following the withdrawal of Charles's Declaration of Indulgence. Nevertheless, a pattern of one or two extended visits to the capital each year continued until 1681. At the end of March that year Pearson was present at Charles II's last Parliament, meeting in Oxford, but thereafter seems to have spent all his time at Chester or Wigan. He declared an intention of attending the opening session of James's Parliament, but was prevented from doing so by ill-health.⁵⁰⁶ Likewise, concerns about his health may have been part of the reason for Wilkins's being far from his diocese at the end of July 1670. According to Rawlet, his curate at Wigan, he had 'gone to the Wells near Banbury'.⁵⁰⁷ These, however, are the exceptions that prove the rule. The Restoration bishops of Chester were generally resident in their diocese except when the king required their presence at court or in Parliament. In a typical year as much as a month may have been taken up with the long journey between London and the north-west, even before a bishop considered travelling around the extensive area under his care.

It was noted that Cartwright was exceptionally quick in going to visit his diocese after his consecration. The reasons for Walton's long delay in going there and Ferne's failure to ever leave London have already been considered. As to the others, it may partly be that winding up the affairs of their previous preferments or making arrangements for their *commendams* may have contributed to any delay, just

⁵⁰⁶ Tanner 31 f.30; *LJ*, vol.14, pp.17, 83.

as it may be that such considerations hastened Cartwright's departure for the north as well as accounting for his unusual choice of route.⁵⁰⁸ There were ten weeks between Hall's consecration and his departure for Chester. The registers for St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle, where he held a canonry, show that he was there during this time, and it has been suggested that he was involved with Sheldon in resisting the King's last-ditch attempts to mitigate the severity of the Act of Uniformity.⁵⁰⁹ However he was enthroned in his cathedral on the last day of July and conducted at least two ordinations during August to qualify intending conformists to retain their livings after St Bartholomew's day. Wilkins was consecrated as bishop on 15 November 1668, but is not known to have been in his diocese until the following June. In December Sheldon noted in a couple of letters that the new Bishop of Chester had still to go to his diocese, in January Newcome visited him in Pall Mall, and in April Evelyn dined with him at Sir Thomas Clifford's.⁵¹⁰ However, in the first three months after his consecration he is known to have been involved in protracted negotiations over payments of tenths and first-fruits on his various preferments, involving a personal appearance before the Treasury Commissioners on 5 January. He was with them again the following month over a dispute involving Thomas Duppa, the collector of tenths from the clergy in Chester whose payments were in arrears.⁵¹¹ At the time of his appointment as bishop, Pearson was unable to leave Cambridge for some time until a college audit had been finished. This delayed completion of the various formalities leading up to his consecration, which did not

⁵⁰⁷ CCRB, vol.2, p.96; the reference is probably to 'Astrop where is a Steele water much frequented by the gentry': Fiennes, *Journeys*, p.55.

⁵⁰⁸ Above, pp.207-08.

⁵⁰⁹ Above, p.123; E.H. Fellowes & E.R.Poyser (eds.), *The Baptism, Marriage & Burial Registers of St George's Chapel, Windsor* (Windsor, 1957), p.7.

⁵¹⁰ Bodl. MS Add C308 ff.126-28; Newcome, *Autobiography*, p.179; Evelyn, *Diary*, vol.III, p.526.

⁵¹¹ CSPD 1668-1669, pp.154-55, 190; CTB 1667-68, pp.509, 513; CTB 1669-72, pp.2-3, 5,11, 21, 33, 108.

take place for over two months, slightly longer than in any other case. By then a new session of Parliament had begun which kept him in London for at least seven weeks, though the exact time of his first journey to Chester is unknown. Overall, it appears that there were good reasons for the varied lengths of time it took for each of the bishops to go and get acquainted with his new diocese at first hand, and the diocese was not necessarily being neglected in this period. For example, the Exhibit Books for Archbishop Frewen's visitation show that in the long period while Walton remained in London, he collated or instituted at least twenty incumbents to livings in the diocese as well as appointing personnel to the revived courts and administration.

Frequent reference has already been made to Parliament. How large a part this played in a particular bishop's life depended above all on the frequency of its meeting during his period in office. It is, therefore, ironic that it was never in session during the episcopate of Thomas Cartwright, the court politician,⁵¹² but it was a forum in which all the others participated. Indeed, both Charles and Sheldon placed considerable emphasis on this duty of the spiritual peers. In his speech closing the first session of the Cavalier Parliament, the King especially thanked the members for repealing the act which had excluded bishops from the House of Lords, and before the start of the second session and on subsequent occasions the Archbishop sent out circular letters on the King's behalf exhorting his colleagues either to attend in person or to nominate proxies.⁵¹³ Few bishops were more conscientious than George Hall in responding to these exhortations, but instances have already been given of his complaining about the intrusion on his diocesan

⁵¹² He was, of course, still legally bishop when the Convention met, but by then he was in exile.
⁵¹³ *LJ*, vol. XI, pp. 331-32; Tanner 43 f. 200, 49 f. 117.

duties.⁵¹⁴ Bishop Lamplugh of Exeter pleaded to be excused from the autumn 1675 session on the grounds that his large diocese provided enough work for more than one bishop and he could not leave it unattended for any length of time.⁵¹⁵ Such sentiments must have been shared by any bishop concerned to be an effective pastor to his flock. The contemporaneous editor of John Hacket's sermons counted it among Hacket's virtues that he regarded any absence from his diocese of Lichfield as 'tedious and intolerable' and would sometimes slip away from London before the end of a parliamentary session in order to be able to preach to his people at Christmas and other great feasts.⁵¹⁶ In the two decades from 1661 to 1681 during which bishops of Chester were actively involved in the business of the House of Lords, there were only five years in which they were not kept away from their diocese at either Christmas or Easter, and sometimes both. Even more rare were years when the bishop was available for ordinations at all the Ember seasons.

Walton was one of twenty-three out of a possible twenty-seven bishops who were in the House to hear the King's welcome on 20 November 1661. The Journals of the House of Lords, which record those peers present at each sitting, show that he attended on the next two days, but not on the 23rd. Convocation sat at the same time as Parliament, and the day was probably devoted to Convocation business since he signed the joint letter to the northern clergy that day.⁵¹⁷ The next day he was reported to be ill when a roll-call was taken in the Lords, and within a week he was dead. The House sat twenty-six times between Ferne's consecration and his death; he was present on eleven of these occasions, including the sitting on 25 February

⁵¹⁴ Above, pp.205-06.

⁵¹⁵ Tanner 39 f.111.

⁵¹⁶ T. Plume, quoted in Sykes, *Sheldon to Secker*, p.25.

⁵¹⁷ Above, pp.20-21, 119.

when Charles commended the newly revised Prayer Book to the Houses. Ferne had also been among those who presented it to the Privy Council on behalf of Convocation the day before.⁵¹⁸ With the conclusion of liturgical revision and the abandonment of the clergy's right to separate taxation, Convocation rapidly faded into the background as a demand on episcopal time until after the Revolution.

With Hall, Wilkins and Pearson it is possible to get a more rounded view of the role of bishops in Parliament over an extended period, and to make some comparison between their different approaches. Wilkins was the only bishop of Chester whom Simon included in a list of nineteen whom 'the Lords' Journal and contemporary comment amply justify naming ... as extremely active politicians'.⁵¹⁹ In fact, the Journal shows Hall was even more assiduous in his attendance in the House than Wilkins; the difference is that Wilkins more often dissented from the majority of his colleagues.

Though Hall was consecrated a week before the end of the second session of the Cavalier Parliament, a writ of summons to take his seat in the House of Lords was not issued until 12 January 1663 in readiness for the session which began on 18 February.⁵²⁰ From then until Hall's death, the House of Lords sat 412 times and he was absent on only thirty-one occasions, a 92% attendance record. Half a dozen of his absences were on purely formal sittings for prorogations; seven more were at the beginning of the Oxford session. This was the one he had hoped to be excused in order to deal with the presentments made during his visitation of the diocese, believing little of consequence would be discussed during the session. In the end he

⁵¹⁸ Kennett, *Register and Chronicle*, p.632.

⁵¹⁹ Simon, *Restoration Episcopate*, p.72.

obediently answered Sheldon's call and served on the committee that dealt with the Five Mile Act and recommended its passage. Committee work was an important part of the work of any active member of the House. Even Ferne had served on two, while in the 1663 session Hall served on sixteen out of the forty-seven committees established by the House. These considered a whole range of public and private bills as well as procedural matters. No more than three of those on which Hall sat dealt with bills that might be regarded of special interest to a bishop because they dealt with pastoral issues such as provision for a wife or children; none especially related to the north-west. The Committees of Privileges and for Petitions, on both of which he sat, met weekly throughout the session. He seems to have been a trusted member of the House, for in 1668 he was put on the committee to deal with the case of *Skinner v. The East India Company*, an important constitutional case which brought Lords and Commons into conflict over their respective spheres of jurisdiction,⁵²¹ and his signature regularly appeared in the Journal as one of the peers who had checked its accuracy on behalf of the House. There is no indication that he ever spoke or voted differently from the majority of the bishops.⁵²²

At 76%, Wilkins' attendance record was less good than Hall's. He was absent from thirty-nine out of 165 sittings, but seems to have been just as active on committees as his predecessor, serving on at least fifty over three years. The big difference was in his willingness to take his own line, which was seen in his opposition to the second Conventicle Act and his support for Lord Roos' divorce

⁵²⁰ HMC, 7th Report, p.167.

⁵²¹ HMC, 8th Report, p.166; Kenyon, *Stuart Constitution*, pp.414-17.

⁵²² E.g. On 20 November 1667 he was present when the Lords rejected the impeachment of Clarendon without a specific charge. Only Durham and St Davids among the bishops dissented from this stance, despite Hall's differences with Clarendon over the appointment of Cheshire magistrates.

bill.⁵²³ This was seen as potentially preparing the way for Charles to divorce Catherine of Braganza. When the bill passed the House on 28 March 1670 after a debate attended by the King, Wilkins was the only one of fourteen bishops present not to enter a dissent. These events show not only that Wilkins was something of a maverick, but also that the bishops did not form a solid block of votes on which the crown could invariably rely. Charles, unlike James, never pushed their loyalty too far.

For the last nineteen months of Wilkins' episcopate Parliament never met except for two formal meetings of the Lords for further prorogations while Charles followed his own policy of indulgence for Dissenters and war against the Dutch. Prolonged periods without a session of Parliament were even more a feature of Pearson's time. It might be thought that this would make attendance easier, since there was more time left free for dealing with other matters, but Pearson's record in this matter was the poorest of all. The new session had started a few days before his consecration on 9 February 1673, and it must have been a few more days before a writ of summons was issued since his name was not called when a roll-call was taken in the House on the 13th. He is first listed as present in the House on 18 February. From then until the dissolution of the Cavalier Parliament the Lords held 349 sittings, but Pearson was absent from 149, an attendance record of 62%. Usually he was present in London, but there is no clear reason why he would attend on some days but not others. For example, in the week beginning 7 July 1678 the house held one sitting on the Monday, with separate morning and afternoon sittings on the following five days. Pearson was there on Monday, missed both sittings on Tuesday, and attended either in the morning or the afternoon but never both on each

⁵²³ Burnet, *History*, vol. 1, pp.493-94; *LJ*, vol.XII, pp.328-29.

of the remaining days. His longest absence was for the whole of the first month of the final session of the Cavalier Parliament. The cause is not known for certain, but ill health seems most likely, and he had nominated Seth Ward as his proxy.⁵²⁴ During the first and second Exclusion Parliaments he was absent for fifty-nine out of eighty sittings and forty-seven out of sixty-six respectively, an attendance of under 30%. He appears to have been in London throughout both sessions, though was absent on the days when the roll was called. On 9 May 1679 he is listed as 'excused' and on 30 October 1680 as 'sick, excused'.⁵²⁵ However, he managed to attend all eight sittings of the brief Oxford Parliament held in March 1681.

The little that is known of Pearson's activities in the Lords suggests that he supported the government and his fellow-bishops as much as he could. For example, on 20 November 1675, all the bishops present, of whom Pearson was one, voted against petitioning Charles for a dissolution, and when Parliament reassembled in February 1677 he was nominated to the committee to investigate those responsible for a pamphlet claiming the long prorogation automatically brought one about.⁵²⁶ An extant division list also shows him supporting the government line and voting against a proposal sent up from the Commons that funds voted for disbanding the army should be entrusted to the City of London rather than to Danby.⁵²⁷ He was also present in the House the day before the start of Stafford's trial for involvement in the Popish Plot, when the bishops asserted their right to participate in such trials if they wished, even though they were absenting themselves on this occasion with the

⁵²⁴ A. Browning, *Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby* (Glasgow, 1951), vol.3, p.127. It was during this period that Oates' Narrative was presented to the Lords, claiming, among much else, that the Pope had nominated 'Thimbleby, a Secular, now Canon of Cambray', to be Bishop of Chester: *LJ*, vol.XIII, pp.313-30.

⁵²⁵ *LJ*, vol.XIII, pp.561, 629.

⁵²⁶ *ibid.*, pp.33, 42.

⁵²⁷ Browning, *Danby*, vol.3, pp.129-32.

leave of the House.⁵²⁸ On the other hand, he was probably not altogether at home in the atmosphere of political and legal debate rather than academic disputation or liturgical devotion. This may be the reason why he joined the other peers on 10 April 1678 when 'the Lords went as a Body to the Abbey Church in Westminster to keep the Fast appointed by His Majesty' but absented himself when routine business was begun the next day.⁵²⁹ He was present in the following July when the House heard an appeal in a legal case. Lord Nottingham made notes on the debate, in which Pearson spoke at some length, and criticised the Bishop for debating scholastically and repeatedly failing to understand the legal significance of terms.⁵³⁰ Attendance in Parliament was probably more of a chore for Pearson than for any of the other bishops under consideration. It kept him away from his diocese for long periods of time, yet he was increasingly unable to make much of a contribution to the work of the House, either in full session or on committees, to which he was increasingly rarely appointed. If this may partly be attributed to the strain of the journey down to London, it is reasonable to suppose that the return journey had a similar effect on his capacity for work in the diocese when the session was over.⁵³¹

Attention may now be given to that diocesan work, once again looking in turn at spiritual and administrative functions, at the bishop's place in local society, and at other areas of work in which personal inclination or government demands might involve him.

⁵²⁸ *LJ*, vol.XIII, p.694.

⁵²⁹ *idid.*, p.201.

⁵³⁰ D.E.C. Yale (ed.), *Lord Nottingham's Chancery Cases*, vol.II (Selden Society, vol.79, London, 1961), p.647-48. Pearson's debating style is shown in his pamphlet of 1660, *No Necessity of Reformation of the Public Doctrine of the Church of England*, in which he recast his opponents' position as a series of syllogisms which he then showed to be illogical.

It has already been noted that Cartwright was able to hold ordinations only in three of the four Ember seasons of the year covered by his diary, and that this must frequently have been the case for his predecessors in other years. The Advent and Lent ordinations were often omitted, falling as they did at times when Parliament was commonly in session or the bishop was taking his turn as a Lent preacher in the Chapel Royal. There is no evidence that ordinations were being held outside the canonical times on any regular basis. Bishop Lloyd of St Asaph had to obtain a faculty from Sancroft to ordain Pearson's nephew John Thane as a deacon one Sunday and a priest the next outside the canonical seasons, but this was in exceptional circumstances, Thane's dying uncle wishing to collate him to a prebend as speedily as possible. The only evidence of special ordination services being held for larger numbers of candidates and by the bishop of Chester himself comes from the first two years of the Restoration. At this stage, of course, many ministers in Presbyterian orders were needing to secure their titles, especially after the passing of the Act of Uniformity. Although he was in the diocese, Walton held no regular Michaelmas ordination at the end of September 1661, but the evidence of the clergy Exhibit Book from Frewen's visitation shows that he held two ordinations the following month, ordaining ten men in all. The majority of these were admitted to both the diaconate and the priesthood on the same day, and all were to serve in parishes in the Chester archdeaconry. Even with the ordinations being held later than usual, it was apparently not possible to gather candidates from the remoter parts of the diocese. By the time Hall came to the diocese in the summer of 1662, this was no longer a problem, and those who exhibited letters of orders from him came from all parts of the diocese. The letters indicate that he held ordinations on 10 and

⁵³¹ Sykes cites several examples of elderly bishops protesting the danger to their health in making the journey to London in order to attend Parliament: *Sheldon to Secker*, pp.23-24.

20 August to enable intending conformists to qualify for their posts before the 24th as well as at the regular time in September. Once again, many men were admitted to both orders in one day. This, like holding ordinations outside the Ember seasons, was against canon law without a dispensation from the archbishop, and is an indication of the pressure of exceptional circumstances at this stage of reconstructing normal church life.

Instances were noted of Cartwright's holding an ordination in Westminster Abbey and of his ordaining men on behalf of other bishops. Such arrangements were not unusual. Walton is known to have issued letters dimissory for the ordination of one John Bean by the Archbishop of Dublin,⁵³² as Pearson must have done for Thane's ordination by Lloyd. Cartwright made a note in his diary of when and by whom the priests he ordained in September 1687 had been made deacons. From these it is clear that Pearson was still able to conduct ordinations himself as late as December 1684, but all those made deacon in 1685 or 1686 had needed to present themselves to some other bishop.⁵³³ The only description of an ordination held by a bishop of Chester in this period is a brief one in Evelyn's diary for 28 February 1675. The sermon was a good one in the diarist's opinion, offering a critique of the 'bold sectaries' and 'exhorting to an esteeme of the Lawful Ministrie', and 'to this succeeded an Ordination of about 30 Deacons & Priests by Dr Pierson Bishop of Chester, very solemn.'⁵³⁴ This was in Covent Garden Church, and Pearson was then in London for Danby's meeting with the bishops and to preach at court. From the numbers involved, it must have been the Lent ordination for London diocese.

⁵³² Sheils (ed.), *Exhibit Books*, p.30.

⁵³³ Cartwright, *Diary*, pp.78, 81.

⁵³⁴ Evelyn, *Diary*, vol.IV, p.54.

Bishop Humphrey Henchman, who was well over eighty and died later that year, was probably glad for a colleague to deputise for him.

Only rarely were bishops of Chester involved in the consecration of other bishops. Cartwright twice assisted Sancroft in consecrations at Lambeth, of the Bishop of St Davids on 26 June 1687, as recorded in his diary, and of the Bishop of Oxford on 7 October 1688. This reflects his position in the political establishment of James II's reign. Ferne and Pearson never participated in such an occasion; Walton, Hall and Wilkins, however, each took part in the consecrations of successive bishops of Sodor and Man.⁵³⁵ This was, of course, a neighbouring diocese and like Chester a part of the northern province. On the third occasion the new bishop was Henry Bridgeman, Dean of Chester, and, in a rare example of a consecration taking place outside London, the ceremony was performed in Chester Cathedral on 1 October 1671 with Wilkins himself as the principal consecrator, assisted by the bishops of St Asaph, Bangor and Clogher. The provincial setting and the absence of an archbishop are indicative of the insignificant status of the diocese of Sodor and Man and do not suggest any special eminence being given to Wilkins. The overall record of Chester's bishops in the matter of consecrations shows how they were never really at the heart of the Church establishment in this period.

Little is known of confirmations outside those recorded in Cartwright's diary, but they are occasionally mentioned in the diaries or correspondence of others. The typical seventeenth-century confirmation was a large-scale affair with the candidates numbered in the hundreds. The rite had been revised in 1661 to give it more

⁵³⁵ W. Stubbs, *Registrum Sacrum Anglicanum* (Oxford, 1858), pp.99-100, 102, 106; *CCRB*, vol.2, p.119.

substance and dignity. The status of the bishop and the significance of what he was doing were emphasised by a new rubric requiring the candidates to kneel for the laying on of his hands, while the Puritan request at the Savoy conference that other ministers should join him in doing this had been quietly ignored. It was usual for a bishop to administer confirmation in each deanery as he made his triennial visitation of his diocese. The memoirs of Sir Daniel Fleming record how his children were confirmed at Kendal on such occasions: William, Catherine and Henry on 23 June 1671 by Wilkins, Daniel on 2 July 1674 and Alice on 3 August 1677 by Pearson. This may have been the last time for ten years a confirmation was held in the north of the diocese for Pearson never held another visitation. When Cartwright confirmed 500 people in Lancaster on 14 August 1687 he noted that many of them were older than usual.⁵³⁶ This also shows that confirmation was not confined to the time of a formal visitation, but the opportunities to come before the bishop must have been more frequent for those living within easy reach of Chester or Wigan. In January 1672 Matthew Anderton wrote from Chester:

On the 25th, being St Paul's day, the bishop in this cathedral confirmed more than 700 men, women, and children. Many more wait for another opportunity with themselves, their children and servants to be partakers of that administration.⁵³⁷

Not everyone had to brave such a throng. Sir Willoughby Aston recorded in his diary for 12 May 1682:

My wife and I went to Chester with Tom and Mall. She was then after service in the Cathedral confirmed by Bishop Pierson in his private Chappell. We dined with him.⁵³⁸

Such individual attention would have been given only to people of rank, and Pearson may already have been finding confirmations with several hundred too much of a

⁵³⁶ Fleming, *Memoirs*, p.75; Cartwright, *Diary*, p.72.

⁵³⁷ *CSPD 1671-1672*, p.104.

⁵³⁸ *Ch.Sh.*, 3rd series, vol.25 (1928), p.9.

strain. There is no hint that Fleming's children were confirmed privately, and at his very first confirmation at Richmond on 14 November 1686 Cartwright laid hands on 'Sir Marmaduke Wyvil and about 300 more'.⁵³⁹

Records of preaching, like those of confirmation, are extremely patchy, and do not allow much of a picture to be built up of various bishops' activity. No other sources mention the sermons listed in Cartwright's diary, and there is no way of telling whether his sixteen in a year was above or below normal expectations. One each of Hall's and Pearson's sermons as bishops survive, both preached on special occasions before the House of Lords. Wilkins was the author of an influential treatise on preaching and three of his sermons as a bishop were printed, all delivered before the king. Evelyn quite often heard Pearson when he was preaching at court. In Lent 1673 his hearers were treated to 'a most incomparable sermon, from the most learned Divine of our Nation'. The following year he again preached 'incomparably' and in 1676 'admirably'. In all, Evelyn heard six of Pearson's Lenten sermons to the court.⁵⁴⁰ Whether the most learned divine of our nation appealed as much to less sophisticated congregations in his diocese remains unknown, and there is no explicit mention in any surviving source of his or Wilkins's ever preaching there, though it would be most unlikely if they did not. What is known is that the sermon at the start of Pearson's 1677 visitation of the diocese was given by Arderne, the future dean, rather than by the bishop himself, while the glimpses of parish life in Wigan under Wilkins given by Rawlet's letters to Baxter mention only himself and Tillotson as preachers there.⁵⁴¹ The one bishop known to have given a high priority to his own preaching ministry within the diocese was Hall,

⁵³⁹ Cartwright, *Diary*, p.12.

⁵⁴⁰ Evelyn, *Diary*, vol.IV, pp.5-6, 31, 52-53, 83, 107, 165.

described by Anderton as ‘a most excellent & constant preacher’ and capable of attracting a young Puritan such as Roger Lowe who would go ‘gadding to sermons’ at Wigan.⁵⁴² How different Hall was from his successors in the frequency of his preaching cannot be known for certain, but preaching was not an aspect of Wilkins’ or Pearson’s ministry that Anderton thought worthy of special mention in his later letters, while Lowe’s record of personal activities closes in 1668. What is probable is that Hall’s attitude was heavily influenced by the example of his father, a pastoral bishop in the Jacobean mould for whom preaching was central, even if his son’s conduct also owed something to the Laudian model of the bishop as disciplinarian.⁵⁴³

Reference has been made to printed sermons, and it is appropriate here to consider writing as another aspect of the bishop’s task of teaching and defending the true faith. It was an activity for which there was little time in a bishop’s crowded schedule. Walton and Ferne wrote nothing new while holding the see, and Hall only printed one new sermon and re-issued one of his earlier works. The only new works by Wilkins published while he was bishop were his sermons before the king, but he published a revised and enlarged version of his popular handbook on preaching, *Ecclesiastes*, in 1669⁵⁴⁴ and was also working on a major treatise *Of the Principles and Duties of Natural Religion*, which was left incomplete at his death: it was edited and published by Tillotson in 1675. In his preface Tillotson explained how his father-in-law had always intended the work for publication and had, indeed, prepared the first twelve chapters for the press. These dealt with questions of methodology

⁵⁴¹ CCRB, vol.2, pp.89-90.

⁵⁴² Above, p.134.

⁵⁴³ The distinction is one made by Kenneth Fincham in his essay ‘Episcopal Government 1603-1640’ in Kenneth Fincham (ed.), *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642* (London, 1993), 71-92 (see especially pp.86-88).

⁵⁴⁴ *Ecclesiastes or A Discourse concerning the Gift of Preaching* was first published in 1646 and reprinted five times before this revised edition.

and with the existence and nature of God. The remaining five chapters of Book I considered the duties of religion, and the nine chapters of Book II with 'how religion conduces to our happiness'. These were 'gather'd and made up out of his Papers, as well as the Materials left for that purpose, and the skill of the Compiler would allow'.

Wilkins himself declared that he wrote the work

in opposition to that Humour of Scepticism and Infidelity, which hath of late so much abounded in the world, not only amongst sensual men of the vulgar sort, but even amongst those who pretend to a more than ordinary measure of wit and learning.⁵⁴⁵

If Wilkins was concerned to uphold the faith against the rising tide of scepticism and fashionable irreligion, Pearson remained pre-occupied with defending Anglican orthodoxy against other forms of Christianity. This was the common thread running through nearly all his writings. The fourth and fifth folio editions of his *Exposition of the Creed* were both published while he was Bishop of Chester, and show that he continued to make minor revisions to the text. For example, one of the notes refers to a passage in the writings of St Cyprian and a comment on it by Bishop Fell, but Fell's edition of Cyprian's works was published only in 1682, the year before the fifth edition of the *Exposition*.⁵⁴⁶ The major new work published while Pearson was bishop was his *Annales Cyprianici*, written to accompany Fell's edition. Cyprian, like Ignatius of Antioch, on whom Pearson had written shortly before leaving Cambridge, exalted the role of the bishop as the focus of unity in the church. His contemporaneous relevance amid the bitter divisions of the early 1680s and with the prospect of a popish successor was well summed up in the subtitle given to Fell's English translation of his *De Catholicae Ecclesiae Unitate*:

⁵⁴⁵ John Wilkins, *Of the Principles and Duties of Natural Religion* (London, 1675), p. 1; Tillotson's preface is unpaginated.

⁵⁴⁶ Pearson, *Exposition of the Creed*, p. 112.

A discourse written a thousand four hundred and thirty years since, in the time of Decius the persecuting emperor... Most usefull for allaying the present heats, and reconciling the differences among us.⁵⁴⁷

By the time Cartwright became bishop the new Decius was in power with his policy of indulgence widely seen as a cover for more sinister designs. No new work of Cartwright's was definitely published while he was bishop, but he refers in the diary to papers he had written to try and persuade Sir Thomas Grosvenor to support James's policy, and an anonymous tract of 1687, which could be based on those papers, has been attributed to him. It is entitled, *An Answer of a Minister of the Church of England to a Seasonable and Important question proposed to him by a Loyal and Religious Member of the present House of Commons: viz. What Respect ought the True Sons of the Church of England, in point of Conscience and Christian Prudence, to bear to the Religion of that Church whereof the King is a Member?* It certainly corresponds with Cartwright's known views, citing many of the same authorities and using similar turns of phrase as his published sermons of the mid-1680s, and the references to the writer's dealings with the questioner fit exactly with the diary's evidence of the bishop's dealings with Sir Thomas Grosvenor.⁵⁴⁸

Writing for publication was an activity for which bishops had little time. The vast bulk of their literary output always belonged to an earlier stage of their careers, whether as university academics or in the enforced leisure of the Interregnum, but what they did write was clearly a part of their task as they each envisaged it. Thus Wilkins wrote for the educated layman who might fall prey to fashionable but erroneous attitudes. Pearson did the same in the successive editions

⁵⁴⁷ R. A. Beddard, 'Tory Oxford' in Nicholas Tyacke (ed.), *Seventeenth-Century Oxford* (Oxford, 1997) 863-906 (Fell's edition of Cyprian is discussed on pp.874-75).

of his *Exposition of the Creed*, though his work on Cyprian was a Latin treatise for fellow scholars. Cartwright, if he was the author of *An Answer of a Minister*, produced a tract for the times from the standpoint of a loyal servant of the crown.

It is remarkable that nowhere among this preaching and writing is any particular attention given to the challenges of superstition or Quakerism. Belief in witchcraft had certainly not gone away,⁵⁴⁹ while the Quakers were stronger in the northern part of Chester diocese than anywhere else in the country, yet the bishops do not seem to have directed any special attention to these particular deviations from orthodoxy in their enforcement of discipline either. One possible explanation for this is that the works just noted were very much aimed at the educated and politically active sections of society, and these were the people with whom the bishops also engaged socially. The people who felt threatened by a suspected witch were her neighbours among the lower orders, while those for whom Quakers were an immediate problem were the clergy or lay impropiators to whom they refused to pay tithes, not the bishop. Recovery of unpaid tithes was often more effectively pursued in the secular courts, which could order distraint of goods, and it was lay magistrates in those courts who had to deal with defendants who refused to take oaths or remove their hats as a sign of respect. The struggle between a magistrate or impropiator and the local Quaker community could be bitter and intensely personal,⁵⁵⁰ but the bishops seem to have been relatively untouched and unmoved by it.

⁵⁴⁸ Cartwright, *Diary*, pp.23-24, 43; A.B., *An Answer of a Minister* (London, 1687), pp.6-7, 55.

⁵⁴⁹ See above, p.149.

⁵⁵⁰ For the example of Daniel Fleming and the Westmorland Quakers, see Besse, *Sufferings of the Quakers*, Vol.2, p.12; George Fox, *The Journal*, edited by Nigel Smith (London, 1998), pp.363-64.

What impact the bishops' preaching and writing had is almost impossible to evaluate, especially within the confines of the diocese. A sermon such as that by Hall comparing adherence to the Covenant to the idolatrous worship of the golden calf reflected the mood of reaction in 1662 and no doubt helped to sustain and reinforce it, but it did not create it. The influence of an unpublished sermon was, in any case, more or less limited to those who actually heard it. Pearson's *Exposition of the Creed* and Wilkin's *Ecclesiastes* both went through numerous editions during their authors' lifetimes, and both writers were popular enough to have further editions of these and other works published posthumously. The *Exposition* was in the libraries of both Sir Peter Leicester and Sir Daniel Fleming. The latter, who purchased the fourth edition of 1676 when Pearson had become bishop, also possessed a number of Wilkins' works on natural philosophy, and in 1669 bought a copy of *Ecclesiastes*. This again was the revised edition published when the author had become Fleming's bishop.⁵⁵¹ *Ecclesiastes* has, indeed, been described as 'the seminal document' in bringing about the change in homiletic style at this time from the ornate and 'witty' manner of Andrewes and Donne to the plain and direct manner of Tillotson.⁵⁵² Though James Arderne, a man of a very different stamp from Wilkins, also produced *Directions Concerning the Matter and Stile of Sermons* in 1671, his work was closely modelled on that of Wilkins. Only one work, however, was directly aimed at the gentry of Chester diocese, and that was Cartwright's *Answer of a Minister*. It clearly failed in its aim, since Grosvenor did not support the repeal of the penal laws and Test Acts, while its appeal to Anglican magistrates

⁵⁵¹ Leicester, *Charges to the Grand Jury*, p.134; Magrath (ed.), *Flemings at Oxford*, vol.1, pp.440, 442, 446, 452, 480.

⁵⁵² Arthur Pollard, *English Sermons* (London, 1963), p.21.

not to withdraw from the Commission of the Peace because they were required to sit with Roman Catholic colleagues clearly fell on deaf ears.⁵⁵³

All these aspects of a bishop's ministry of word and sacrament had to go alongside what Burnet, in his criticism of Pearson, called 'the governing part of his function'.⁵⁵⁴ At the heart of the system of pastoral and administrative oversight lay the visitation. In theory, the bishop would travel around the whole diocese every three years. Articles of Enquiry would be sent out beforehand.⁵⁵⁵ In each deanery the clergy would show their letters of orders and, along with any schoolmasters, physicians, surgeons and midwives, their licences. Clergy and churchwardens would also make their presentments of those responsible for any offences enquired about in the Articles, the offenders being disciplined in the subsequent correction courts or in the Consistory Court. This was also the regular occasion for the bishop to administer the rite of confirmation. Various factors interrupted this pattern, such as the illness or death of the bishop or the suspension of the diocesan bishop's jurisdiction during a metropolitanical visitation by the Archbishop of York.⁵⁵⁶ Across the period under review, there could have been nine diocesan visitations. In fact there were just four: one each by Hall and Wilkins and two by Pearson. Though Cosin had held a visitation in Durham in July 1662, the rapid changes of bishop in Chester rendered such a thing impossible there and Archbishop Frewen undertook

⁵⁵³ *Answer of a Minister*, pp.52-53; above, p.192.

⁵⁵⁴ Foxcroft (ed.), *Supplement to Burnet's History*, p.214.

⁵⁵⁵ Printed copies survive from 1671 and 1674. The latter were reprinted in Pearson, *Minor Works*, vol.1, pp.cxx-cxxvii. A surviving example of the summons sent to clergy to attend the visitation of 1671 is printed in John Booker, *A History of the Ancient Chapels of Didsbury and Chorlton in Manchester Parish* (Chetham Society XLII, 1857), pp.88-90.

⁵⁵⁶ Metropolitanical visitations had been an important part of maintaining discipline or enforcing change in the Tudor and early Stuart periods. The last one in the southern province was planned by Archbishop Juxon in 1663 but cut short by his death. In the much smaller and more manageable northern province they continued to be undertaken by successive archbishops of York throughout the seventeenth century.

his own visitation covering the three dioceses of York, Carlisle and Chester. Bishop Sterne, who like Cosin had been in post since 1660, undertook his own visitation of Carlisle diocese only in 1663, and Hall's primary visitation in Chester was delayed until 1665. Sterne, by now Archbishop of York, held a metropolitanical visitation in 1668, but a regular series of visitations by the diocesan bishop followed in 1671, 1674 and 1677. After that Pearson was too ill for the rigours of several weeks' travel around his extensive diocese and Cartwright was too pre-occupied with other things to undertake the task. It was, however, possible for a bishop to undertake a visitation of particular institutions. Thus Hall visited the Consistory Court in this way in September 1665, and Pearson and Cartwright each held visitations of the cathedral, the one in 1675 in the interval between his two diocesan visitations, the other in 1687. For Cartwright, this may have been the prelude to a diocesan-wide visitation he was destined never to undertake, for his diary shows that he had cause for concern about the cathedral from his first arrival in the diocese while the injunctions issued at the conclusion of the visitation expressed his conviction that a cathedral should serve 'for example to inferior Churches'.⁵⁵⁷ There was apparently need for this, since in 1690 his successor, Bishop Stratford, informed Archbishop Lamplugh

that for thirteen years last past (as my Chancellor tells me), no visitation has been made by any bishop of this diocese: that by reason of this long neglect many things are scandalously amisse, and very much need correction.⁵⁵⁸

⁵⁵⁷ Cheshire RO, EDA 2/3, f.135.

⁵⁵⁸ J.P.Earwaker (ed.), *Local Gleanings relating to Lancashire and Cheshire* (reprinted from the *Manchester Courier*, 1875-1878), vol.2, p.23.

Typically, a visitation of the diocese took about six weeks. For practical reasons it had to be undertaken in the summer, when the longer hours of daylight and the better weather made travelling easier. Even so, a bishop would have to compete for attention with the vital concerns of everyday life, such as the start of the harvest. The surviving clergy Call Books make it possible to trace the route that was followed, since they give the place and date where the bishop met with them in each deanery. Those for Hall's visitation and for Richmond archdeaconry for Wilkins' are no longer extant, but they are complete for both of Pearson's, and in the case of the 1674 visitation both as the rough note-book kept by clerks at the time and in the fair copy made later.⁵⁵⁹ Since the latter is much fuller, it must include information collected later, whether from other records or at the correction courts. The usual pattern seems to have been to begin with the deaneries in western Cheshire before moving to the eastern part of the county and then up through Lancashire to the Lake District and then eastwards, to end in Yorkshire. Sometimes a single venue would serve for the clergy and laity of two neighbouring deaneries. At other times the bishop may not have been present in person, but this seems to have been restricted to the deaneries near Chester where the people would have had other opportunities to come for confirmation or anything else that could not be dealt with by the chancellor or some other official.⁵⁶⁰

The visitation of 1674 may be taken as an example. The Articles of Enquiry dealt mainly with the observance of the canons of 1604 and the rubrics of the Prayer

⁵⁵⁹ Cheshire RO, EDV 2/7 & 2/8; EDV 2/6 covers the archdeaconry of Chester in 1671, EDV 2/9 is a fair copy for the whole diocese in 1677.

⁵⁶⁰ Kenneth Fincham, *Prelate as Pastor: the episcopate of James I* (Oxford, 1990), appendix V, pp.320-22, lists all visitations in the period 1597-1627 where the bishop is known to have either been present or absent. Bishops of Chester seem always to have visited in person, and this tradition was generally followed by their Restoration successors. The worst record in the earlier period was of

Book, whether there were any conventicles or unlicensed teachers, or if attempts were being made to divert church and charitable endowments or withhold tithes. The articles were taken almost verbatim from those issued by Wilkins in 1671. This probably means they were drawn up by officials rather than by Pearson himself, which may explain why the one significant difference is the omission of the entire section in the earlier set headed 'Touching Ecclesiastical Officers', which asked about various malpractices of which they might be guilty.

The visitation began on 1 June with the Chester and Wirral deaneries, and dealt with Malpas and Bangor deaneries the following day. It would seem that Pearson became personally involved only on the 3rd when the visitation of Frodsham deanery is specially noted in the working copy of the Call Book as being 'in the presence of his lordship'. He must then have returned to the palace in Chester, for there was a few days' break before the long journey through the rest of the diocese began. On 13 June he was in Nantwich for the Nantwich and Middlewich deaneries, followed by Macclesfield on the 18th and Manchester on the 20th. The next stop was Wigan for the Warrington deanery on 23 June. This was the obvious stopping point since he had his own house to stay in and would not need to retrace his steps in order to continue the journey north as he would if he had gone to Liverpool, the largest town in the deanery. The visitation of Chester archdeaconry was completed on 25 June when the clergy of Blackburn and Leyland deaneries were summoned to Preston. Two days later Pearson was in Lancaster for the first two deaneries in Richmond archdeaconry, Amounderness and Lonsdale. From there he crossed Morecambe Bay to Cartmel, where he was on 30 June for both Copeland and Furness

court bishops such as Lancelot Andrewes (who always visited through deputies) just as it was Cartwright who failed to make visitation of his diocese at all in his two years at Chester.

deaneries. It is hardly surprising that this was when the highest number of absentees among the clergy was noted, for these deaneries covered a large and mountainous area with poor communications. So far as is known, no bishop went right into Copeland deanery itself, and he must have seemed a very remote figure to its inhabitants. From Cartmel Pearson went to Kendal on 2 July, the occasion of the confirmation of the younger Daniel Fleming. At this point Pearson took another break, for a note in the rough copy says, 'My Lord Bishop went from here to the Bishop of Carlisle's to Rose Castle and came to Richmond on the Thursday night following.'⁵⁶¹ There, on 8 July, he held the visitation for Richmond and Catterick deaneries, concluding the whole visitation two days later in Boroughbridge. From there the return journey to Chester may have taken another three days. As well as dealing with formal ecclesiastical business, he is likely to have confirmed two or three thousand people and will have met with many of the local gentry on whose goodwill and co-operation the Church relied. Sir Daniel Fleming's 'Great Book of Accounts' lists his expenses when waiting upon the bishop in each of the visitation years.⁵⁶² Even at this early stage in his episcopate the strain may have had an adverse effect on Pearson's health, for that autumn several letter writers testified to illness detaining him in Chester for nearly a month after receiving the command to go to London for the consultation with Danby on church affairs.⁵⁶³

After the visitation matters raised by the presentations would be dealt with in the correction courts. In 1665 Hall expressed some frustration at not being able to oversee this in person because of the summons to Parliament,⁵⁶⁴ but this was before

⁵⁶¹ Cheshire RO, EDV 2/7, f.33v.

⁵⁶² Magrath (ed.), *Flemings in Oxford*, vol.1, pp.459, 469, 485.

⁵⁶³ *CSPD 1673-75*, pp.403, 416, 437.

⁵⁶⁴ Above, p.206.

he had become disillusioned about the effectiveness of the church courts and, in general, the correction business was dealt with by the courts and their lay officials.

All the bishops seem to have dealt in person with some of the cases that came before their courts. The great majority of these, recorded in the bishops' Register, dealt with disputes over pews, but some concerned other matters. For example, in November 1664 Hall ordered the churchwardens of Frodsham to restore the pulpit which 'was, in time of the late Rebellion, without any lawfull Authority removed from its ancient place'.⁵⁶⁵ Such perceived disorder arising from the Civil War and Interregnum is the kind of issue with which one would expect Hall or any other bishop to be concerned at this point in time, but more enduring areas of concern seem to have been clergy stipends and parsonage houses. A week or two before the Frodsham case, Hall was petitioned by the inhabitants of Rufford chapelry to compel the Rector of Croston to pay their curate's stipend. Hall duly sent an order that the Rector should pay him £25 annually, but this must have had little effect, for just over a year later he sent another order for payment 'without delay or deduction'.⁵⁶⁶ During his visitation in 1671, Wilkins consecrated a new church for the chapelry of Witherslack in Westmorland. The cost of rebuilding and a stipend of £26 for the curate had been bequeathed by John Barwick, late Dean of St Paul's, but Wilkins insisted that the inhabitants should also continue to pay a stipend of twenty nobles (£6 13s 4d), as they had done before.⁵⁶⁷ Two of Pearson's orders dealt with parsonage houses. One required the Rector of Christleton to deposit twenty nobles each year at the diocesan registry until sufficient money had accrued to rebuild the rectory, which had been destroyed in fighting during the Civil War. The Rector had

⁵⁶⁵ Cheshire RO, EDA 2/3, f.17.

⁵⁶⁶ *ibid.*, ff.66-67.

been presented by his churchwardens for having built an unnecessarily large tithe-barn but done nothing about a house that would enable him to reside in the parish. Pearson's other order gave his approval to the building of a new vicarage in Blackburn.⁵⁶⁸ The Register also includes the injunctions he issued at the conclusion of his visitation of the cathedral, which in addition to regulating aspects of the cathedral worship also sought to secure the stipends and houses of all the cathedral staff.⁵⁶⁹ It is not certain how effective some of these measures were in the long term. An eighteenth-century map of the diocese lists all the churches and chapels, together with a note of the minister's stipend. Rufford stands at £22 13s rather than the £25 'without deduction' ordered by Hall, while Witherslack is given as £31 1s, whereas Wilkins' order should have secured £32 13s 4d, small but significant differences to men on such low incomes.⁵⁷⁰

It was the bishop's prerogative to direct how money payments to the consistory court in commutation of penances should be disposed of. Records survive of a number of instances for the period from 1661 to 1665. Five pounds was 'by the Bishop's special order distributed amongst the poore' in July 1661, and the same thing happened in the following March.⁵⁷¹ These must have been instructions sent from London by Walton and Ferne. A list drawn up for Bishop Hall at the time of his visitation of the consistory in 1665 gives details of a further £79. The greater part of this (£59 6s 8d) he had devoted to the repair of the cathedral, £10 to the church at Farndon, £3 to 'a poore widowe', and two lots of £3 6s 8d each to the poor

⁵⁶⁷ *ibid.*, f.65-66; Magrath, *Flemings at Oxford*, vol.1, p.459.

⁵⁶⁸ Cheshire RO, EDA 2/3, ff.75, 96.

⁵⁶⁹ *ibid.*, ff.74-75.

⁵⁷⁰ T.H., *A Map of the Diocess of Chester divided into Deanries &c* (London, 1732).

⁵⁷¹ Cheshire RO, EDA 3/2, ff.76, 79.

of Malpas and Stockport.⁵⁷² These final amounts may have been distributed to the poor in the course of his diocesan visitation as a good-will exercise. Even the payment to Farndon may have been an attempt to encourage it to set right the deficiencies noted at the visitation if poverty was pleaded as an excuse.⁵⁷³

Only a handful of the 142 letters mentioned in Cartwright's diary have survived, and there is no way of knowing what proportion of his predecessors' letters have been lost or if they were more or less enthusiastic correspondents than he was. None written by Walton, Ferne or Wilkins appear to be extant. Among those by the other three, the bulk of the survivors are letters to Sheldon and Sancroft.⁵⁷⁴ These and other official correspondence were more likely to be preserved by their recipients, but none of the bishops appear to have kept copies of the letters they sent. All are in their own distinctive handwriting: a cramped hand, tending to get smaller towards the end of a line or the bottom of a page, by Hall, a large clear hand by Pearson, a 'loose and rambling' hand by Cartwright.⁵⁷⁵ The unbalanced selection of letters to have survived undoubtedly gives a special prominence to their relationship with the archbishops of Canterbury, but the absence of correspondence with their own metropolitan is nevertheless striking. Despite the regular visitations of their province, the archbishops of York were not the drivers of ecclesiastical policy. Like the bishop of London in the southern province, they often did little more than pass on

⁵⁷² *ibid.*, f.125

⁵⁷³ Above, p.140.

⁵⁷⁴ The bulk of Sheldon's letters from diocesan bishops are collected together in Bodl. MS Add C305. The series of letters from Hall is followed immediately by one from Pearson, but relations between Wilkins and Sheldon were never warm.

⁵⁷⁵ The description of Cartwright's handwriting is that used by Hunter in his preface to the *Diary*, p.xiv. Hall, in the letter quoted above, p.204, acknowledged his tendency to scribble and blot the paper. It is ironic that a man who stabbed himself on his own pen-knife did not use a better trimmed quill.

instructions received from Lambeth or Whitehall.⁵⁷⁶ Sheldon's one surviving letter to Wilkins reveals some frustration that he could not involve himself directly in affairs in the north. Writing to urge Wilkins to take action against a certain disreputable clergyman, he commented, 'If he were of my Province, I knew well enough how to deale with him presently.' The man in question had, apparently, been refused ordination by Hall and may not have been a genuine priest at all, but had allegedly intruded himself into the chapelry of Altham in Whalley parish, where the archbishop was the impropriator and patron.⁵⁷⁷ There are several earlier items in Sheldon's letter-book relating to problems at Whalley over the appointment and remuneration of curates in the various chapelries, and though these are addressed to Stephen Gey, the Vicar, and Sir Ralph Ashton (or Assheton), the leading gentleman of the parish, they make it clear that Sheldon looked to Hall and Wilkins to sort the matter out and uphold the rights of the clergy and of the archbishop as patron.⁵⁷⁸ Shortly after Sancroft became archbishop, he received a letter from Pearson, who had also been instructed to sort out problems in Whalley, which, wrote Pearson, 'have created mee no little trouble'.⁵⁷⁹ On another occasion Hall was pressed by Sheldon to allow the rector of a parish in Chester diocese to exchange his living with an incumbent in Oxford.⁵⁸⁰

The archbishops also seem to have expected diocesan bishops to keep them informed about the circumstances of their colleagues. Not only is there the series of letters in which Bishop Lloyd of St Asaph informed Sancroft about the progress of

⁵⁷⁶ e.g. for the survey of conventicles in 1669 or the encouragement of catechising in 1673:

Ch.Sh., 3rd series, vol.11 (1914), p.30; BL, Harley 7377 f.41v.

⁵⁷⁷ BL, Harley 7377 f.24v; Such a situation cannot have made it any easier to win people back from Thomas Jolly's Independent congregation.

⁵⁷⁸ Bodl. MS Add C308 ff.101v-102, 118v, 126v, 127v. The matter is also touched on in one of Hall's letters to Sheldon: Bodl. MS Add. C305 f.64.

⁵⁷⁹ Lambeth Palace Library, MS 2797 f.4.

Pearson's final illness, but also one from Hall in which he reports to Sancroft on 'what the Bishop of Bangor dyed seized of' and on the health of the bishops of Oxford and St Asaph. The list of sinecures held by the late Bishop of Bangor is accompanied by an apology for any inaccuracies caused by Hall's inability to speak Welsh, but he makes it clear that he was acting in obedience to the Archbishop's command.⁵⁸¹

It was not only archbishops who gave additional tasks to the diocesan bishops. The government also looked on them as its agents for a variety of purposes, both tasks that belonged to the normal routine of administration and temporary commissions. Such tasks were not only imposed on bishops as overtly engaged in court politics as Cartwright was, as the following examples show.

One permanent role was as collectors of tenths from their inferior clergy, but such a task would be delegated to others and is likely to have directly concerned the bishop himself only when things went wrong. This was the situation Wilkins found himself in almost immediately upon his appointment. He and Thomas Duppa, the Receiver of Tenths in the dioceses of Chester, Exeter and Salisbury, were called before the Treasury Commission because Duppa's payments were in arrears and the auditor was demanding a 12% surcharge, though this was eventually remitted.⁵⁸² Presumably Duppa's payments from the other two dioceses were up to date. Perhaps he thought the interregnum at Chester had given him an opportunity to hold on to the cash for a while for his own purposes. Bishop Croft of Hereford was called in at the same time about similar arrears from his own diocese. The bishop

⁵⁸⁰ Bodl. MS Add. C305 f.52.

⁵⁸¹ *ibid.*, f.50.

must have been involved in other aspects of collecting local crown revenues, for another entry in the Treasury Minute Book records, 'The Auditor for co. Lancaster and Cheshire is to attend on Friday morning to give an account of what rents remain in the said counties beside the list brought in by the Bishop of Chester.'⁵⁸³

Other tasks might relate to either local concerns or matters where the bishop had some special expertise. On 21 August 1661, a few days before Walton set out for his diocese, the Council ordered him to examine a package of books that had been intercepted on their way to a Quaker in Chester. If he found them to be scandalous or dangerous he was to burn them in public.⁵⁸⁴ Walton and Pearson were both asked to help settle disputes concerning disputed fellowships, and the income that went with them, at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge. On the first of these occasions, Sterne, Cosin and Walton were explicitly asked to intervene 'as knowing the university statutes', while the latter was only a year after Pearson had left Cambridge, so similar considerations must have applied.⁵⁸⁵

Government concerns could effect the normal running of the diocese and imposition of ecclesiastical discipline. Sir Joseph Craddock, the commissary for the court at Richmond, had to be warned not to take action against the schoolmaster at Rombaldkirk in Yorkshire for attending Quaker meetings since he was a government spy.⁵⁸⁶ On another occasion, Bishop Hall thought it right to intervene in the secular judicial process to gain a reprieve for a former royalist who had killed a man,

⁵⁸² *CTB 1669-72*, pp.21, 108.

⁵⁸³ *ibid.*, p.1068.

⁵⁸⁴ Greaves, *Deliver Us From Evil*, p.212. The concern seems to have been political rather than religious: see above, pp.180-81, 234.

⁵⁸⁵ *CSPD 1660-61*, p.575; *CSPD 1673-75*, p.123.

⁵⁸⁶ *CSPD 1666-67*, p.206.

allegedly in self-defence, yet been convicted of murder by a jury of former Roundheads.⁵⁸⁷ Other aspects of a bishop's administration, or lack of it, might cause disquiet in Whitehall. In September 1683 Pearson was asked to account for the fact that the special service of thanksgiving for the discovery of the Rye House Plot had not been circulated for use in parts of the Richmond archdeaconry.⁵⁸⁸

Other demands on a bishop's time were ones about which he had more choice. There was nothing new in a bishop of Chester being asked to preach for the Sons of the Clergy when Cartwright was approached to do this.⁵⁸⁹ Hall had been involved with the origins of the festival during the Interregnum, being its second preacher. Pearson was the festival preacher in 1675, and when the charter for the Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy was granted in 1678 he was a member of its governing court and, as his signature on documents shows, an active one when his presence in London allowed.⁵⁹⁰ Wilkins is, perhaps, more famous as the moving spirit behind the foundation of the Royal Society than as a bishop. Though he certainly gave far less time to scientific pursuits than previously, he did not abandon them altogether, still having some involvement with the Society when he was in London and seizing the opportunity to dissect a dolphin that got stranded in the Dee estuary.⁵⁹¹ When Pepys met him in October 1668, the newly appointed bishop's conversation was all about his recently published *Essay towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language*, not his hopes or plans for his episcopal ministry.⁵⁹² Nevertheless, the *Essay* was his last work relating to natural philosophy, and his

⁵⁸⁷ CSPD 1664-65, p.354.

⁵⁸⁸ CSPD 1683, pp.385, 423.

⁵⁸⁹ Above, p.211.

⁵⁹⁰ E.H. Pearce, *The Sons of the Clergy, 1655-1904* (London, 1904), pp.6-10, 181.

⁵⁹¹ Shapiro, *Wilkins*, pp.201-02.

⁵⁹² Pepys, *Diary*, vol.9, p.331.

future literary endeavours were exclusively theological. More surprisingly, Pearson was also a fellow of the Society, though he seems to have taken little active part in its proceedings. Many conservative churchmen such as Peter Gunning were vehemently opposed to it on the grounds that the study of natural science was detrimental to revealed religion. Pearson was the last man to undervalue revelation, yet he cannot have shared Gunning's view.⁵⁹³

Occasional references in letters and diaries show that the pattern of dining and entertaining enjoyed by Cartwright was probably typical. Hospitality towards neighbours and travellers and charity towards the needy were still part of the ideal set before all those on more than a subsistence level of income, and especially those who claimed gentry or higher status. It was an ideal frequently encouraged through the application of biblical texts.⁵⁹⁴ That it would be expected of him was something Walton assumed when he included in his second petition for the advowson of Croston that it would enable him better to exercise hospitality and charity.⁵⁹⁵ Until well into the nineteenth century archbishops of Canterbury kept open table every Tuesday for any gentleman or cleric who arrived at Lambeth Palace suitably attired, and it has been claimed that Elizabethan bishops had been best able to retain the respect and esteem of their flocks when resident in their dioceses and extending hospitality to the leading laity.⁵⁹⁶ There is insufficient evidence to judge how well the Restoration bishops of Chester lived up to this ideal. In a sermon entitled *The*

⁵⁹³ Churton, 'Memoir', p.lxix; H.A. Lloyd-Jukes, 'Peter Gunning, 1613-84: Scholar, Churchman, Controversialist', in C.W.Dugmore & C.Duggan (eds.), *Studies in Church History*, vol.1 (London, 1964), pp.221-32 (especially p.231).

⁵⁹⁴ Felicity Heal, 'The Idea of Hospitality in Early Modern England', *P & P* 102 (1984) 66-93. Hospitality and charity were less clearly distinguished than they would be today, though the manner in which they were given depended on the recipient's status.

⁵⁹⁵ *CSPD 1661-1662*, p.69.

Danger of Riches, preached more than twenty years before he became bishop, Cartwright had warned clergy to be charitable lest they suffer the malicious envy of less fortunate laity, so he was at least aware of the practical importance of the subject.⁵⁹⁷ Matthew Anderton's brief encomium on Hall highlighted his being 'very Charitable' as his outstanding quality alongside being a 'constant preacher'.⁵⁹⁸ Apart from this, all that can be said is that no surviving record suggests any of the six bishops won special regard for their munificence or notoriety for their meanness. Sometimes the bishop would be host to the great and good, especially those travelling across the Irish Sea. 'The good Bishop of Man is now here with mee, intending shortly to go to his Isle of Patmos,' reported Hall in June 1666.⁵⁹⁹ In 1672 Lord Berkeley, the returning Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, was 'nobly entertained at the Palace at dinner by the Bishop'.⁶⁰⁰ Pearson, like Cartwright, dined with local gentry and with clergy and officials. Sir Willoughby Aston's diary refers several times to being either the bishop's guest or his host.⁶⁰¹ Henry Prescott, shortly to become the deputy registrar, gives a glimpse of the scholarly bishop in relaxed mood when he ate at the palace in January 1683: 'I took my lunch with my Lord Bishop. During lunch a funny story of 30 dozen larks killed by two muskets fired at once.'⁶⁰² Pearson's name, along with that of Prescott, appears in the roll of the Preston Guild

⁵⁹⁶ Carpenter, *Cantuar*, pp.246-47; Ralph Houlbrooke, 'The Protestant Episcopate, 1547-1603: the Pastoral Contribution' in Felicity Heal & Rosemary O'Day (eds.), *Church and Society in England, Henry VIII to James I* (London, 1977), pp. 78-98 (p.95).

⁵⁹⁷ Schlatter, *Social Ideas*, p.153.

⁵⁹⁸ PRO, SP29/245.

⁵⁹⁹ Bodl., MS Add. C305 f.54.

⁶⁰⁰ *CSPD 1672*, p.471.

⁶⁰¹ *Ch.Sh.*, 3rd series, vol.25 (1929), pp.9, 12; vol.56 (1961), p.50; vol.60 (1965), p.47; 4th series, vol.1 (1966), pp.16, 24.

⁶⁰² *The Diary of Henry Prescott, LL.B., Deputy Registrar of Chester Diocese*, edited by John Addy, John Harrop & Peter McNiven, vol.III (RSLC 133, 1997), pp.699: Harrop's translation of the Latin original.

for the previous year,⁶⁰³ while yet another kind of social interaction with local dignitaries, both clerical and lay, is revealed by the following entry in the parish registers of St Oswald's:

William Sonne to Dr Henry Bridgeman, Dean of Chester and Bishop of Mann, was borne the sixth day of February, 1681,... And Babtized upon Friday, the 21st of February following, by Dr Lawrence Fogg, in the Cathedrall Church of Chester, William, Earle of Derby, and Dr John Pierson, Lord Bishop of Chester, Godfathers, and my Lady Dorothy Bridgeman, Godmother.⁶⁰⁴

Pepys and Evelyn met successive bishops in London. On Sunday 5 January 1668, Pepys was invited to dinner by Lady Carteret:

... there we met with my Lord Brereton and several other strangers, to dine there; and I find him a very sober and serious, able man, and was in discourse too hard for the Bishop of Chester, who dined there; and who, above all books lately wrote, commending the matter and style of a late book called *The Causes of the Decay of Piety*, I do resolve at his commendation to get it.⁶⁰⁵

A fuller report of this conversation would have thrown invaluable light on Hall's perception of the problems he faced. Brereton was a Cheshire man, so the discussion may have focused on the situation there. At least the incident reveals that a bishop in London could still maintain contact with notable men from his diocese. On the other hand, when Evelyn dined with Wilkins the gathering was a distinctly political one, with Clifford as the host and Ashley and Lauderdale among the other guests, while the meal he shared with Pearson was in a clerical setting: 'I din'd at Knightsbridge with the Bishops of Salisbury, Chester & Lincoln my old friends.'⁶⁰⁶ Though it would be unwise to generalise from just two isolated instances, it is not

⁶⁰³ Bishop Bridgeman had also been listed in the Guild rolls: *The Rolls of Burgesses at the Guilds Merchant of the Borough of Preston*, ed. by W. Alexander Abram (RSLC IX, 1884), pp. 76, 1-6, 180-81.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ch. Sh.*, 3rd series, vol. 3 (1899), p. 103.

⁶⁰⁵ Pepys, *Diary*, vol. 9, p. 10.

⁶⁰⁶ Evelyn, *Diary*, vol. III, p. 526; vol. IV, p. 33 (entries for 2 April 1669 and 25 March 1674).

hard to imagine the two bishops each being more at home in these rather different gatherings.

Socially, the bishops mingled with fellow clergy, the gentry and the ruling oligarchies of the towns. These were the people with whom they shared responsibility for the good order of society, on whose co-operation and assistance they depended, and who were the tenants of their impropriations. The charitable payments made from money commutations for penances were bestowed on classes of people such as the poor in a particular place,⁶⁰⁷ and are unlikely to have been supervised by the bishop in detail, even when he was in residence or if similar distributions were made from his own pocket. It would have been more usual for his chaplain to deal with such things on his behalf, though it must be assumed that Hall was personally involved in the case of the not insignificant gift of £3 made to a particular widow in 1665.⁶⁰⁸ One other recorded case of a bishop's kindness towards a particular individual concerned 'an honourable Maid lately deceased'. Pearson, so Dean Bridgeman informed his chapter colleagues, had 'a kindness for her family as well as a great love unto justice' and was concerned to discover what the traditional fees for a burial in the cathedral had been so that they should not be taken advantage of by exorbitant charges.⁶⁰⁹

A bishop in the Restoration era certainly faced a 'multiplicity of business', as Lloyd termed it in his funeral sermon for Wilkins. Much of it followed patterns laid down by law or custom, patterns which no one seriously tried to change. The patchy

⁶⁰⁷ See above, p.243.

⁶⁰⁸ Cheshire RO, EDA 3/2, f.125. The widow's name is given, but unfortunately is illegible.

⁶⁰⁹ Cheshire RO, EDD 3913/3/2, p.112: The ancient records of fees had apparently been taken to London during the Interregnum and destroyed in the Great Fire.

nature of the surviving evidence makes it difficult to draw sharp distinctions of episcopal style between the different holders of the see beyond those outlined in the previous chapter regarding their attitudes towards dissent and non-conformity. It was only after the Revolution, when attempts to deal with the established church's rivals by either persecution or comprehension were finally abandoned, that a vigorous pastoral bishop, Nicholas Stratford, became involved with a variety of new initiatives such as Queen Anne's Bounty, the founding of the S.P.C.K., and encouraging societies for the reformation of manners. Though there are some indications of differences between the various bishops, they probably had little impact on the average curate or man in the pew. Hall's priority, like that of every bishop in the 1660s, was reconstruction: physical, such as directing fines from the consistory court towards repair of the cathedral, institutional, through the campaign for conformity, and spiritual, through the priority he gave to preaching. Wilkins stands somewhat apart from the bulk of the ecclesiastical establishment, as shown by his record in Parliament and the absence of regular correspondence with Sheldon. Cartwright strove to be a conscientious diocesan, but his political stance as an active supporter of James II determined much of his extra-diocesan activity.

Perhaps nothing had so great an impact on a diocese as its bishop's state of health. In an age when retirement was virtually unknown, bishops, like kings, had to remain active to the end of their lives. Hall, Wilkins and Cartwright were all dead before reaching the age at which Pearson succeeded to the bishopric, and he was soon at the age at which Walton and Ferne too had passed away. References to his being unwell occur throughout his episcopate, and poor health clearly inhibited his ability to deal with the multiplicity of business. Burnet's claim that 'his memory

went from him so entirely, that he became as a child some years before he died', is undoubtedly an exaggeration, as a letter written to Sancroft on 18 April 1685 shows.⁶¹⁰ Yet first-hand evidence shows the state to which he came before he died. White Kennett was told by Henry Dodwell, the editor of some of Pearson's posthumous works, how

he called to wait on the Bishop at his palace in Chester, and got into the library, and asked to see the Bishop. After much importunity, the Bishop was led in by an old woman, his nurse, and, taking no notice of Mr Dodwell, he looked round upon books, held out his hands, and cried, 'O sad, whose books are all these?' At which, said Mr Dodwell, I was so surprised and so ashamed, that I went away without hearing another word from him.⁶¹¹

The diocese was, perhaps, fortunate that its other bishops died after very short illnesses so that it was not left without an effective chief pastor for as much as it might have been.

⁶¹⁰ Burnet, *Reign of James II*, p.158; Tanner 31 f.30.

⁶¹¹ Quoted in Bridgeman, *History of Wigan*, pp.557-58.

§6 BY WHAT AUTHORITY? EPISCOPACY, CHURCH AND STATE.

Something of the extent of the bishops' writing and preaching and also of the thinking which underlay their actions have been touched on in the previous two chapters. This one will look at their thought in rather more detail. The principal sources for this are their published works, though no attempt will be made to cover all the topics with which these deal. Many of Wilkins' writings are on scientific or mathematical subjects; Walton's most extensive work, *The Considerator Considered*, was largely concerned with detailed questions of textual criticism of the Bible;⁶¹² Pearson similarly devoted much literary labour to establishing authentic texts and chronologies for patristic authors, while his *Exposition of the Creed* necessarily covered many areas of Christian doctrine. The main concern here will be with those books and sermons which deal directly with the justification for an episcopal polity, and with the place of bishops and the church in relation to secular authorities. Most of the works in which their ideas were expressed were written before they became bishops with little time for significant new writing, and many date from before the Restoration. The circumstances under which they spoke or wrote will often need to be taken into consideration. Though it is true, as Spurr observes, that much of what was written at this time provided a powerful apologia for the legitimacy of episcopacy yet was vague about what a bishop actually did,⁶¹³ it will nevertheless be found that the ideas these men expressed in their published works are not irrelevant to their actual conduct in office. This appears, for example,

⁶¹² In one passage, however, Walton suggested that the real objection of John Owen -- 'the Considerator' -- to his inclusion of ancient translations in his Polyglot Bible was that they proved episcopal government, set liturgies and the observance of festivals had been used since the earliest times in churches that were never subject to Rome: Todd, *Memoirs of Walton*, vol.2 (a reprint of *The Considerator Considered*), pp.203-04.

⁶¹³ Spurr, *Restoration Church*, p.143.

in Ferne's failure to make any kind of practical concessions, Wilkins' personal conformity while rejecting the persecution of Dissenters, or Cartwright's willing co-operation with James in policies which undermined the privileged position of the Church of England.

The two who wrote directly about the origins and purpose of episcopacy were Ferne and Pearson. Ferne's earliest work was produced during the Civil War, and consisted of short pamphlets aimed at winning waverers over to the cause of royalism and the Established Church. The earliest of these was *The Resolving of Conscience*, which came out in the autumn of 1642. Although Ferne was never a member of the Great Tew circle, his views were very much in accord with those of Hyde, Falkland and other constitutional royalists. The main concern of the tract was with the legitimacy of armed resistance. He did not attempt to defend all the policies of the Personal Rule, accepting that a king had certain obligations towards his subjects and that his power was limited by law. However, if a king failed to meet his obligations or tried to assume powers that were not legitimately his, the subject was forbidden by both Scripture and reason to retaliate with force, though he could respond with 'cryes to God, petitions to the Prince, denials of obedience to his unlawfull commands, denyalls of subsidy, ayd, &c.'⁶¹⁴ Towards the end of the work Ferne turned briefly from the political problem of when and how a subject could resist his sovereign to one of the religious issues that he believed underlay the outbreak of civil war:

If we hearken to the peoples voice, for that commonly speaks the mind of their leaders, we shall find them usually call this Warre, as they did that with the Scots, The Bishops Warre. His Majesty has indeed alwayes declared against altering of the Government of the Church by Bishops, being such as it alwayes had since the first receiving of the Christian Faith in this land, and of all other

⁶¹⁴ Henry Ferne, *A Resolving of Conscience* (Cambridge, 1642), p.23.

governments simply the best, if reformed from abuse and corruptions that have grown upon it, to the purging out of which his Majesty is always ready to agree. But ... whether is it so just in Subjects by Arms to force a change of Government which was always in the Church, and by Law established, as it is in the King to defend the same as he is bound by Oath? It is clear which of the two are upon the defensive.⁶¹⁵

Ferne no doubt felt fully justified in identifying episcopacy as a central issue of the war when the Solemn League and Covenant was signed, just as he must have felt a certain grim satisfaction when he saw his prophecy fulfilled that the Parliamentary armies would turn against their masters, for 'according to the principles now taught them, they may lay hold upon this power of resistance, for their representative body claims it by them'⁶¹⁶ The signing of the Covenant was one of the new developments against which he wrote *Episcopacy and Presbytery Considered*, a work first published in 1644 and re-issued three years later to rally moderate opinion as the demands of religious, social and political radicals grew in intensity. In it he expanded many of the points hinted at in the brief paragraph just quoted from *The Resolving of Conscience* about the antiquity of episcopacy as an institution (even if some more recent developments were undesirable) and its place within the traditional constitution of church and state.

Too many people, Ferne feared, were prepared to go along with a drastic change in church government because they had never really considered the true nature of either system. The structure of the work, therefore, was first to set out the nature, origins and evolution of episcopacy and then that of Presbyterianism before comparing the advantages and disadvantages of both systems. The constitutional royalist began with a definition of what might be termed constitutional episcopacy,

⁶¹⁵ *ibid.*, p.39.

⁶¹⁶ *ibid.*, p.25.

designed to conciliate those whose aversion to Laudianism might tempt them to throw out the baby with the bath-water:

Episcopacy ... in it selfe considered, is a Prelacy or superiority of One above all the Presbyters within such a precinct or Diocesse, which one is appointed to the care of all the Churches within that compasse, and furnished with power and authority for Ordination and Jurisdiction (that Authority not being Arbitrary, but bounded by Lawes, and administered or exercised with advice and assistance of certaine choice Presbyters) to the intent that all Churches or Congregations under him may be provided of able Pastors, and that both these inferiour Pastours and people may performe the duties required of them.⁶¹⁷

He then traced the origins of episcopacy back to the New Testament. Jesus had commissioned his apostles with the words, 'As the Father hath sent me, even so I send you.' This Ferne interpreted as implying a power to send yet others to establish and care for Christian churches, 'and so to the World's end; For this was an Ordinary power to continue in the Church after the Apostles.'⁶¹⁸ That this was the case is shown by the examples of Timothy and others in the New Testament, and

As it appeares plainly enough in Holy Writ, so the practice and continuance of Episcopall Government, is most evident in all the Ancient Fathers, all the Councells, all the Histories of the Church, so cleare and obvious to any eye that looks into them, that it is no small wonder, any man of Learning and Knowledge should in this point be Papist or Puritan, either for a Pope or against a Bishop.⁶¹⁹

Ferne then remarked how even Calvin acknowledged that in ancient times each city had a bishop and that Jerome, the only Father whose views seemed to support the Presbyterian case, nevertheless taught that Alexandria had had a succession of bishops from the time of the evangelist St Mark. He disposed of the argument that early bishops were subject to a presbytery by claiming that they could not then have prevented schisms among the presbyters (which even Calvin and Jerome admitted was the purpose of a bishop), and rejected the view that episcopacy was a merely

⁶¹⁷ Henry Ferne, *Episcopacy and Presbytery Considered, according to the several respects, which may commend a church government, and oblige good Christians to it* (London, 1647), p.3.

⁶¹⁸ *ibid.*, p.4, quoting John 20:21.

⁶¹⁹ *ibid.*, p.5.

human institution, insisting that it could not then have secured such early and universal recognition. 'It cannot be conceived,' he concluded, 'that the Church was left by the Apostles under any other Government then Episcopall.' By contrast, of Presbyterianism he could say bluntly, 'For 1500 years continuance of Christianity we have no example of any Church so governed.'⁶²⁰ In advancing these arguments he was not being particularly original; they had been regularly deployed by apologists for the Established Church for at least fifty years and would have been common ground among the majority of conformists.

Ferne did not ignore the thousand years that divided the patristic era from his own day, and acknowledged the growth of an array of subordinates and assistants for the bishop, such as cathedral chapters, archdeacons, and diocesan chancellors. While these were not of the essence of an episcopal system, their assistance made a bishop's task easier. Ferne agreed that it was best if a bishop exercised jurisdiction in person whenever possible, but pointed out that it was inconsistent of the Presbyterians to object to lay chancellors at the same time as arguing for lay elders in their own disciplinary system. Since Ferne's own career as a bishop was so exceptionally brief, he never got the chance to turn precept into practice by presiding in Chester Consistory Court, but it has been shown that his successors did pursue this ideal when the many other competing claims on their time allowed.⁶²¹

When comparing the actual workings of the two systems he highlighted four points. Firstly, Presbyterians involved laymen in the selection of new ministers and even in their ordination, without apostolic warrant and contrary to catholic practice,

⁶²⁰ *ibid.*, pp.5, 11. He later quoted the Hussites and other foreign churches who had sought for bishops if possible; p.25.

whereas a bishop was better able to do this on account of his learning, rank and experience. Secondly, disputed points of faith and worship are better determined by clergy meeting in synod under their bishop or by a national council of bishops than by a presbytery which included laymen. 'This Inundation of Sects and Errors, which now overflows the Land,' he claimed, 'wee find has prevailed through the restraint of Episcopall power.'⁶²² Thirdly, the power of the keys was not given by Christ to laymen, and in many parochial elderships was exercised by those who were ignorant and illiterate yet sat in judgement on their social superiors. Church discipline in the episcopal system was exercised by men who were less likely to be motivated by petty jealousies and rivalries. Finally, the Presbyterian polity was less effective for preserving peace and unity, one of the chief ends of church government, since there was often contention about choosing a moderator for each session and certain personalities could easily dominate or sway the meeting. All this, so Ferne claimed, was avoided under the settled leadership of a bishop.⁶²³

Having demonstrated to his own satisfaction that episcopacy secured a more peaceful and ordered life for the Church, Ferne went on to argue that it also helped the Church relate better to society, claiming that presbyteries encroached on the jurisdiction of temporal courts. This was a clever way of trying to win over those who had resented the pretensions of Laud and his associates, but were equally wary of the claims being made for *jure divino* presbyteries. With hardly anyone yet thinking of a settlement that did not include the king, Ferne could still argue for episcopacy on the basis that it accorded best with the royal supremacy. The Papacy, episcopacy and Presbyterianism in the Church corresponded to monarchy,

⁶²¹ See above, pp.212, 241-42.

⁶²² Ferne, *Episcopacy and Presbytery Considered*, p.16.

aristocracy and democracy in a state. Bishops neither pretended to be superior to the king, as the Pope did, nor did they undermine monarchy as the democratic nature of Presbyterianism threatened to do.⁶²⁴

Like other constitutional royalists, Ferne was critical of aspects of the Personal Rule, but soon came to feel that Parliament and its allies were threatening much more dangerous innovations. His writings in the 1640s were principally directed at the more moderate or hesitant supporters of Parliament. But just as he drew the line at active opposition aimed at coercing the king, so he made few practical concessions over the operation of episcopacy. No one latched onto Ferne's writings as offering the basis for a compromise settlement in the way Baxter and some others took up Ussher's plans for a reduced episcopacy. Ferne made a theoretical distinction between the essentials of episcopal polity and later accretions, but he defended the existing system in practice and never suggested the creation of more and smaller dioceses that would enable the bishops to be more directly involved in discipline and pastoral oversight. Similarly, while claiming that a good bishop would act with the advice and assistance of his senior clergy, he rejected any idea that they could overrule him. His thinking is compatible with the ideas put forward in the Worcester House Declaration on the operation of episcopacy, which provided for the bishop to be advised by a council of senior clergy without being subject to it, yet his practice as Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge showed that he wished to circumvent the Declaration's restrictions on the revival of the pre-war church.⁶²⁵

⁶²³ *ibid.*, pp.15-17.

⁶²⁴ *ibid.*, pp.18ff.

The works Ferne wrote in the 1640s were all pamphlets intended to have an immediate impact on public opinion, but in the enforced leisure of the 1650s he wrote three rather more substantial volumes. The first of these, *Certain Considerations of Present Concernment touching this Reformed Church of England*, was written in answer to the criticisms of Anglican ordinations made by the Jesuit Anthony Champny and published in 1653. In 1655 he produced two more works: *Of the Division between the English Church and the Romish Church upon the Reformation* and *A Compendious Discourse upon the Case as it stands between the Church of England and of Rome on the one hand, and again between the same Church of England and those Congregations which have divided from it on the other hand*. The latter title is significant in its refusal to refer to the English Presbyterians or Independents as churches. The reason is made clear in a passage from *Of the Division*:

The case betweene the English and the Romish Church is as between two Nationall Churches, having full authority for publick Reformation; but the case between the English Church, and those that have divided from it, is between a Nationall Church and the members of it; by which it appears they could have no sufficient Authority for publick Reformation, without, and against the Authority in being, to pull down and set up as they have done, and it will appear they could have no just Cause for as much as a Separation from the Communion of our Church.⁶²⁶

He demonstrated the lack of just cause for separation from the Church of England by repeating the arguments of *Episcopacy and Presbytery Considered* on the nature and origins of episcopacy and by defending the various ceremonies objected to by the Puritans both individually and on the general grounds that

In the Churches determination of things in themselves indifferent, and enjoying the observation of Rites and Ceremonies, it is enough that the particular be not against God's Word: and he that will not yield obedience to it, is bound to shew it plainly contrary to the Word, or else stand guilty of

⁶²⁵ Above, p.117.

⁶²⁶ Henry Ferne, *Of the Division between the English Church and the Romish Church upon the Reformation* (London, 1655), p.47.

disobeying the known precepts of the Word, which command obedience to Authority.⁶²⁷

This obedience was essential if the Church were to fulfil its purpose and be the vehicle of salvation for all its members, for

The Church of Christ is a Society or Company under a Regiment, Discipline, Government, and the Members constituting that Society are either Persons taught, guided, governed, or Persons teaching, guiding, governing; and this in order to preserve all in Unity, and to advance every Member of this visible Society, to an effectuall and reall participation of Grace, and Union with Christ the Head; and therefore, and upon no lesse account is obedience due unto them.⁶²⁸

All this makes it clear why Ferne was so eager to restore conformity in Cambridge.

It also explains why he was at pains to cite cases of foreign Protestant churches which had retained episcopacy or would have done so if possible, but had no sympathy with those who took Presbyterian orders when, as in England even in the 1650s, orthodox Protestant bishops were available.

Wilful omission or rejection of it [episcopacy and episcopal ordination] is not only a great sin and Sacrilege committed against the commandment and appointment of Christ and his Apostles, but also such a breach of charity in them who are guilty of it that it renders them Schismatical, and so far disjoyned from the body of Christ, which is his Church, as they stand guilty of it.⁶²⁹

There remained one aspect of the debate about episcopacy on which Ferne remained agnostic: did bishops differ from presbyters in order or merely in degree? Apparently feeling he had no clear guidance from Scripture or the patristic tradition of interpretation, he left the question open, pointing to the practical advantages of either answer, much as he had argued for the practical advantages of episcopacy as well as putting the case for it from the New Testament and catholic practice:

⁶²⁷ *ibid.*, p.49.

⁶²⁸ *ibid.*, p.48.

⁶²⁹ Henry Ferne, *Certain Considerations of Present Concernment touching this Reformed Church of England* (London, 1653), p.104.

I suppose the first way (which conceives it [the power of ordination] superadded as a distinct power to their priestly function) to be the clearer for securing the episcopal function and distinguishing it from the other; but the second way (which conceives that power radically diffused and communicated in the very order of the Priestly function, and restrained to such select persons in the exercise of it, the faculty or immediate power whereof they received in consecration) I suppose to be more easy and expedient for a peaceable accord of the difference in hand, and yet safe enough for Episcopal Ordination.⁶³⁰

This was a very slight concession towards the Presbyterian position. It also, though Ferne never said this, made it easier to accept the prospect of a Church of England in which the succession of episcopal consecrations could not be maintained, a situation which became increasingly likely as the Interregnum continued. It was, perhaps, the more secure situation of the 1660s as much as purely theological considerations which enabled Pearson to adopt the stronger position.

Pearson's arguments are set out most fully in his *Determinationes Theologicae Sex* ('Six Theological Conclusions'), lectures he gave in the 1660s as Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, and *Conciones ad Clerum Sex* ('Six Addresses to Clergy') given in the same capacity.⁶³¹ His first three conclusions were that the order of bishops was apostolic in origin, that the power of ordination resided in bishops alone, and that Anglican ordinations contained all that was essential for a call to the ministry. The last of the addresses to clergy maintained the divine institution of the ordained ministry and of the distinct orders of bishop, priest and deacon. While using many of the same scriptural and patristic texts as Ferne to argue for the apostolic origins of episcopacy, he more strongly emphasised that this in effect meant it had a divine origin as part of the way God himself had ordered things:

⁶³⁰ *ibid.*, p.118.

⁶³¹ The *Determinationes* are in Pearson, *Minor Works*, vol.1, pp.271-316, and the *Conciones* in vol.2, pp.3-78.

Not by the people, nor through them, but by God, through Paul, was Titus made a bishop... Through this apostolic tradition the whole power of ordination rests in the bishops; no power is granted to anyone else in the New Testament, it was granted to none in the ancient church. Whatever has been said with regard to the honour of the office of presbyter, ordination has always been denied them; just as it is permitted for fathers to create sons but not vice-versa.⁶³²

A distinct power, Pearson maintained, implied a separate order, and since the powers of ordination, of governing other presbyters, and of excommunicating members of the Church by his own authority all belonged to a bishop by his consecration, it must have bestowed on him a new order superior to that of a priest. He rejected the argument that the use of different terms ('ordaining' priests but 'consecrating' bishops) implied that there was parity between them. 'The ordination of bishops is called consecration, not as a denial of the order, but to distinguish it and give it precedence.'⁶³³ Even Jerome was quoted in support of the distinction between the orders, since he had seen Aaron with his sons and the Levites as Old Testament types for a Christian bishop with his presbyters and deacons.⁶³⁴ The levelling of bishops and priests had its origins elsewhere:

For nothing is more certain than that all diminution of the rights of episcopacy had its source in the papal usurpation; and the pope of Rome appears to me in no other light, than as an individual who claims to himself all the authority given to bishops throughout the whole world, and from the assumption of that authority to himself, threatens the independence of Christian princes, states, and churches.⁶³⁵

While the theory was set out in Latin in the lecture hall, the implications for church life were spelt out in liturgy and in a popular pamphlet which highlighted some of the pastoral issues. Whereas the same formula for ordination -- 'Receive

⁶³² *ibid.*, vol.2, pp.73-74. The first sentence in this quotation matches the view expressed by Sancroft in his sermon at Walton's consecration summarised on p.45 above.

⁶³³ *ibid.*, vol.1, p.274.

⁶³⁴ *ibid.*, vol.2, p.75.

⁶³⁵ *ibid.*, vol.1, p.274; the translation of this passage is by Churton on p.lviii.

the Holy Ghost' -- had been used for both bishops and priests in the earlier versions of the Prayer Book, in 1661 Convocation adopted Pearson's proposal that the words 'for the office and work of a priest...' or 'for the office and work of a bishop now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands' be added.⁶³⁶ These modifications made it clear that a new order was being given. The pamphlet was Pearson's open *Letter on Promiscuous Ordinations*. This was written in response to an anonymous enquiry from someone who feared, amidst all the rumours of comprehension or indulgence that were prevalent in 1668, that his parish patron might be able to nominate a vicar who had 'received something which he calls ordination, either after a classical or congregational way'.⁶³⁷ Pearson responded:

In the peculiar and happy condition of our Church, these promiscuous ordinations, if at all allowed by it, are the most destructive to that which is the safety and honour of it. We have the greatest felicity which could happen to a reformation, as being regular and authoritative, that we have so taken away the many mistakes and errors, which had been introduced by a long ignorance and usurpation, as to retain a perfect compliance with the ancient church....⁶³⁸

However, 'by promiscuous ordinations the doctrine of the Church will be rendered indefensible and the discipline impracticable'.⁶³⁹ Moreover, not only the institution but the individual believer would suffer. If the prospective minister of the enquirer's parish 'still obstinately refuse[d] to receive ordination after the established way of the Church of England', then baptisms he administered would be irregular, while neither the Holy Communion he celebrated nor the absolution he offered a penitent in Christ's name would be valid.⁶⁴⁰ All this may be seen as a logical development of the statement in his *Exposition of the Creed*: 'As ... there is no church where there is no order or ministry; so where the same order and ministry is, there is the same

⁶³⁶ above, p.203.

⁶³⁷ Pearson, *Minor Works*, vol.2, p.231.

⁶³⁸ *ibid.*, vol.2, p.233.

⁶³⁹ *ibid.*, vol.2, p.234.

⁶⁴⁰ *ibid.*, vol.2, pp.235-37.

Church. This is the unity of discipline.’ The claim was backed up in the notes by quotations about the bishop as a focus and symbol of unity from Ignatius and Cyprian, the subjects of two of Pearson’s later works.⁶⁴¹

While Ferne’s Civil War pamphlets had included a defence of episcopacy as part of the ancient constitution and as the church polity which accorded best with the royal supremacy, the circumstances under which Pearson spoke and wrote did not require him to touch directly on the relationship of Church and crown. Nevertheless, there are scattered hints as to his views. It is probable that he thought of the royal supremacy as one element in securing England’s ‘regular and authoritative’ reformation, for in discussing the standing of the Forty-two Articles of Edward VI’s reign and the Thirty-nine of Elizabeth’s he noted how the title-pages described them as agreed by the bishops and clergy meeting in Convocation and published by royal authority. The latter set of articles were subsequently established by Parliament, but nowhere did Pearson imply that crown or Parliament could have devised and imposed them without the bishops’ agreement.⁶⁴² The bishops’ authority he believed to be *jure divino*, while in his *Exposition of the Creed* he implied that the conversion of Constantine signalled the acceptance by secular authorities of responsibilities towards the church;

Little above two ages after the death of the last apostle, the emperors of the world gave in their names to Christ, and submitted their sceptres to His laws, that the Gentiles might come to His light, and kings to the brightness of his rising, that kings might become the nursing fathers, and their queens the nursing mothers of the Church.⁶⁴³

⁶⁴¹ Pearson, *Exposition of the Creed*, p.642.

⁶⁴² Pearson, *Minor Works*, vol.2, pp.193-198; the passage refers to comes from a tract of 1660, *No Necessity of Reformation of the Public Doctrine of the Church of England*.

⁶⁴³ Pearson, *Exposition of the Creed*, p.172: the phraseology is taken from the Book of Isaiah.

It was right that subjects should 'learn to obey the powers which are of human ordination, because in them they obey the Lord of all', yet even the most absolute ruler had to learn 'that the people which they rule are not their own, but the subjects of a greater Prince, by him committed to their charge'.⁶⁴⁴ In any case, the essential truths of the gospel had been set forth in the apostolic age, correctly interpreted by the Fathers, and entrusted to the bishops and clergy. This was why in his earliest surviving sermon, probably preached in 1643, he could be so dismissive of the forthcoming Westminster Assembly. After referring to a number of ancient church councils, he concluded:

Alas! they pretended to but one Holy Ghost among them all. We are like to have divers spirits in one. They were but chosen by the clergy. These shall be elected by a representative body of the whole kingdom..... Therefore, to conclude in a word, whoever will not freely submit his judgement with all the obedience of faith to the determination of such a synod, he deserves no better, than - to be counted a member of the catholic church!⁶⁴⁵

No seventeenth-century bishop ever had to contend with the kind of government-inspired changes to doctrine and worship that had convulsed the mid-Tudor church, so how they would actually have behaved in such a situation is unknown. Some Churchmen were certainly eager for Convocation to meet and formulate a religious settlement at the Restoration, before Charles could impose one or Parliament could seize the initiative,⁶⁴⁶ and all were aware that no secular authority could provide an absolutely secure foundation for the Church. The fate of Charles I provided Pearson with a striking contrast to the omnipotence of God, for 'experience teacheth us that the most puissant prince is compelled actually to submit, when the stronger part of his own people hath taken the boldness to put a force upon

⁶⁴⁴ *ibid.*, pp.295-96.

⁶⁴⁵ Pearson, *Minor Works*, vol.2, pp.110-11.

⁶⁴⁶ Sykes, *Sheldon to Secker*, p.36.

him'.⁶⁴⁷ Churchmen of all shades of opinion needed to find better justifications for their preferred form of church than a simple appeal to the royal supremacy once the old king was dead and his sons were proving too unreliable to be the rock on which to build the church.⁶⁴⁸ This was one of the factors that led to a renewed emphasis on the Church's own inherent authority and Pearson's views provide some indication of this trend. However, Church and monarchy having fallen and risen together, there was a natural reluctance among churchmen to be openly critical of the crown. The somewhat precarious position they espoused is illustrated by the sermon preached at Lancaster assizes in 1675 by Henry Pigot, Vicar of Rochdale. He had some difficulty in defining the relationship between the king and bishops who were something more than the king's agents:

Kings' prerogatives we stickle for, and amongst them that they have a right to be both Fathers and Sons to the Church; for those of Bishops also, but not to exalt 'em over those who are in most peculiar manner God's anoynted.⁶⁴⁹

This suggested that bishops might also be described as God's anointed and had God-given prerogatives which could clash with those of the crown, though the ideal was that they should work together. The independent claims of the Church of England became clearer as the preacher urged magistrates and clergy to make common cause:

If you stick by your old King Edward's laws, Magna Charta, several other good statutes, and the common Law: we to our one Canon, two Testaments, three Creeds, the first four Councils, the five first Centuries, as fixing the rule of our Religion, we satisfie ourselves, and those guided by us, and stop the mouth of those who tell us of turning all upside down.⁶⁵⁰

⁶⁴⁷ Pearson, *Exposition of the Creed*, p.87.

⁶⁴⁸ Maltby comments, 'There is a striking undercurrent of unease and discontent among Church of England loyalists about Charles himself and more significantly about basing claims of authenticity for the established church on arguments around the Supreme Governorship.' Maltby, 'Formation of Anglicanism', p.141.

⁶⁴⁹ Quoted in Raines, *Vicars of Rochdale*, p.122.

⁶⁵⁰ *ibid.*; also Earwaker (ed.), *Local Gleanings*, vol.1, p.226. 'King Edward's laws' is probably a reference to the laws of Edward the Confessor, which were regarded in the middle ages as a standard of good government.

Pigot's list of authorities for the doctrine and polity of the Church is an unacknowledged quotation from Lancelot Andrewes,⁶⁵¹ and alongside the struggle to justify Anglican orders and liturgical practice by an appeal to scripture, tradition and reason was another to maintain that conformists were the true heirs of the reformers, above all of those virtually canonised in Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. Dissenters, for the same reason, were portrayed as perverting that Protestant inheritance. De Krey and others have argued that the crisis of 1679 to 1682 was as much about religion as politics, with nonconformists seeing the bishops and their supporters as the betrayers of the Reformation,⁶⁵² but this was not something new. Ever since the troubles among the Marian exiles at Frankfurt, English Protestants had been divided between those loyal to the actual inheritance of Cranmer and his associates and those loyal to the vision of a more thoroughgoing reformation which they believed fate alone had prevented Cranmer from carrying through. Ferne's case for an episcopate purged of recent (but unspecified) corruptions could be interpreted as a promise to return to a Jacobean or even an Edwardian model. In the same sermon in which Pearson poured scorn on the forthcoming Westminster Assembly, he defended set forms of prayer and demanded to know, 'Did reverend Cranmer first sacrifice his hand, because it had a part in the liturgy?'⁶⁵³ In the one surviving sermon from his time as bishop, the themes of loyalty to the Reformation inheritance and the obligation of the secular authorities to defend the Church as it was currently constituted were cleverly combined. He was preaching before the House of Lords on 5 November 1673. His theme, therefore, was thanksgiving for the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot, while

⁶⁵¹ H.R. McAdoo, *The Spirit of Anglicanism: A Survey of Anglican Theological Method in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1965), p.320.

⁶⁵² Gary S. De Krey, 'Reformation in the Restoration Crisis, 1679-1682' in Donna B. Hamilton & Richard Stier (eds.), *Religion, Literature and Politics in Post-Reformation England, 1540-1688* (Cambridge, 1996), pp.231-252. See also Morrill's comment on the Cheshire Tories quoted above, p.174.

⁶⁵³ Pearson, *Minor Works*, vol.2, p.99.

the immediate context was Charles's recent and reluctant withdrawal of his Declaration of Indulgence. Since the plotters had been Englishmen, but of a different religion, it must have been the religious settlement that they aimed to overthrow. It must also have been his approbation of that settlement which moved God providentially to foil the plot. The passage of time had removed the people who had been saved, but Pearson's audience could preserve the religion 'which was then so signally owned'. He concluded by noting how 'our late sovereign' had been saved as a prince in 1605 only to perish as a king in 1649, and feared what might happen if the nation's sins again provoked God's anger. This enabled him to end on a suitably loyal note while condemning the Church of England's enemies on either hand, the people whom Charles had tried to woo with his Declaration:

"God save the king." God save him from the open rebellion of the schismatical party, the ruin of his father. God save him from the secret machinations of the papal faction, the danger of his grandfather. "God save the king;" and let all the people say, Amen.⁶⁵⁴

In a sermon preached to the Sons of the Clergy in 1655 in the very public setting of St Paul's Cathedral, George Hall went as far as circumstances would allow in claiming the reformers as the spiritual ancestors of the episcopalians:

Against us in our whole Ecclesiastical Order, there hath been continuall barking, Martin Mar-prelate, and Mar-Priest also, is still alive; let me familiarly expresse our Condition, Since the time of our not peevisch, and voluntary, but inforced drawing off from Rome, in our Reformation... The Separatists, and Papists, have been playing at Tennis, and our Hierarchy, and Ministry, are the Ball they tosse; The Separatist aimes to strike us into the Popes Hazzard, calling us Anti-christian; and look, how many Bishops we have had, so many Popes; (It is well Pope Cranmer, Pope Latimer, Pope Ridley come into the number.) The Papist, with vehemence Rackets us back againe, as Schismaticall, and Hereticall, and ill it is with us, which soever wins the Game.⁶⁵⁵

⁶⁵⁴ *ibid.*, pp.151-52.

⁶⁵⁵ Hall, *God's Appearing*, pp.19-20.

His audience will have included Presbyterians and non-separating Independents as well as Anglicans; the preacher in 1656 was to be Thomas Manton. The text for the sermon, like that for Pearson's sixth address asserting the divine origin of the three-fold ministry, was taken from the section of the Book of Numbers dealing with the Old Testament priesthood. Hall chose to concentrate on defending the very principle of an ordained ministry against the radical sectaries who rejected clergy of any kind or Roman Catholics who repudiated a Protestant ministry. In this he could enlist the widest sympathy among his audience, just as he did in urging mutual forbearance between the upholders of extempore and set forms of prayer. Yet he could reasonably have expected many of his hearers to be familiar with the tradition which saw the high priest, other priests and Levites of Judaism as prefiguring the bishop, priests and deacons of a Christian diocese, and he said nothing to repudiate such a notion. Rather, he repeatedly suggested that all the present troubles of people turning to Rome or to the sects could be attributed to the abandonment of episcopacy and the ways of the pre-War church:

Some fancied a present necessity, of abolishing, and throwing away, what they would have done better to have kept; But the worst ficklenesse, and novelty hath been, Growing weary of old Truths (as well as old Establishments) and espousing new fond opinions, Forsaking the ancient paths, wherein the Prophet adviseth us to walk, and choosing to go in paths not cast up; yea, good God! How many wayes have been lost? Some proving Apostates to God, and Religion, rellishing the Cup of Romes enchantment... Others crumbling away into Conventicles, ready to join with every frantick Sect.⁶⁵⁶

Though never directly attacking the Presbyterians, it is clear that he considered their demands for a change of polity as lying at the root of so many other troubles. His sermon at the Restoration comparing the Covenant to the golden calf made it clear that he numbered them among the apostates, and meanwhile he could identify the deprived bishops such as his own father with the revered Marian martyrs. In the

⁶⁵⁶ *ibid.*, pp.24-25.

preface to the printed version of the 1655 sermon, he claimed that he was publishing it to refute accusations that he was a preacher of false doctrine. Some at least of his hearers had recognised a defence of the Anglican forms of ministry and not merely of any settled Protestant ministry. The sermons preached after the Restoration were equally capable of being interpreted as veiled criticisms of Charles II. While in its immediate context the sermon on the golden calf was about the demand in the new Act of Uniformity that clergy should repudiate the Covenant, no one could forget that Charles himself had signed it in his effort to recover the throne with Scottish assistance. In a Fast Sermon before the House of Lords on 3 October 1666 he denounced, among other things, the following of extravagant French fashions as a cause of the ravages of plague and fire. This was several days before Pepys and Evelyn recorded the introduction by Charles of more restrained modes of dress at court. Hall went on to remind his noble hearers, 'The greater your Persons and Honours are, the more pressing is your obligation to be Religious, because your examples are more leading, and imperative and influential;' while the sermon included his familiar plea for secular authority to exert its greater power in co-operation with the church if evil was to be overcome;

The Evil which is done, is with both hands, earnestly, as the Prophet most emphatically expresses the impiety. By the way, Why should not we put both our hands, as earnestly, (the strength of the *Brachium Seculare* added to our weaker Ecclesiastical Coercions) to manacle and hamstring those mighty men in outrageous wickedness, who everywhere confront not us, but God, being engaged in a continual and open Theomachy.⁶⁵⁷

Perceiving the more ambivalent attitude of many high churchmen to royal authority, Shaftesbury once went so far as to claim, 'A cavalier forces his Loyalty to strike Sail to his Religion, and could be content to pare the Nails a little of the Civil

⁶⁵⁷ Hall, *Fast Sermon*, pp.9, 14, 28; Pepys, *Diary*, vol.6, p.320; Evelyn, *Diary*, vol.III, p.464.

Government, so you would let him sharpen the Ecclesiastical Tallons.⁶⁵⁸ As might be expected, however, Cartwright adopted a position which contrasted with that of Ferne, Pearson and Hall in its avoidance of all explicit or implicit criticism of the crown. Three printed sermons are extant from the 1680s, contemporary with his various attempts to secure a bishopric, plus the *Answer of a Minister* and his speeches to the fellows of Magdalen College, Oxford, dating from his time as bishop of Chester. All the published sermons had an overtly political theme, though he is known to have preached on other topics and urged his clergy to do so.⁶⁵⁹ Cartwright regularly appealed to the Bible, the ultimate authority for all Protestants, and strove as much as any of the others to show that he was an advocate of the genuine Protestant tradition which Whigs and Dissenters had corrupted. Thus, addressing the gentry of Yorkshire in 1684 he complained:

We live in an Age wherein Men seem to call themselves Protestants, not from that solemn and Honourable Protestation which was made by several Princes against the Errours and Superstitions of Rome, and an Edict made in prejudice of the Reformed Religion at Spires in Germany, A.D. 1529, but rather from the Protestations made by the Covenanting Rebels of Scotland, against Gods and the Kings Authority, A.D. 1638 and 1639, First against the Function of Episcopacy as Antichristian, and not long after, against the King, and Kingship it self.⁶⁶⁰

Such men, he implied, had only themselves to blame if the heir presumptive was a Roman Catholic who refused to return to the church in which he had been brought up:

The Haughty Spirits of our Modern Seditious Dissenters, (the last, but worst Edition of Protestants, and that which needs much Correction and Amendment) scorn to stoop to Authority, and therefore they speak evil of Dignities, and Libel the Government, and do so much as in them lies to scare all the Princes in Christendom from turning Protestants, by reason of whom the Way of Truth,

⁶⁵⁸ Quoted in T. Harris, *Politics under the Later Stuarts: party conflict in a divided society, 1660-1715* (London, 1993), p.74.

⁶⁵⁹ Evelyn, *Diary* for 11 July 1686, vol.IV, p.518; Cartwright, *Diary*, p.35.

⁶⁶⁰ Thomas Cartwright, *A Sermon Preached to the Gentlemen of Yorkshire, at Bow-Church in London, the 24th of June, 1684, being the Day of their Yearly Feast* (London, 1684), p.19.

and the best Religion under Heaven, comes to be evil spoken of, from whence our Calamities do arise.⁶⁶¹

There is no reason to doubt that Cartwright considered the reformed Church of England to embody the best religion under heaven; it was 'the truly Catholick Religion, for which he [Charles I] dyed'.⁶⁶² There is no doubt that he saw the enemies of episcopacy and the monarchy to be one and the same, and believed this to be no less true in James II's reign than it had been in his father's or brother's. Celebrating the failure of Monmouth's rising and first anniversary of James's accession, he urged the people of Ripon,

Let us bless God for the miraculous disappointments of all the malicious Hopes and infernal designs of those Blood-Thirsty Men, being not only agreeable to their Anti-Monarchical and Anti-Episcopal Principles, but, in truth, inseparable from them.⁶⁶³

This need mean only that he shared Ferne's view that monarchy and episcopacy naturally suited one another, without going so far as to accept episcopacy as a desirable or essential part of true religion. However, his own decision to seek episcopal ordination in 1655 would suggest that he did see it as more than a hedge to monarchy, and although the *Answer of a Minister* affirmed that 'all Bishops are subject to the Imperial Power, who is to determine what Doctrines are to be Preached and what not, least any should be licens'd to harangue to the People in Seditious Libels', and justified the suspension of Bishop Compton, it never went so far as to suggest that the king could dispense with bishops altogether.⁶⁶⁴ Royal control over preaching was to avoid civil unrest, not to determine true doctrine. Article 37 was cited in support of the King's actions through the Ecclesiastical Commission, but it was also quoted along with Article 19 and Canon 1 to set out the position that

⁶⁶¹ *ibid.*, pp.19-20.

⁶⁶² Thomas Cartwright, *A Sermon Preached at Holy-Rood House*, Epistle Dedicatory, unpaginated.

⁶⁶³ Thomas Cartwright, *A Sermon Preached upon the Anniversary*, p.2.

Anglican clergy were bound to uphold in their teaching. These assert that the Church of Rome has erred in matters of faith, that the Bishop of Rome has no jurisdiction in England, and that the clergy should preach at least four times a year against usurped and foreign power. What Cartwright objected to was preachers who took it upon themselves to go further than the official formularies of the Church of England, for instance by arguing that the Pope was antichrist; but his diary suggests that he himself conducted private debates with Roman Catholic clergy.⁶⁶⁵ Certainly his positive teaching was always in favour of the king's authority, not of the king's church. The most he would concede was that Rome was an erring part of the true Church, but that Anglicans should demonstrate the superiority of their own form of Christianity by living better lives:

We least of all fear the Seduction of those Members of our Church who practise strictly that excellent Religion, which they and we profess: The best Service we can do to prevent the Growth of Popery, will be to perswade Men all we can to become better Livers and better Subjects; upon which account, Practical Preachers will do the Church more service than Polemical.⁶⁶⁶

Cartwright brought nothing original to the argument for absolute monarchy.

In the sermon preached before Princess Anne while they were both with James in Scotland he used the traditional metaphors of the head and of a father or husband for the authority of a king:

Who can stretch out his hand against the Lords Anoynted, and be innocent? Can his own Subjects do it? how came the feet by any authority to judge the head, or the subjects to set upon their Sovereign? Does the King hold his Crown by indentures from his people? As much as the Father does his Government, by a Covenant with his Children.... God made him King, and us

⁶⁶⁴ Anon. (attributed to Cartwright), *An Answer of a Minister*, pp.31, 34.

⁶⁶⁵ *ibid.*, pp.20-24; Cartwright, *Diary*, pp.23, 28-29. However, his own teaching, outlined on p.278 below, went beyond Article VII which denied that 'the Civil precepts [of the Old Testament] ought of necessity to be received in any commonwealth'.

⁶⁶⁶ *Answer of a Minister*, p.24.

Subjects, we were wedded together at his Coronation; and so we should have continued like Man and Wife for better for worse.⁶⁶⁷

On his return to England, it seems likely that he read Filmer's newly published *Patriarcha*, for in the two later sermons he adopts its quasi-historical argument from Adam rather than using the older idea of correspondences. Charles II, he told the Yorkshire gentry, was 'next Heir to Adam, the first Monarch of the World, in whom the Supremacy was as large and unlimited as any act of his Will; for God gave him Dominion over the World, and made him Sole Proprietor of it'.⁶⁶⁸ There was no warrant in either scripture or nature, he assured the congregation at Ripon, for any limits on royal authority, and even the king himself could not lay aside his ultimate supremacy. This was the grounds for Cartwright's insistence that any royal promise was a free gift, the terms of which the king alone as the donor could interpret, and which he could revoke at will to secure the people's well-being, even the promise to govern them in accordance with the law.⁶⁶⁹ This was also the view which so shocked the Whig Burnet, who believed it secured Cartwright his bishopric.⁶⁷⁰ But from Cartwright's point of view, all the arguments about the growth in popery and arbitrary government had become an irrelevance. James, he maintained, was 'made our King by Gods Laws, of which the Law of the Land is only Declarative'. The implication was that the arguments of Whig constitutional lawyers must yield to Cartwright's exegesis of the Bible, though he was no doubt glad to quote both legal authorities and no less a person than the Protestant heroine Elizabeth in support of his position:

The sole legislative Power is lodg'd in the King; and to him (saith Bracton) belongs the Interpretation of all Laws, when made.... There is no state in

⁶⁶⁷ Cartwright, *Sermon at Holy-Rood House*, pp.12-13.

⁶⁶⁸ Cartwright, *Sermon to the Gentlemen of Yorkshire*, p.9; '*Patriarcha*' and other political works of Sir Robert Filmer, edited by Peter Laslett (Oxford, 1949).

⁶⁶⁹ Cartwright, *Sermon upon the Anniversary*, pp.13, 15, 22.

⁶⁷⁰ Burnet, *Reign of James II*, p.161.

which there is not an ultimate Judicature, which is not to be accountable; and Queen Elizabeth used to say, That she was to be accountable to none but God: nor did Protestants call this Tyranny, or Arbitrary Government, in her Days.⁶⁷¹

Once again the appeal to Protestant exemplars considered beyond reproach was being used as a clinching argument. Cartwright defined 'arbitrary' as 'supreme and absolute' and claimed that this was a necessary attribute of sovereign power. The real question, therefore, was not the existence of such power but whether it belonged to the king or the people, either of whom were capable of abusing it.⁶⁷² In his speeches at Magdalen College, many of the same arguments were deployed and authorities appealed to. He also suggested what could be if Adam's heir was given the honour and obedience that were his due.

Were it not for the serpent of discontent and jealousies, which are now so busy in it, this Kingdom would be like the garden of Eden before the Curse, a mirror of prosperity and happiness to all the world besides; but this serpentine humour of stinging and biting one another, and of tempting men to rebel against God and the King, because others who differ from us in judgement are as happy as ourselves, will as certainly turn us, as it did our first Parents, out of Paradise.⁶⁷³

To Cartwright, it was more than a metaphor to say that those 'led by populacy' were living in a Fool's Paradise.⁶⁷⁴

These printed works of Cartwright's from the 1680s were designed to shape attitudes and support particular policies, just as Ferne's tracts of the 1640s or Pearson's shorter English works had been. This helped determine their form and content. Throughout, his key concern was with the authority of the crown. On this the patristic authorities beloved of Ferne and Pearson had little to say. Legal authorities were better suited for the task of convincing the political classes. In the *Answer of a Minister* the target audience could be even more narrowly defined as the

⁶⁷¹ Cartwright, *Sermon upon the Anniversary*, pp.11-12, 19-20.

⁶⁷² *ibid.*, pp.18-19.

⁶⁷³ Bloxham, *Magdalen College*, p.116.

Anglican gentry in Parliament. ‘The true sons of the Church of England’ were distinguished from those who went under ‘the equivocal Signification of True Protestants’,⁶⁷⁵ and there were references not only to the Articles and canons but to such contemporaneous writers as Sherlock, Bramhall, Taylor and Sanderson. The Bible itself, of course, had plenty to say about kings, and since national laws could do no more than declare God’s law on constitutional matters, Old Testament precedents could be readily applied to seventeenth-century England. The text of his sermon on James’s first anniversary, which told how Solomon had dismissed the people to their homes after the dedication of the Temple, was taken to prove that the king could prorogue or dissolve Parliament at will.⁶⁷⁶ In the sermon to the Yorkshire gentry his text was, ‘Fear thou the Lord and the king.’ Analysing the text, he noted ‘the close and intimate connection between God and the King, ’tis the nearest that may be, for there is no disjunctive, but a meer copulative between them’.⁶⁷⁷ This was his opening to attack those who placed anything between the crown and the source of its authority in God himself.

Now there are three sorts of People who do attempt to disjoyn God and the King in this kind; the papal Jesuite, the Protestant Jesuite, and he who pretends to be a Royalist, and yet disgraces so good a Cause by his prophane Life. The two first a *Fratres in Malo*, twins in Rebellion, the elder is of the Ignatian Fraternity, and Roman Conclave, who puts the Pope; the Younger of the Puritanical Assembly or Classis, which puts the people between God and the King, and therefore I call the one a Papal, and the other a Phanatical Jesuite; for I believe them both to be Roman Pensions, two Parties commanded by one General, because in all times, when the Government hath been charging one of them in the front, the other hath always treacherously attack’d it in the rear, (and as much of late as ever) and both prov’d themselves in the end, Abhorers of Monarchy.⁶⁷⁸

⁶⁷⁴ *ibid.*, p.189.

⁶⁷⁵ *Answer of a Minister*, p.6.

⁶⁷⁶ Cartwright, *Sermon upon the Anniversary*, pp.5-6.

⁶⁷⁷ Cartwright, *Sermon to the Gentlemen of Yorkshire*, p.3; the text is Proverbs 24:21.

⁶⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p.15.

Hall and Pearson, along with many others, had made a link between the Church of England's enemies on either side, and even to see Puritans as the tools or dupes of the Jesuits was nothing new. Within eight months of these words being spoken, however, Charles had died and James was king. Cartwright never explicitly disowned this view, but probably never saw the need to. Though *An Answer of a Minister* was written to support James's Declaration of Indulgence and his campaign for the repeal of the penal laws, Cartwright there deployed the argument that some laws were enacted to meet particular situations and should be repealed when circumstances changed. The penal laws against Roman Catholics had been necessary in the days of popish conspiracies against Elizabeth and James I, but Roman Catholics had no motive for rising against the then king, so the laws against them were redundant. From his earlier identification of the Dissenters as pensioners of Rome, the same would have been true of them, though he did not make this explicit. This line of argument left the way open for new laws against popery or dissent to protect a future Protestant monarch.

To much of what has been considered so far, there is no very clear parallel in the writings of John Wilkins. For a man who took both the Covenant and the Engagement, and then the various oaths prescribed by the Act of Uniformity, and who also held high office under the Commonwealth, the Protectorate and the restored monarchy, arguments for particular constitutional arrangements in church or state can have had little appeal. The fifth of his *Sermons Preached upon Several Occasions* published posthumously in 1682 is said in the heading to have been preached in London at a visitation.⁶⁷⁹ Though the text is taken from the Epistle to

⁶⁷⁹ The sermon is undated, but was almost certainly preached at some time in the 1660s when Wilkins was Vicar of St Lawrence', Jewry.

Titus, he ignored the customary reference by Restoration churchmen preaching on such a text to Timothy and Titus as bishops of the apostolic age. This had naturally enough been the theme of Sancroft's sermon on Titus at Walton's consecration as Bishop of Chester. Arderne, preaching at Pearson's visitation of 1677 took a text from the second Epistle to Timothy and like Wilkins concentrated on St Paul's advice concerning the behaviour of a Christian minister, but prefaced his remarks with a summary of Pearson's teaching, asserting that Timothy was a diocesan bishop and that priests and bishops were distinct orders.⁶⁸⁰ Even Lloyd devoted nearly a quarter of his sermon at Wilkins' funeral to claiming his text from the Epistle to the Hebrews referred to early bishops.⁶⁸¹ It was only in one short passage in *Of the Principles and Duties of Natural Religion* that Wilkins said anything about the ministry. Since this was a book written to win sceptics over to Christianity, Wilkins could not appeal to authorities that a non-believer would not accept. Instead, having demonstrated the existence and attributes of God, he claimed that these evoked adoration and worship.

There are likewise some particular actions and services, which by the light of Nature, and the consent of Nations have been judged proper to express our honouring of him: As the setting apart of particular Persons, and Places, and Times, peculiarly for his worship.⁶⁸²

His understanding of the ministry was briefly expanded in the following paragraph. All nations have had clergy to instruct and encourage the people in their religious duties, and this was best done by men who had been properly prepared and set apart, and who were obliged by their office to fulfil these tasks. This was an argument for an ordered and educated ministry, but no more, and even in making the case for that Wilkins hardly shared Hall's passion in claiming that God had vindicated his

⁶⁸⁰ James Arderne, *A Sermon Preached at the Visitation of the Right Reverend Father in God, John, Lord Bishop of Chester, at Chester* (London, 1677), p.1.

⁶⁸¹ Lloyd, *Funeral Sermon*, pp.1-12.

ministers. The argument was essentially pragmatic. While this was partly a result of the context in which Wilkins was writing, his only recorded comment on the form of ministry was much the same. Burnet related:

As Cromwell was then [1655] designing to make himself king, Dr Wilkins told me he often said to him, no temporal government could have a sure support without a national church that adhered to it, and he thought England was capable of no other national constitution but of episcopacy; to which, he told men, he did not doubt but Cromwell would have turned, as soon as the design of his kingship was settled.⁶⁸³

Ferne would have agreed with this, but it was hardly his primary argument in favour of episcopacy. This stance meant that for Wilkins, what to do with those who had received what Pearson regarded as promiscuous ordinations was an administrative rather than a theological or even a pastoral problem, and it was apparently to satisfy others rather than himself that he told Baxter that some form of laying-on of hands by a bishop for Presbyterian ministers would be a necessary part of any scheme of comprehension.⁶⁸⁴

While it would be a mistake to characterise Wilkins' conception of Christianity as entirely this-worldly, he certainly gave as much weight to the consequences of a godly life here as hereafter. The final chapter of his *Principles and Duties of Natural Religion* was headed, 'The Conclusion of the whole, shewing the excellency of the Christian Religion, and the advantages of it, both as to Knowledg and practice of our duty, above the meer light of Nature.' This in itself put the emphasis on human behaviour in the here and now, even if the end of

⁶⁸² Wilkins, *Natural Religion*, p.180.

⁶⁸³ Burnet, *History of My Own Time*, vol.1, p.114.

⁶⁸⁴ Above, pp.157-158.

Christianity was 'the eternal vision and fruition of God'.⁶⁸⁵ In one of his sermons he had gone even further:

Now the design of Christianity being to promote the good of mankind and the peace of Societies, therefore doth the Doctrine of it so frequently insist upon those kind of virtues and graces which are most conducive to this end. And therefore upon all these accounts the truth of the Doctrine will appear very evident, viz. That 'tis the duty of Christians to give signal testimony of their equity and moderation upon all occasions of difference and contests with one another.⁶⁸⁶

Atheism and irreligion had, in Wilkins' view, been increasing as a result of the excesses of 'the Professors of Religion on several hands',⁶⁸⁷ men whose approach had the very opposite effect from producing a peaceful society. Human judgement was too frail to produce universal agreement on everything. It was insistence on the shibboleths of competing theologies that had led to the disaster of civil war, and Wilkins painted a picture of the consequences of unwarranted dogmatism in language reminiscent of the Homilies on the outcome of wilful rebellion or Hobbes on the state of nature:

If upon every difference men should think themselves obliged to prosecute matters to the utmost height and rigour, such eager persons may easily hence be induced to have recourse to Arms rather than such precious things as truth and justice shall suffer; and being once thus engaged, it will be impossible (if they will act consistently) to end their differences by any way of accommodation, they must fight it out to the last till one side be wholly subdued and destroyed. And thus would men grow wild and savage, the benefits of Society would be lost, and mankind destroyed out of the world. 'Tis this moderation and calmness of spirit which takes men off from their natural wildness and ferity, which tames and fits them for society. The less any man hath of it, the more doth he degenerate and draw near to the nature of brute creatures.⁶⁸⁸

This is the antithesis of Wilkins' ideal of a world in which genuine religion will bring its own rewards.

⁶⁸⁵ Wilkins, *Natural Religion*, pp.394, 403.

⁶⁸⁶ Wilkins, *Sermons upon Several Occasions* (London, 1682), p.415.

⁶⁸⁷ Wilkins, *Natural Religion*, pp.407-08.

The first of the *Sermons Preached upon Several Occasions* was devoted to maintaining the view that looking for the reward God would give was a proper and effective motive for leading a good life, while chapter 3 in Book II of *The Principles and Duties of Natural Religion* sought to prove ‘how Religion conduces to the happiness of the outward man, in respect of Liberty, Safety, and Quiet’.⁶⁸⁹ The very obvious objection to this, as Wilkins acknowledged, was that it took no account of the experience of suffering persecution for the faith, an experience which various New Testament texts implied was more or less inevitable. To this he had two answers. Firstly, not everything that was called persecution for religion really was. He gave no examples, but suggested that some people’s suffering was the result of their own foolish behaviour and lack of understanding. Secondly, there were exceptions to the general rule that a religious life would bring rewards in this life. In the early days of Christianity, God chose to spread the faith through the witness of those who braved persecution, though even they were rewarded with patience and courage to cheer and support them. All that, however, was long ago:

It must withall be granted, that these Scriptures [predicting persecution] are not equally applicable to such other times and places, when and where the true Religion is publickly professed and encouraged, when Kings are nursing fathers, and Queens nursing mothers to the Church; because in such times and places, the profession of Religion will be so far from hindering, that it will rather promote a man’s secular advantage.⁶⁹⁰

Since Wilkins himself neither suffered persecution nor lacked secular advantage, he must have regarded Charles II as a nursing father encouraging true religion, and the suffering of the Dissenters as something they brought upon themselves by insisting on their own way in matters indifferent. In his sermon on the virtue of moderation, he must have had an eye on the Nonconformists when he included among his

⁶⁸⁸ Wilkins, *Sermons upon Several Occasions*, p.414.

⁶⁸⁹ Wilkins, *Natural Religion*, p.324.

⁶⁹⁰ *ibid.*, pp.328-29.

examples 'that of our Saviour in his yielding to pay tribute for the avoiding of offence, to which in strictness he was not obliged', while both sides could learn from

that carriage in the Council of the Apostles in not insisting on the strict right of things, but accommodating those Controversies of the Primitive times about Jewish Rites, by such Moderate expedient, as might most effectually heal and compose those differences.⁶⁹¹

All this is entirely consistent with Wilkins' own practice, both during the Interregnum and after the Restoration. He believed that focusing on those truths on which there was well-nigh universal agreement, placing minimum stress on other matters, but being prepared to go along as far as conscience allowed with what the government of the day required was actually the best way of commending the faith. When inessentials were insisted on and that insistence was backed with force, people would be driven to accept the Hobbesian conclusion that religion was created by power, but was not inherently true.⁶⁹²

Nor was Wilkins' approach so far from the attitude of the others whose views have been considered. As noted above,⁶⁹³ all of them but Ferne made some compromise with the Cromwellian church in order to be able to minister. The preface to the revised Prayer Book declared that the Church of England had always avoided the extreme 'of too much stiffness in refusing ... any variation' from its public liturgy,⁶⁹⁴ and conformists were agreed that it was obstinacy over inessentials that prevented dissenters from conforming, so that they were to some extent the authors of their own misfortunes. Wilkins and his Latitudinarian disciples were prepared to go further than others in making concessions to bring in the Non-

⁶⁹¹ Wilkins, *Sermons upon Several Occasions*, pp.402-03.

⁶⁹² Wilkins, *Natural Religion*, pp.407-08.

⁶⁹³ p.15.

conformists, just as they had themselves been more fully integrated into the national church of the 1650s. Ferne was alleged to have told Convocation that Latitudinarians would 'do every thing and believe nothing',⁶⁹⁵ yet in reality the differences between them and other conformists were ones of degree rather than fundamental attitude. There was a range of attitudes over what was necessary to the being or at least the well-being of the church. In Wilkins' case, this was quite a limited set of beliefs and practices and would not have included the institution of episcopacy, whereas for Pearson this was an essential, while at the very least Ferne and Hall believed the theological case for it to be much stronger than for the alternatives and the practical advantages far greater. Walton, Ferne, Hall and Pearson had all been royalists in the Civil War, but none went so far in exalting the hereditary monarchy as did Cartwright. Cartwright's extreme royalism obscures his views on the authority and basis of episcopacy, while Wilkins never discussed the theoretical justification for any form of government in church or state. His concern was always with what worked in practice, and in only one of his sermons before the king did he briefly touch on the relationship between rulers and the ruled, again to make a practical point. 'The two grand Relations that concern Society,' he asserted, 'are Government and Subjection. And Irreligion doth indispose men for both these.' This was because governors should be able to command respect, while those under them ought to be motivated by conscience as well as fear, but Wilkins developed no theory of what should happen if the ruler's behaviour was unsatisfactory and no hints were dropped that Charles should mend his ways.⁶⁹⁶

⁶⁹⁴ BCP, p.5.

⁶⁹⁵ 'Papers of Thomas Woodcock', p.65.

⁶⁹⁶ John Wilkins, *Sermons preached upon several occasions before the King at Whitehall* (London, 1677), p.48.

Many of the differences between the men under consideration arose from the circumstances in which they wrote or the audiences they were addressing. Pearson at the start of his *Exposition of the Creed* and Wilkins in the first chapter of his *Principles and Duties of Natural Religion* gave similar analyses of the different kinds of evidence or proof that were appropriate to different kinds of proposition. However, it was only at the conclusion of his work, aimed at sceptics, that Wilkins could advance the proposition that the Biblical writers were trustworthy witnesses in matters of faith, whereas Pearson took that as something his Christian readers would already accept, so that arguments could be built up on propositions taken from scripture. Ferne and Pearson both gave prominence to the Fathers as guides to understanding and interpreting the Bible. All made use of reason, but meant rather different things by it. For Pearson, it was the construction of a logical argument in scholastic fashion on the basis of authoritative statements from Scripture. For Wilkins it was that light of nature which had guided men of different ages and nations to adopt similar beliefs, and also that spirit of wisdom by which men applied theoretical beliefs to practical concerns. This latter element also came to the fore in Ferne and Cartwright, especially in *Episcopacy and Presbytery Considered and An Answer of a Minister*.

The major concern shared by all was how to avoid a repeat of the cataclysm of the 1640s, and this led to speculative theology's being down-played in favour of ethical teaching. This is most evident in Wilkins, both in what he wrote and in his actual practice, for every one of his eighteen surviving sermons deals with some aspect of Christian behaviour rather than belief, but it is found in the others as well. 'The daily decay of solid and substantial Piety,' Cartwright complained, 'is the most

unhappy effect of Christians foolishly Fighting in a Mist, and Scuffling in the Dark among themselves, against the interest of Peace and Charity.⁶⁹⁷ The words could have been taken from Wilkins himself, and Cartwright would have seen his sermons on royal authority as inculcating good behaviour in the subject rather than as mere theorising. Even Pearson was concerned to show in his *Exposition* how each article of the creed bore upon Christian behaviour, and he was adamantly opposed to any attempt to extend the range of doctrines to which assent was required. This came out in his short tract of 1660, *No Necessity of Reformation of the Public Doctrine of the Church of England*, repudiating the demand of Cornelius Burgess and other Calvinist clergy for the removal of perceived ambiguities in the Thirty-nine Articles, and the inclusion of an explicit repudiation of Arminianism as a way of exposing crypto-papists. Not only would it fail in such an aim, argued Pearson, since the Jansenists opposed Arminius while remaining papists, it would also turn inessentials into articles of faith by requiring assent to something that was not necessary to maintain the integrity of the creed. In an interesting aside, Pearson claimed to be as much opposed to Arminianism as those he was criticising were, but the thought was nowhere developed. For a growing number of divines the passions roused by this subject in a previous generation had died down.⁶⁹⁸ The same approach can be seen in Hall's letter to Sir Peter Leicester containing his critique of the latter's treatise on the immortality of the soul.⁶⁹⁹ His own arguments, giving prominence to how the taint of original sin is transferred, show that the Bishop's theology was still contained in a strongly Augustinian framework, like that of Calvin and Luther. Nevertheless, he gently cautioned Leicester against needless speculation into things that could not

⁶⁹⁷ *Answer of a Minister*, p.22.

⁶⁹⁸ Pearson, *Minor Works*, vol.2, p.189. It is likely that Pearson, following his usual method, gave 'Arminianism' a precise theological definition, while his opponents may have used it in a wider derogatory sense.

be known with certainty about the origin of the soul; what was beyond doubt was that the soul survived physical death. No one in the seventeenth century doubted that this meant it would come to judgement for deeds done in the flesh, so the necessity for holy living was again implicitly brought to the fore.⁷⁰⁰

There was, then, no unanimity among Chester's bishops in this period, nor among churchmen as a whole, as to the origin and authority of their office or precisely how it related to other established authorities. Their different understandings did have some influence on their conduct in office and the policies they would actively support. The common aim was to guide a flock that would not once again err and stray with such disastrous consequences as in the 1640s, but the theory as to how this could be achieved was as varied as the pastoral and disciplinary practice considered in earlier chapters. It is hardly surprising that Churchmen of every variety sought to bolster their position by an appeal to the Scriptures, but alongside this went a more general appeal to the past. Whether this was to the early Church or to the more recent history of the Reformation depended on the subject being debated and the audience being addressed. Wilkins may be regarded as the exception who proves the rule. His appeal was primarily to the ethical teaching of the Bible and alongside that to the light of nature. His son-in-law Tillotson and the other Latitudinarians, in following his approach, were better able to adapt to life after the Revolution and came to dominate the eighteenth-century Church. In the Restoration era, however, theirs was a minority position and Ferne, Pearson or Cartwright, arguing in their different ways for a prescriptive past are more typical.

⁶⁹⁹ Above, p.204.

⁷⁰⁰ Cheshire RO, DLT/B67 pp.256-61. The immensely popular treatise *The Whole Duty of Man* premised its whole argument for a godly life on the fact that man possessed an immortal soul which would inevitably come to judgement.

§7 CONCLUSION: THE MEN AND THE TASK

This thesis has aimed neither at giving a complete history of Chester diocese during the three decades from the Restoration of Charles II to the death of Thomas Cartwright in exile, nor at providing complete biographies of the six bishops who ruled the diocese in that period, though it could furnish materials for both. The intention, rather, has been to look at what it meant to be a bishop in the Restoration era both in theory and in practice through the experience of these six men. That is why sermons, letters and diaries have been as important as sources as administrative records. The latter may say something of what was done, but not of the hopes and ideals that inspired it, or of the frustration that was experienced if these were not realised. The bishops themselves were certainly a varied group of men, and show the truth of Simon's conviction that the Restoration episcopate was far from monochrome.⁷⁰¹ The differences between them lay not only in politics or theology, but in temperament and style.

Walton was a man of varied talents. Before the Civil War his reputation was as a pluralist and a supporter of Laud's policies of financial and liturgical reform. This made him an early target of the wrath of the Long Parliament. It was only during the Interregnum that he emerged as a scholar of distinction by compiling a Polyglot Bible with the help of divines who came from a variety of political and doctrinal standpoints. This gave him the stature to justify his elevation to the restored bench of bishops, and the man who had once written a treatise on the complex issues surrounding tithe payments in London presided over the relatively

⁷⁰¹ Simon, *Restoration Episcopate*, pp.204-07.

rapid restoration of the judicial and administrative machinery of Chester diocese, at the same time ensuring financial provision was made for his family.

Ferne, again, seems to have been a talented man whose skills as a royalist pamphleteer won him the trust of the administrations of both Charles I and Charles II when Hyde was a leading minister. Thus he negotiated for the King at the treaty of Uxbridge, was nominated for a bishopric by the government in exile, and on the Restoration was given responsibility for the affairs of Cambridge University before his brief tenure of the see of Chester. His conduct as vice-chancellor and bishop illustrates the way the experiences of the previous few years had hardened the attitudes of many who would have been counted as moderates at the outbreak of war, leading many of those classed as constitutional royalists to adopt more authoritarian positions.

George Hall has emerged from this study as a more rounded character than was previously known. Less obviously talented in any particular way than most of the other men being considered, he was perhaps the most conscientious and hard-working of them all. This is shown in a variety of ways: his regular reporting to Sheldon, his constant striving to encourage and enforce conformity, his exemplary record of attendance in the House of Lords, his preaching. It is also revealed by the fact that he is the only one of the six (apart from Ferne, who never had the opportunity) not to have used his position as bishop to advance or provide for his own family. Indeed, he even began his will by stating, 'Because my owne relac'ons are, God be thanked, sufficiently provided for in this world I dare not charge my

estate with any legacie or legacies unto any of them.⁷⁰² He probably set himself unrealistic goals, or at least felt bound to meet unrealistic expectations, about what could be achieved in the quest for conformity and what he should personally undertake, so died a frustrated man.

Wilkins is the one to whom history has been kindest. While stricter churchmen among his contemporaries deplored his appointment, posterity has more easily warmed to a man who was the guiding spirit behind the establishment of the Royal Society and who deprecated religious persecution. He was, of course, admired by many in his own time, people as varied in their religious sympathies as Pepys, Evelyn and Burnet all expressing their admiration. But even the last of these admitted that he was 'naturally ambitious',⁷⁰³ and he is more vulnerable than any of the other bishops of Chester, not excluding Cartwright, to the charge of erastian submission to any *de facto* government in order to advance his career. If Hall died a disappointed man because conformity could not be enforced, Wilkins may have despaired of ever winning his generation round to the view that persecution was futile, but the documents which might reveal his inner feelings have not survived. He failed to get his scheme for comprehension accepted by Parliament and was unsuccessful in his opposition to the second Conventicle Act. He could do no more to stay the sporadic outbursts of persecution by lay magistrates than Hall could make them more sustained and effective. On the other hand, he did win more respect for his office among the Dissenters of the north-west.

⁷⁰² *Ch.Sh.*, 3rd series, vol.1 (1896), p.57.

⁷⁰³ Burnet, *History of My Own Time*, vol.1, p.333.

This respect was something Pearson managed to maintain, despite his more hard-line stance on most of the points at issue. Pearson's was by far the longest episcopate of those that have been studied. For nearly a decade he was free from the need to pay first fruits draining his resources, and in four years of his episcopate there was no meeting of Parliament to draw him away from his diocese, yet he reveals some of the weaknesses of the system. For much of the time his health would not allow him to take advantage of this comparative freedom of action, but he brought other personal failings to the task. Despite his eminence as a scholar, he did not move as easily as Wilkins from the lecture hall to the world of practical affairs. He was accused of continuing to devote too much time to his studies and of failing to appreciate the difference between a debate in the High Court of Parliament and a scholastic disputation. He lacked the drive to push through desirable reforms (such as the amalgamation of parishes in the city of Chester) and was easily dominated by those more adept at the ways of the world, be they politicians or administrators.⁷⁰⁴

Cartwright has come down in the Whig tradition of Burnet and Macaulay as little more than a pantomime villain, and even Dean Granville -- the only other senior churchman to choose exile after the Revolution -- treated him as a figure of fun.⁷⁰⁵ Yet despite the obvious shortcomings, which made even James II reluctant to place too much confidence in him, at least one contemporaneous critic was prepared to concede that he carried out his episcopal duties in a proper manner.⁷⁰⁶ Though his position with regard to James and his policies was that of a tiny minority, he

⁷⁰⁴ Above, pp.94-95, 171, 179, 226-27, 241.

⁷⁰⁵ Above, pp.34, 184. To Macaulay, he was 'a still viler sycophant than Parker', whom he had already dismissed as 'a parasite': *History of England*, vol.1, p.575.

⁷⁰⁶ Above, p.215.

remained loyal to his master and his principles at great personal cost, and in any assessment of his character this should be set against the very obvious ambition with which he sought a bishopric.

It appeared in chapter 2 on the appointment of bishops that no effort seems to have been made to find a man whose talents matched the particular needs of a diocese. All rested on the direction of royal policy at the time a vacancy occurred and the favour a potential bishop's patrons currently enjoyed, while the key officials, such as the chancellor or the rural deans, held their offices for life or for the time of a lease and could not readily be changed for men whom a particular bishop found more congenial. Did the personality or views of the bishop, then, have much impact on the day to day life of his diocese? On one level, probably not. For a Dissenter, the attitude of the local justices was probably more important in determining the degree of harassment he faced; for the partial conformist the attitude of the parish minister or churchwardens when they came to make their presentments was more significant. The magistrates, and even the clergy or wardens, who implemented the religious settlement at local level could not be made to change their attitude or approach overnight because of a change of bishop. In any case, only a small proportion of the clergy owed their position to the bishop rather than some other patron. At another level the character of the bishop could be important. Practically all Restoration bishops were normally resident in their dioceses, and an active one would regularly be travelling around either on visitation or in the more informal way that Cartwright did in the summer of 1687. This gave the people of the diocese opportunities to hear him preach, to come for confirmation, or bring disputes on which they wanted his personal adjudication. Prolonged illness, like that of Pearson, made all this impossible except for those who could get to Chester or Wigan, and for most of his

declining years Pearson seems to have been at Chester, which for many of his flock was the less accessible of his residences. As it was, the most able-bodied and conscientious bishop was often called away to London by his duties in Parliament or at court, and in the case of Chester the difficulties were exacerbated by the sheer extent of the diocese. Chester diocese was doubly the victim of missed opportunities for reform. Under the original proposals for the creation of new dioceses after the Dissolution of the Monasteries, each archdeaconry would have been a separate diocese, but Henry VIII decided against such generous use of his new wealth. At the Restoration, the Worcester House proposals would have allowed for a suffragan bishop to be appointed who could share the work load and provide personal pastoral care for the diocese when the diocesan bishop was unwell or away in London about his national responsibilities, but these ideas were abandoned along with all other thoughts of compromise with the perceived enemies of church and crown. The events of 1637 to 1660 cast a long and dark shadow over the succeeding decades, and the majority of the political nation were fearful of any return to that terrible time. The attitudes, beliefs and actions of senior churchmen no less than of lay politicians can be traced to the traumatic experience of those years. It was an ironic consequence of this, that, though bishops and monarchs felt their enemies to be the same, their alliance was frequently uneasy, and while lay politicians kept clerical pretensions on a tight rein, theory increasingly emphasised the independent nature of spiritual authority.

Because of the limited impact any one bishop could have and because of the general fear of change, the diocese inherited by Bishop Stratford after the Revolution was little different from the one entrusted to the care of Walton at the Restoration.

The proportion of graduate clergy had increased, but this had been a trend within the church as a whole throughout the century. The degree of merely partial conformity within the parish churches had declined as surplices and the other paraphernalia of Anglican worship were gradually acquired, yet complete uniformity was not to be attained even after Dissenters were free to leave the Established Church, as Charles Wheatly complained in the preface to his *Rational Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer*, a work first published in 1710.⁷⁰⁷ The area was still one where nonconformist sympathies were strong, and throughout the 1690s disputes continued over whether some of the remote chapels belonged to Churchmen or Dissenters and a man was indicted at Lancaster sessions for calling the Prayer Book popish and diabolical.⁷⁰⁸

The later Stuart episcopate included some remarkable and talented individuals, and none of those appointed to Chester can be dismissed as totally unsatisfactory, even if each of them had his limitations. But all were part of an inflexible system which no one whose loyalty to the monarchy and the Church was beyond doubt was ready to reform.⁷⁰⁹ Able men were destined to struggle with an increasingly archaic and inefficient structure for another century and a half.

⁷⁰⁷ Charles Wheatly, *A Rational Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England* (Bohn's Standard Library edition, London, 1848), p.ix.

⁷⁰⁸ M.R.Watts, *The Dissenters from the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford, 1978), p.509; HMC, *Kenyon*, pp.245-47, 410.

⁷⁰⁹ Wilkins was the least conservative or reactionary of the six bishops, but was unconcerned with detailed questions of church polity and showed no interest in any kind of structural reform.

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