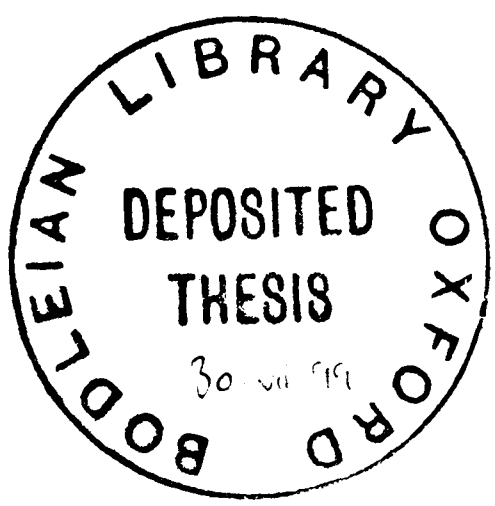
CLERGY AND COMMUNITY: THE ARCHDEACONRIES OF BUCKINGHAM AND GLOUCESTER, 1730-1780

Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the University of Oxford

by

Alene Jayne Wilton

Lincoln College
1998



For Mum & Dad

and Simon

- with loving thanks

Clergy and Community: The Archdeaconries of Buckingham and Gloucester, 1730-80.
Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
by Alene Wilton
Lincoln College, Trinity Term 1998

The intention of this thesis is to make a contribution to the understanding of the eighteenth-century Church of England within the community in which it existed. Recognising the enormous variation that existed within the Church during the period, this study provides a close comparison of two archdeaconries, (something which is rarely undertaken in the historiography of the Church), both of which have never received attention from historians. In order to study the Church in these regions, the archdeaconries of Buckingham and Gloucester, detailed consideration is given to the role and activities of the parochial clergy in each archdeaconry. By concentrating upon the community, and the clergy's place within it, this thesis is able to provide a detailed picture of the social, political and economic integration of the clergy within these two specific regions, as well as their pastoral work and family life, the latter much neglected by historians. It devotes much attention to the property of the clergy, as a means of locating the clergy within local communities, and because of the great effect their property and income had upon other spheres of their everyday life. In doing this, this thesis demonstrates the diversity of experience of clergy within each archdeaconry, but it also shows some overall trends which marked the experience of parochial clergy in the period. It argues that the eighteenth-century clergyman was immersed in almost every aspect of community life, and although conscious of his distinctiveness as a parson, such integration represented a fusion of the ecclesiastical and secular, the incumbent's pragmatic response to the circumstances of the community of which he was a part.

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This intention of this thesis is to make a contribution to the understanding of the eighteenth-century Church of England within the community in which it existed. Recognising the enormous variation that existed within the Church during the period, something which has been shown by recent historical scholarship, and in particular the burgeoning regional study of the Church, this thesis makes a contribution to that work by providing a close comparison of two archdeaconries, Buckingham and Gloucester.

In doing so, its attention is entirely upon the parochial incumbents of the two archdeaconries. Such a focus was prompted by methodological considerations. This was because the approach taken in order to carry out the study was prosopographical, and by concentrating solely upon the parochial incumbents who were closely tied to their local communities, the study was able to presuppose at least a modicum of uniformity in their experience with the community. The aim in doing this was to be able to uncover the involvement of the parsons of Buckingham and Gloucester in various spheres of

community life, and to show the similarities and differences between these experiences.

In order to examine these different spheres, the thesis is divided into two parts. The first part is devoted entirely to the property of the clergy. The reason for doing this was because property was absolutely intrinsic to the fabric of eighteenth-century life, and it permeated all aspects of social, political and economic relations. The Church was no less caught up in this propertied milieu than any other institution in eighteenth-century England. Thus, the property of the clergy is given great attention, because it impinged upon so many spheres of their involvement within the community. Its importance will be evident not only in the Chapter 1, but also in the subsequent chapters of this study.

Chapter 1 then, is broken into three sections. The first provides a detailed discussion of the property with which the benefices were endowed. Consideration is given to all aspects of this property, parsonages, glebes, voluntary contributions, tithes and fees. Because tithes were such a complicated species of property, discussion of their contribution to clerical earnings is incorporated into a detailed discussion of the value of the livings of the two archdeaconries. This analysis is detailed not only because of the complexity of the issue, but also because it includes a description of the economies and the landscape of both regions. Thus it provides a definitive location for the clergyman and the Church within the geographic and economic landscape which he shared with the rest of the community. In the first

section of Chapter 1 the benefice values within all of the deaneries of both archdeaconries are considered in close detail; changes in their value over time, and reasons for their occurrence are indicated. Discussion of benefice values in such detail is rare in the historiography of the Church, but it is invaluable for the way it demonstrates the great variation within the endowment of parishes in the eighteenth century Church. By way of conclusion, the two archdeaconries are compared, and it is shown that for all the great variation within the two regions, the benefice values of the archdeaconry of Buckingham were more consistent and better overall than that of Gloucester.

The second section of Chapter 1 is focused upon the incomes of the clergy in both of the archdeaconries. This is distinct from the benefice values, since, because of the prevalence of pluralism in the eighteenth-century Church the two were not always the same thing. An attempt is made to discover the level of pluralism within both of the archdeaconries and the reasons for it, and ultimately the effect that it had upon the incomes of the parsons of both these regions. Again, it is concluded that the situation in Buckingham was better than that of Gloucester. The parsons of the former earned more overall and there was less disparity of income between the clergy within that archdeaconry.

The third section of Chapter 1 is devoted to providing a context for the benefice values, and more especially the incomes of the clergy within the two regions, and how this related to their place within

the community. It contexualises clerical incomes by comparing them with those of other members of the community, both from the labouring and also the professional classes, and shows that there were many parsons, even at the end of the period who compared unfavourably with both groups. The section then turns to an assessment of what was regarded as an adequate level of income for the clergyman of the eighteenth century, what was necessary for him to adequately support himself, to retain the dignity of his profession, and to fulfil societal and clerical expectations that he should take his place amongst the middling ranks of society. It is argued that whilst many clergy enjoyed comfortable lifestyles, there remained many other who struggled to support themselves, let alone afford the trappings of a genteel life. The remainder of the chapter examines the ways in which the parsons of both regions augmented and supplemented their ecclesiastical incomes, through secular sources, or by ecclesiastical means. The chapter is concluded by demonstrating the pragmatism of the clergy in the enhancement of the value of their livings, particularly in the collection of their tithes. This was because of the repercussions for their relationships with the rest of the community if they pushed their demands too far. By taking a pragmatic approach, however, it is contended that many clergy minimised conflict within their parishes, something which many historians have hidden by their emphasis on lay-clerical conflict over tithes. In sum, it has been shown by this lengthy and detailed chapter that, despite differing individual experiences and

wealth, property generally engaged and embedded the clergy of the eighteenth century within the community.

The second part of the thesis rests firmly upon this base of research as it turns to consider clerical involvement in other spheres of community life. Chapter 2 is focused upon the family life of the clergy. This chapter is important historiographically, as the marital and domestic situation of the eighteenth-century parson has been largely neglected by historians, which is surprising, given the importance of life within the parsonage to a cleric's pastoral effectiveness. The lack of research upon this topic may, however, reflect the patchy nature of the primary information available to reconstruct the family histories of the clergy. This was the case for Buckingham and Gloucester, but it was still possible to uncover some interesting trends with regard to the marital and domestic experiences of the clergy in these two areas in the period. This was demonstrated by evidence of the propensity for long bachelorhoods and late marriage amongst the clergy, a consequence in the main of the career structure of the eighteenth-century Church. It was shown that when clergy did marry, a number of personal, social and economic and career considerations governed his choice of a bride. There was also much localised and also endogamous marriage within the clerical profession, the former doing much to embed parsons further within the community. Of prime importance for his relations with his congregation was the appropriate example of his household, and as a corollary of this, attention is also given to the children of the

clergy. A parson's responsibilities for his offspring and his wife in widowhood complete the chapter. The conclusion to be drawn from this discussion was that marriage and parenthood were important events for eighteenth-century parson, with many implications for him personally and for his relationship with the community.

Chapter 3 is devoted to the clergy's involvement in the political life of Buckingham and Gloucester. It attempts to discover if the typical portrait of the eighteenth-century parson as having Tory predilections is true of the clergy of these regions. Unfortunately, the extant poll book evidence for the period, because of the nature of the elections for which these books survive, provides little conclusive evidence of party allegiance for either archdeaconry. It seems that many of the clergy of Gloucester had leanings towards Toryism, but it is much harder to say that definitively for Buckingham. Other aspects of clerical political involvement are also analysed, including the striking parallels between their voting habits and that of other rural elites. Such parallels also apply to their parishioners, suggesting that the clergy exercised great political influence within the community. In general, it seems that the clergy's political involvement was strongly shaped by their evaluation of the socio-political matters of importance to their communities, and most importantly, the part they both expected and wanted to play politically within it. In most parsons, a sense of moderation and pragmatism governed their political involvement, not least to preserve the order of the communities in which they lived and

their prominent place within it.

Chapter 4 concentrates on other issues relating to community life that have not yet been considered by this thesis. It has three main focuses: firstly, the backgrounds and origins of the clergy who served the livings of both archdeaconries; secondly, the social integration of the clergy within the community, and thirdly, the dedication to the pastoral duties of the clergymen of the two archdeaconries. In this chapter it was shown that the clergy were usually well-integrated socially within the communities which surrounded them. It was demonstrated too, that the clergy of Buckingham were more measurably conscientious in fulfilling their ecclesiastical responsibilities, though the degree to which clergy in both archdeaconries did so was, in large measure, a product of the realities of the communities in which they found themselves.

In concluding the thesis, it is suggested that in almost every sphere of community life the clergy were immersed in the life of the community, and, moreover, that they were willing to be so immersed. Although conscious of their distinctiveness as a parsons, such integration represented a fusion of the ecclesiastical and the secular. Whether this was advisable for a clergyman was beside the point. The fact was, that it represented the incumbent's pragmatic response to the circumstances of the community of which he was a part. In saying that, however, it is pointed out again that the communities of which the clergy of Buckingham and Gloucester were members were not rural

idylls. Conflict could occur, and parsons were not always universally liked. Such generalisations also belie the fact that there were significant differences between the archdeaconries during the period, and more particularly, within the communities of both regions. Ultimately, as was shown in many parts of this thesis, the experience of each eighteenth-century clergyman within the community depended upon the idiosyncrasies and inclinations of the man, and the peculiarities of the community of which he was parson.

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Abbreviations

BL	British Library
BRO	Buckinghamshire Record Office
CERC	Church of England Record Centre
DNB	*Dictionary of National Biography*
GLRO	Greater London Record Office
GDR	Gloucester Diocesan Records
GRO	Gloucestershire Record Office
IHR	Institute of Historical Research
LA	Lincolnshire Archives
OA	Oxfordshire Archives
PRO	Public Record Office
TBGAS	*Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucester Archaeological Society*
VCH	Victoria Country History

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Introduction

> The Clergy are less powerful from their rank and industry than from their *locality*. They are, from necessity, *everywhere*; and their aggregate influence is astonishingly great. When from the top of any high hill, one looks around the country, and sees the multitude of regularly distributed spires, one not only ceases to wonder that order and religion are maintained, but one is astonished that any such thing as disaffection or irreligion should prevail. It is the equal distribution of the clergy, their being in every corner of the kingdom that makes them a powerful and formidable corps.[1]

The intention of this thesis is to make a contribution to the understanding of the eighteenth-century Church of England within the community in which it existed. As such, it is part of a recent historiographical trend to give closer attention to the Hanoverian Church within society. It has been shown that this research has done much to rectify the negative image historians had previously given of the eighteenth-century Church, and it has also uncovered much detail about the Church and its role in society that has been hitherto overlooked by earlier historians.[2] One of the most crucial facts that has been revealed by this research is the enormous variation that existed from region to region with regard to almost every facet of the Church. This has been reflected in the burgeoning regional studies of the Church during the period, which have slowly allowed historians to

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[1] William Cobbett to William Windham, 27 May 1802, in *The Life and Letters of William Cobbett in England and America*, ed. Lewis Melville, (London, 1913), vol. 1, pp. 156-7.

[2] John Walsh, Colin Haydon, & Stephen Taylor eds., *The Church of England c. 1689-c. 1833: from toleration to Tractarianism*, (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 1-3. (Henceforth, Walsh et.al.)

build a more comprehensive picture of its activities and presence within different parts of the country. Two regions that have never been subject to this attention are the archdeaconries of Buckingham and Gloucester. It is with them that this thesis is concerned.

The close comparison of two such regions of the Church in a single study is unusual in the historiography of the eighteenth-century Church, but the decision to do so rested upon the fact that it was easier to provide a context for the analysis undertaken if the parameters and agenda for that research were the same. Thus, while this study makes comparison with regions outside of the two archdeaconries, in the main, its conclusions rest upon the evidence of Buckingham and Gloucester. More specifically, the two regions were selected for a variety of reasons. In the first place they had not been studied before. More importantly they lay in close proximity to one another, so there would not be the wide disparity between them that there might have been had, for instance, archdeaconries from the north and south of England been considered. Another parallel between the two was that they were both of roughly similar size, though there were about fifty more benefices in Gloucester than in Buckingham. In the case of Buckingham, the county and archdeaconry were coterminous, and in Gloucester, this was almost the case, only the parishes west of the Severn being excluded. The differences between them are important too. Ecclesiastically, Buckingham lay in the vast diocese of Lincoln, whereas Gloucester was virtually coterminous with the diocese.

Demographically, the former was more densely populated than the latter, though it remained almost entirely a rural archdeaconry, with only small towns, and virtually no industry; by contrast, many parts of Gloucester contained only scattered populations, but the cathedral City of Gloucester was within the bounds of the archdeaconry. In terms of economy, though agriculture prevailed in the county, there was a significant cloth-producing industry in the hill-country regions. Such features of both archdeaocnries provide the context and backdrop for consideration of the role and activities of the parochial clergy in each within the communities in which they lived and worked.

The notion of community used here is essentially grounded in the geographical propinquity of the networks and interactions of individuals within defined spatial and territorial and regions. Yet these regions were not confined solely with the bounds of the parish in which parsons were beneficed; they might also have included local neighbourhoods, deaneries, and even the archdeaconry as a whole. These territorial units corresponded in reality to areas which both residents and outsiders would identify as a distinctive community. It is important to realise, too, that whilst the territorial boundaries might have been fixed and settled, they were never impermeable. Thus, while much attention is given to the parish or local communities in which the clergy participated, none of these communities existed in a vacuum. Institutions such as the Church of England penetrated community insularity and the clergy had an important part to play in this. More

than that, though the geographic boundaries defining a community might have been static, within them there was a nexus of social relationships and interactions, which was fundamental to the existence of a community and which lent it its dynamism. Relationships within a community changed over time as individuals and families prospered and declined, migrated or entrenched themselves, co-operated or quarrelled. The part that the clergy of each archdeaconry played in the dynamic of such relations is the focus of this study.

The methodological approach taken in order to achieve this was prosopographical, in that it potentially afforded a detailed and intimate examination of individual members of the parochial clergy within each archdeaconry. The focus of the study was exclusively upon the parochial incumbents, not simply because of the sheer number of parsons that this amounted to in the period under consideration, but mainly because it meant that the basis of the study presupposed at least a modicum of uniformity of experience within the community. In order to achieve this, data regarding the lives of all of the incumbents in both regions was gathered for the period 1730 to 1780. Since parsons who were beneficed at either of these two dates were included, there are a number of instances of clergymen who had been presented in the seventeenth century, or who were still in possession of their livings well into the nineteenth century. This research provided a wealth of information, yet paradoxically, many extant sources from the period are fragmentary, and thus there are often frustrating gaps in the detail

of many individual clerical lives. The periodisation of the study was of necessity arbitrary, but was chosen to allow for several generations of clergy to pass through the benefices of the two archdeaconries. It was also selected because the decades it encompasses represent a period of relative ecclesiastical, political and social stability within the Church.

Structurally, the arguments of the thesis are presented thematically, and the study is divided into two parts. The first part examines the clergy and their property. The second considers their family life, something much neglected by historians of the eighteenth-century Church, political life, an aspect of clerical experience much stereotyped by past scholars, and concludes with an examination of their social lives and pastoral work within the community. The fact that Part A is devoted entirely to one particular theme in no way undermines the significance to the experiences of the clergy within the community of those discussed in Part B. Rather, it is reflective of the fact of the prominence of property within eighteenth-century society and the fact that it impinged on so many other facets of the lives of all eighteenth-century individuals, clergy included.

Property was intrinsic to the fabric of eighteenth-century English society. Property moulded social relations, it was fundamental to political debate and polemic, and it influenced innumerable decisions of government and many legal developments. Indeed, property provided the links between the political, legal and economic

systems.[3] Property, and ways of thinking about it, encroached into philosophical and moral debate, into ecclesiastical and theological thinking, and even into depictions of marital and familial relations.[4] It provided links between generations of families, tying individuals to communities and bringing stability to society.[5] In short, so dominant was property in all spheres of eighteenth-century life, and so coloured by it was every manner of ideology and thought, that it is reasonable to regard the "propertied mentality" as "hegemonic".[6] Property, in all its forms, was virtually sacrosanct in eighteenth-century England.

Property was, however, not prized simply for its marketable or commercial worth, nor was it merely a measure of an individual's wealth or income, although acquisition and display were important to the eighteenth-century psyche. Rather, "the acquisition of wealth was the route to social acceptance and political power at all levels of society".[7] Social status accrued to individuals in proportion to the property they owned - or that it appeared they owned. In a highly status-conscious, hierarchical society, consumption and display became all important, especially amongst those who aspired to assert or elevate their status. Such status could bestow upon the property-owner commensurate power and authority: "property was the single most

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[3] Andrew Reeve, *Property*, (London, 1986), p. 7

[4] The predominance of property and the propertied mentality in eighteenth-century English life is elaborated at length by Paul Langford, *Public Life and the Propertied Englishman*, (Oxford, 1994), especially chapter 1.

[5] Reeve, p. 84.

[6] Langford, p. 28.

[7] ibid., p. 9.

important source of authority over others, and it was the basis of political power."[8]

Above all other forms, this was still most true of landed property in the eighteenth century.[9] Men who had made their fortunes in other spheres continued to invest their wealth in land in the period, as they had done in preceding centuries. Landed property remained the "foundation" of eighteenth-century society.[10]

The examination of the ecclesiastical property of the clergy of Buckingham and Gloucester, and of the income which such property produced for them, has, for this reason, been deliberately detailed. Further, it establishes a definitive location for the parson within the everyday world of the local communities in which he lived and worked. The geographic and economic landscape, which are described in the first part of Chapter 1, and which provided his wealth was one which he shared with his neighbours and parishioners; the changes in that landscape affected parson and layman alike. Property integrated the clergy, and through them, the Church, into the every day life of the community. Their property also affected the ways in which they and their families lived their lives, their social integration and social intercourse in which they engaged, and their involvement in politics. Thus the property of the clergy was important in itself to their position

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[8] David Roberts, *Paternalism in Early Victorian England*, (London 1979), p. 4; see also Langford, pp. 51ff.
[9] See Langford, p. 58; Reeves, pp. 80ff.
[10] Mingay, *English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 3.

and role in the community, but it also affected other spheres of their lives and interaction within the community.

Chapter 1

Clergy and Property

> Persons Ecclesiastical are God's Stewards, not only for that he hath set them over his Family, as the Ministers of ghostly food, but even for this very cause also, that they are to receive and dispose his Temporal Revenues, the Gifts and Oblations which Men bring him.[1]

The Church of England was no less caught up in the propertied milieu than any other institution in eighteenth-century England. Indeed, the Church was amongst the nation's foremost landed property owners, owning estates, farms, glebes and urban tenements, not to mention church buildings and parsonages, as well as other property such as church ornaments, paintings, vestments and pew rents. Despite despoliation wrought by Reformation and Interregnum, (allowing lay encroachment upon ecclesiastical land and property), by the eighteenth century the Church had managed to entrench its position in English society as a substantial, powerful property owner, and almost commercially-prosperous landlord.[2] Such a position or role

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[1] Richard Hooker, *The Works of That Learned and Judicious Divine Mr. Richard Hooker containing Eight Books of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, and Several Other Treatises, To which is prefixed The Life of the Author, by Isaac Walton*, ed. J. Gauden, (Oxford, 1793), vol. 3, Book VII, 23, pp. 249-59.

[2] See for example W. Jeremy Gregory, 'Archbishop, Cathedral and Parish: The Diocese of Canterbury, 1660-1805', D.Phil. dissertation, University of Oxford, 1993, esp. Chapter 3. (Hereafter, Gregory, 'Thesis'.)

contributed very significantly towards creating the inextricably-bound relationship - be it one of conflict or co-operation - existing between laity and Church in the period. This relationship was one of interdependence. It was intensified further by other property connections between lay- and clergymen, such as the enormous clerical reliance upon the patronage of the lay-owners of advowsons, and most notably, the link between the parson and the parish which contributed to his income, in the form of tithes. In this way, property served to embed the Church within the community, especially in rural areas, counties like Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire.

Property was something in which clergymen themselves had, unsurprisingly, a great interest. Their parish, freehold property itself, brought with it entitlement to several other forms of property: parsonage, glebe, tithe and fees. There was, however, great variation in both the quality and quantity of property and income between parishes, making each parson's personal circumstances virtually unique. It can be said, though, that the dual, even juxtaposed, position of parson and property-owner was not uncomplicated. On the one hand, for example, they were trustees of Church property, temporary curators of a piece of property which, though it might be exploited to their advantage while possessed, had in time to be passed intact and as undiminished in value as possible, to a successor. Yet they had too, an obligation to their familial successors, a responsibility to provide not only for their dependants while incumbents of a parish, but also to

secure their family's future somehow upon their own death. Other rather contradictory threads often bound clerics into potentially difficult positions: while they owed their benefice (and sometimes stipend) to a patron, it was important that as clergymen they preserved their independence and integrity, especially in the pulpit. Often too, they might be embroiled in a tithe or enclosure dispute with their parishioners, yet were they also obliged to extol Christian virtues of peaceable and neighbourly conduct. Indeed, incumbents usually had to convert their classical, university education into the realities of parochial life, to deal with business and farming matters, so that they could get the best from their glebe and tithes. At the same time they would be expected to preserve the dignity of their office - or, in the snobbish eighteenth century, their social status - in spite of what could often be a very meagre parochial income. Furthermore, such were the vagaries of the lottery that was the parochial system, that many a parson watched his clerical neighbour (or the stipendary curate, his rector or vicar) reap a fat profit from his living, while he struggled to make his own profitable. All these tensions were inherent in the parson's position as property-owner: sometimes they boiled over into conflict with other members of the community; mostly they lay latent, a customary part of the clergyman's place in eighteenth-century society. Property had a crucial influence over the life of the eighteenth-century clergyman, and the way that he was able to act and to interact within the various spheres of his life and work.

It is with issues such as these that this chapter is concerned. In addressing then, it is broken up into three sections. The first considers the benefices of clergy. It examines the different types of property with which a living might be endowed, and the contribution that such property might make to the value of a benefice. Thus consideration is given to parsonages and glebes, voluntary contributions and fees. Tithes, which formed the greater part of most clerical incomes, were a complex piece of property. For this reason, discussion of their contribution to the clerical earnings is incorporated into the analysis of the value of livings in the archdeaconries of Gloucester and Buckingham. This analysis is deliberately detailed because it establishes a definitive location for the clergyman and the Church within the geographic and economic landscape which he shared with his neighbours and parishioners. Thus, it includes a description of the countryside and the economies of both regions, before considering the value of benefices within each archdeaconry in turn over the period. It closes with a comparison of benefice values in the two regions. Section II continues this comparison, as it examines the actual incomes, the 'take-home pay', that the clergy of the two archdeaconries derived from their benefices, the two not always being of the same value. In Section III, attention is given to the value of clerical incomes in terms of the realities of eighteenth century life, and ways in which clergy augmented and supplemented their incomes. By way of conclusion, too, it seeks generally to tease out some of the

themes regarding clerical property and the community which have arisen during the preceding discussion and historical debate in general.

The benefice values and incomes upon which this discussion are based are derived from a number of primary sources. There are a number of problems with regard to these sources, which must be pointed out before beginning. There was no consistent source for either archdeaconry for the start of the period other than the Queen Anne's Bounty' s survey of poor livings.[3] This has been used here to give an indication of the level of poverty and the value of the poorest benefices within the archdeaconries. For Buckinghamshire, though there had been surveys of the diocese during the period, no other complete source was discovered which provides the values of livings of the archdeaconry until 1780, when a diocesan speculum was brought up to date. This is used here for benefice values for this date.[4] In Gloucestershire, the bishops had carried out surveys of the diocese throughout the eighteenth century, and the value of livings provided in the 1750 survey are used here.[5] For the end of the period, benefice values contained in Samuel Rudder's 1779 *History* of the county have been used, and where necessary, supplemented with information from Ralph Bigland.[6]

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[3] anon., *The Return made by the Governors of the Bounty of Queen Anne, for the Augmentation of the Maintenance of the Poor Clergy*, (London, 1736).

[4] LA, SPE 7 Diocesan Book; also used SPE 4 Speculum 1788-92.

[5] GRO, GDR 393 Diocesan survey 1750.

[6] Samuel Rudder, *A New History of Gloucestershire*, (Cirencester, 1779; edition reprinted 1979); Ralph Bigland, *Historical, Monumental, and Genealogical Collections relative to the County of Gloucester, printed from the original papers of the late R. Bigland*, ed. Richard Bigland, 2 vols., (London, 1791, 1792).

All of these sources possess gaps in the information they contain, and this is reflected in the discussion and in the statistics contained in the tables which accompany it. The sources have another weakness in that they rely upon clerics' estimations of the value of their benefice. Such valuations were formed from the clergyman's personal estimate of his, or his predecessor's, last few years' receipts of tithes, profits of the glebe, and any surplice fees or voluntary contributions to which he might be entitled. Ecclesiastical property that was let by the incumbent might also be included in this sum, particularly if it was customary to lease this property. Thus this information may be of varying accuracy, depending upon a cleric's precision in estimating his benefice's worth. This pitfall is further exacerbated by the fact that there would be fluctuations to clerical incomes depending upon the vagaries of the harvest. An additional problem with these figures is that some clergymen may have included income from property in their valuation of their benefice that others did not; for instance some may have recorded only the value of their tithes and no other sources of income, whilst others recorded everything which they received. There is no way of distinguishing what a clergyman included in the valuation of his benefice. For the purposes of this discussion, however, such figures have to be taken at face value, but these caveats must always be borne in mind.

I *CLERGY & THEIR BENEFICES*

Parochial clergymen of the early modern period were, as mentioned, all property owners, to greater or lesser degrees, by virtue of their possession of a benefice. Livings themselves were a form of freehold, bringing with them the franchise and, in theory at least, the potential security of lifelong ownership. Clerical property was essentially landed, literally in the case of glebe and parsonage. The pastoral income of clergymen was derived mostly from property such as tithes, surplice fees, mortuaries and Easter offerings. These payments too were 'landed' property especially in the case of tithes, since, in a still largely rural society, they were usually gleaned from produce of the land.[7]

The distribution of ecclesiastical property amongst parochial incumbents was completely inequitable; it was based upon geography, agricultural productivity, population density, local custom, historical and ecclesiastical fact. Thus, as both contemporaries and historians have continually indicated, "in the incomes of the parochial clergy there is...diversity and injustice", even between contiguous parishes.[8] One eighteenth-century cleric wrote of the

> inequality of livings (I speak of all dues and stipends whatsoever, appropriated to their respective cures) is so great, that all disinterested persons are unanimous in wishing some favourable amendment

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[7] See Mingay, *English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 4.

[8] John Wade, *The Black Book: An Exposition of Abuses in church and State, Courts of Law, Municipal Corporations, and Public Companies*, 2nd ed., (London, 1835), p. 54; see also p. 87; and e.g. John H. Pruett, *The Parish Clergy under the Later Stuarts—The Leicestershire Experience*, (Urbana, 1978), p. 82.

> to take place....[The clergyman] must be very conversant with what passes within his neighbouring parishes, who cannot see, that the greatest living often has the least duty, and the least burthened (excuse the phrase) with the greatest cure of souls.[9]

Such disparities are evident in both archdeaconries during the period, and they will become readily apparent in the following discussion of the property of the clergy of eighteenth-century Buckingham and Gloucester.

Parsonage and glebe

The most visible and tangible pieces of property to which the majority of clergy were entitled were the real estate of the benefice: the glebe and the parsonage house. This property obviously had an ecclesiastical and social importance to the cleric beyond the merely economic. The glebe was the land attached to the living as part of its endowment. As with so many facets of the eighteenth-century Church, there was a great deal of variation between the quality and size of this land. Glebes might be arable or pastoral lands, or a mixture of both, usually depending upon what sort of land usage prevailed locally. They might be small, just gardens or orchards close to the parsonage, enclosed fields or allotments in the open fields, a stake in the common fields of the parish, or woodlands: such were the vagaries of the

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[9] Benjamin Hutchinson, *An Humble Address to the Clergy of England; Recommending a Method for the more speedy Augmentation of the Income of their Indigent BRETHREN; AND for rendering the Provision of their WIDOWS and ORPHANS more general, adequate and certain*, (Cambridge, 1764), pp. 5-6.

clergyman's lot. Such idiosyncrasies also applied to the size of glebes: the three portionists of Waddesdon in Buckinghamshire, for example, each had glebes which varied in extent: the first portionist had a 26 acre glebe, the second, just 10 acres, and the third, 20 acres. In Gloucester, where more glebe sizes are known than Buckingham, glebes were generally larger in the Cotswolds than in the vale region, a reflection, no doubt, of the lack of encroachment by monastic appropriators, and a scattered population which had made more land available for the priest, circumstances that will be explained more fully below. Yet here too, his glebe might range in size from hundreds of acres to less than one acre, from the 287 acres of the rectory of Beverstone (with Kingscote), to 16 acres in nearby Uley, or no glebe at all in Lechlade. It is difficult to determine accurately for either archdeaconry just how many parsons were in this latter position. Certainly they were a minority of clergy, and most of them were curates, many of whose entire endowments had been appropriated in previous centuries. But there were also rectories and vicarages amongst them, such as Lechlade, Lillingstone Dayrell, Horsenden, Whitchurch, Tewkesbury, Welford, Cranham, nor do any of the benefices in the city of Gloucester appear to have retained their glebes.[10]

The lack of a glebe could be a significant economic loss to a

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[10] See G.F.A. Best, *Temporal Pillars: Queen Anne's Bounty, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and the Church of England*, (Cambridge, 1964), p. 17; VCH Gloucester, vol. IV.

cleric, since such a piece of property was potentially more than a passive asset: it could produce a positive and substantial financial return. Of course the income of some glebe-less clergy, such as the incumbents of Lechlade, Welford or Lillingstone Dayrell, suffered little from the lack of land attached to their benefice. For other clergy, though, their glebe made a substantial contribution to their annual income. The value of glebes to the clergyman varied from parish to parish, and depended very much upon those features described above, not least because they would, in part, determine what a parson might do with the land at his disposal. The history of a parish might also play a part in his deliberations, while the parson's own personal circumstances, inclinations and personality shaped the final decision. It would be very unlikely that the land would be left untended in any way, liable to the encroachments of audacious parishioners and criticism of contemporaries, not least because this would be entirely detrimental to the incumbent's successors, whose rights he was urged by church leaders of the period to guard as carefully as his own.

For many clergy farming their glebe was less a part of their responsibilities as a clergyman, and more of an economic necessity or even an advantage. Clerical farming had a long-standing tradition, as can be evinced from the ancient butteries, brew-houses, barns, storehouses and other farm buildings noted in most terriers.[11] The

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[11] See Pruett, pp. 92-3; D. M^{c}Clatchey, *Oxfordshire Clergy 1777-1869. A Study of the Established Church and the Role of its Clergy in Local Society*, (Oxford, 1960), pp. 115-120.

presence of these in the eighteenth century is not necessarily an indication of active clerical involvement in agriculture, since some were merely used to store tithes once collected and the tools required to do this. But many instances they were still in use by farming clerics. The aim for most incumbents had long been self-sufficiency, and this remained the case for many in the Georgian age. Within two years of his presentation to Harnhill and Driffield in Gloucestershire, Richard Cumberland was delighted to be able to inform his brother he had achieved this state:

> I have the pleasure to find my Expences lessen every Day, my farm supplying us plentifully with Mutton, Pork, Bacon, Butter and Cheese, besides Malt and a good part of our Firing and enables me always to have a Horse in the Stable, and room for a Friend so that my principal Expence in Housekeeping is Wine and Tea.[12]

More than this, though, as agriculture became more profitable during the century, many clergymen hoped themselves to reap a profit from their lands, which motivated an active interest in farming the property attached to their living. Cumberland was pleased with his return from his first harvest:

> I think myself extremely fortunate in having got over the first year, without meeting any material disappointment tho not without Difficulty being so much straitened for money. To stock and sow a farm of 60 acres, ½ arable requires according to computations 300£^{s} at Least, 200 the nearest way. and [sic] when you consider I began with only 100 and have not yet received 5£ back except in Housekeeping, and have 90£^{s} worth of Live Stock, besides Implements and a years produce, you cannot say

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[12] Richard Dennison & George Cumberland, *The Cumberland Letters*, ed. Clementina Black, (London, 1912), p. 217, Richard to George, 18 November 1778. (Hereafter, Cumberland, *Letters*.)

> I have been a Bad manager.[13]

Sometimes clergymen, like William Cole, rented additional land to make their glebe a more viable farm unit; he rented two closes and a "Pightel"[14], which

> are of the greatest Use to me, for my 3 Horses and 2 Cows, as there is only one single Acre of Glebe Land belonging to the Rectory, & that lying at a Mile distance on the Bank of the River by Eaton. Without these I should have neither Grass nor Hay for my Cattle: but with them I have abundance of both: though I generally hire 2 or 3 Pightels on the Green for the Spring & Summer's Feed for them, & save my others for Hay.[15]

Some clerics took their interest in agriculture even further, and it became one of their prime passions and pursuits; amongst them were zealous proponents of the new agricultural systems developed during the century, such as Thomas Leigh of Broadwell and Adlestrop, who managed his own glebe and family estates in these parishes, and was the leading instigator of the successful enclosure of the parishes. Similarly Charles Coxwell of Barnsley, Bibury and Coberley took a great interest in his glebe and other land, and managed his estates extremely profitably.[16] In Buckinghamshire, Henry de Salis' rectorial farm of 200-300 acres was singled out by the agricultural writer St John Priest for attention.[17]

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[13] ibid., p. 216, 12 September 1778.

[14] "A small field or enclosure, especially near a dwelling", William Cole, *The Blecheley Diary of the Rev. William Cole M.A. F.S.A. 1765-67*, ed. Francis Griffin Stokes, (London, 1931), p. 24, n. 4. (Hereafter, Cole, *Blecheley Diary*.)

[15] Cole, *Blecheley Diary*, p. 320.

[16] Joan Johnson, *The Gloucestershire Gentry*, (Gloucester, 1989), p. 148.

[17] St. John Priest, *General View of the Agriculture of Buckinghamshire*, (London, 1810), p. 58.

It is difficult to determine just how many parsons in either county were actively engaged in farming their glebe. Certainly Pruett found that whilst the majority of parsons in late-Stuart Leicestershire did farm their glebes themselves, an increasing number inclined towards leasing their property. This trend is confirmed by McClatchey who found that in Oxfordshire after 1780 instances of incumbents farming their glebe were few, and further, that the majority of clerics leased the land awarded to them when tithes were commuted at enclosure.[18] It is probably fair to say that Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire differed little from these counties. The sight of a clergyman actively earning a living by "toiling on his glebe, by feeding swine, and by loading dungcarts", to quote Macaulay's derisory portrait of the turn of the century priest, was a progressively rare one as the century progressed. Many factors contributed to this change. It became increasingly regarded by clergy and their contemporaries to be demeaning for a man of the cloth to dirty his hands in this way, especially as more and more clergy came from a gentle background, with little experience or inclination to till the land themselves. Practically speaking, as many more clerics were granted allotments of land in lieu of glebe and tithes when the parish was enclosed, it became more difficult for clergy to commit time and energy to farm large properties actively. This did not mean that they all gave up their land to others to cultivate. Instead they employed farm hands to assist

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[18] Pruett, p. 92; McClatchey, pp. 117, 119.

them. Where once this may have occurred only during the busiest times of the agricultural calendar, on many clerical farms including all those of the parsons mentioned above, such employees became a permanent fixture, especially as greater profits were reaped by clergy from which to draw labourers' wages. Thus such clergy were still actively involved in the cultivation of their property, but in a more managerial rather than practical capacity.

For those with no desire to take active responsibility for the land, leasing some or all of it to tenants was the obvious answer. This suited clergymen who were too old or infirm to engage in farming, non-resident and pluralist clergy absent from their benefice, or parsons with little knowledge, time or inclination for agriculture. Instead, by leasing the glebe, a clergyman received a direct income from his land with little personal effort. Such an arrangement, though, was not without its risks or costs: bad tenants could ruin the glebe land and lower both its return and its subsequent value on the rental market.[19] Furthermore the parson was responsible for maintaining the farm buildings on this property, and this could be costly for him. The cottage and farm buildings upon the land let by the curate of Long Crendon in Buckinghamshire, for instance, were "decayed & burdensome", and cost the curate "from 20 to 30 £ p. ann: almost yearly to keep in decent condition."[20] But for many clergymen, leasing

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[19] Pruett, pp. 92-3.

[20] CERC, F1278 1805 survey; see also Ampney St Mary, F102 1810 survey, where, upon the 22 acres of land that the curate possessed there were "large & expensive

their glebes brought them a nice income, and with the increasing profitability of agriculture during the eighteenth century, they might double their rental income in ten or fifteen years.[21] Even small pieces of land, including the church-yard which was often let by clerics, could be exploited for some profit by the parson if he desired: the rector of Hedsor rented "two acres of poor land to the Parish Clerk" with the rectory for £4.10.0 a year; half an acre of glebe land in Iver brought the incumbent £1 a year .[22]

A similar situation prevailed as regards the parsonage houses of the clergy of the two archdeaconries. It was an advantage to the parson that his accommodation and that of his family was provided without charge: Cumberland admitted that "had he farmed on so slender a beginning for a Livelihood I must have been ruined and starved, but what has enabled me is, having no Rent to pay, and a maintenance besides."[23] More than that, however, was the fact that the house was also potentially a positive asset, a piece of property from which parsons might draw an income if they were inclined to do so. Just as there were benefices without glebes, though, so too there were livings with no parsonage—in some instances, they were both lacking in the same parish, as was the case in Great Washbourne in Gloucester. Parishes without parsonages were very much a minority: in the 1810

Buildings to repair".

[21] Evans, p. 9.

[22] CERC, F2243 1810 survey; F2586 1812 survey.

[23] Cumberland, *Letters*, p. 216, Richard to George Cumberland, 12 September 1778.

diocesan survey, the incumbents of about 7 percent of parishes in the diocese of Gloucester had obtained a licence because of either the "want or unfitness" of their parsonage.[24] It is not possible to obtain the equivalent figures for the archdeaconry of Buckingham, as its statistics were submerged in those for the vast diocese of Lincoln, though it is likely that they were of a similar magnitude.

The majority of parishes without a house in both archdeaconries were rather impoverished livings. In the curacies, very often the house had been impropriated with the tithes, while in other types of living of mediocre value the poor income did not made it worthwhile for an incumbent to reside, especially if he had to go to great expense to repair a decayed house or to find his own accommodation. There were some parishes where there was no official parsonage, but where the advowson was owned by the incumbent or his family. Instances of this can be seen in Marston, Compton Abdale, Snowshill, and Hampnett which were in possession of the Loggin, Page, Kirkham, and Hughes families respectively during the period: clearly the clerics of these and other such parishes resided in family property and had no need of a parsonage. But for clerics less fortunate than these who wanted to reside in a living with no parsonage, finding suitable accommodation could involve both considerable effort and expenditure. Some clergy were forced to live

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[24] Abstract of the number and classes of Non-Resident Incumbents and the number of Resident Incumbents According to the Diocesan Returns for the year 1810, *Parliamentary Papers*, vol. X, 1812.

outside their parishes, which meant a great deal of travelling in all weather conditions, (not to mention the ecclesiastical and social implications). The lack of a house in Sudeley meant that the parson lived half a mile away from the parish, whilst in Charlton Kings, the curate lived one and a half miles away in Cheltenham.[25] Similarly lacking a parsonage, the vicar of Padbury had been forced for many decades to live in Buckingham, two miles away from his congregation. In Princes Risborough, there was no house at all, though the parson was fortunate enough to find one to rent within the parish, but only "at considerable expence & inconvenience".[26] In Whaddon in Gloucestershire, the curate not only lived two miles away in the parish of Moreton Valence, but he did so at the cost, by 1810, of twenty guineas a year.[27] Clearly, the outlay required to supply their own accommodation could be considerable proportion of what was usually an insubstantial income. This was a widely recognised problem in the eighteenth-century Church, and it occasionally prompted efforts to rectify the situation in some parishes. Sometimes a patron would decide to supply a house where there had previously been none, as was case in Olney and in Stowe (Bucks) in the 1760s.[28] Queen Anne's Bounty funds too were occasionally used to purchase houses, as occurred in Horsley during the period.[29] For many incumbents, the

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[25] CERC, F4479 1813 survey; F952 1814 survey.
[26] CERC, F2129 1811 survey.
[27] CERC, F692 1788 and 1810 surveys.
[28] LA, Ben2/68/1.
[29] CERC, F2335 1777 survey.

problem of a parsonage-less parish was solved by being non-resident, usually through pluralism. The cleric could simply leave the problem of finding accommodation to his curate (even if it meant paying the curate a higher stipend to cover the cost of his renting a house), or better still avoid the difficulty completely by having neighbouring parsons serve his living for him. He could then reside elsewhere, and take the profit of the living, such as it might be, for his own uses.

Almost as problematic for a cleric as having no parsonage was being presented to a living with a house which was completely unsuitable for his purposes, its only redeeming feature being the fact that the parson could gain an income from it by renting it to tenants. Houses might unsuitable for the incumbent for any number of reasons. Sometimes they were just completely inappropriate for a cleric's use. Martin Barry, the curate of Gloucester St Nicholas described the rooms "set apart for his use" at St Bartholomew's Hospital, where he was also to act as chaplain, as "so ill-considered that I have let them for one Guinea pr annum."[30] Occasionally they were simply too small for the parson, let alone for his family. Charles Coxwell applied for a licence permitting his non-residence for this reason:

> I hold the Rectory of Barnsley in your Lordship's Diocese where for several Years I resided, till the Increase of my Family amounting to twelve Children obliged me (with the permission of the ordinary of the Peculiar of Bibury, of which my Church makes a Part) to quit my Parsonage House, as not sufficiently commodious for a larger Paternal [i.e. family] Mansion

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[30] CERC, F1896, Martin Barry to Robert Chester (Queen Anne's Bounty), 6 February 1782; (his underlining).

> at Ablington where I now reside. This place is contiguous to the Parish of Barnsley, where I can very shortly be, on any occasion when wanted....[31]

Other historians have found evidence of clerical houses being let out by incumbents because the house was far too large for the needs of the incumbent especially if he was a bachelor, and though no examples of this were discovered in either archdeaconry under consideration here, it is possible that such over-large houses existed in both.[32]

Many clerics who decided to lease their parsonages did so because they regarded the house as inadequate or inappropriate for a clergyman, particularly if what they found in their parish was a small, ancient, perhaps even medieval, cottage. The rector of Hedsor, for example, found the house available to him was but a "mean cottage", and he decided to let it to the parish clerk. He was, however, unable to find any "House within the Parish in which a Rector can reside", and was forced to live two miles away in the adjacent parish of Hitcham.[33]

Similarly, the vicarage of Twining in Gloucestershire was deemed "totally unfit for the Residence of the Incumbent" in the early nineteenth century. It is uncertain how long this had been the case, though it is likely that it had been so for at least twenty years. In any case, the vicar let the house to a "Cottager" but also resided in the

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[31] GRO, D269B/F25, Charles Coxwell to Bishop of Gloucester, 8 August 1803.

[32] M^{c}Clatchey, p. 23; Pruett, p. 138; Peter Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence: Ecclesiastical Structure and Problems of Church Reform 1700-1840*, (Cambridge, 1989), p. 148.

[33] CERC, F2243 1810 survey.

parish himself.[34] How many clerical complaints regarding the meanness of parsonages were made on the basis of concerns about social status and other social considerations, rather than practical grounds is difficult to say. Economically speaking, for many clerics, renting out an unsatisfactory and unwanted parsonage was usually the most profitable option: at worst, it might offset the money he would have to pay to rent or buy a better house, but at best, if he was lucky, it might bring him a profitable income.

The latter was certainly the case for the pluralist, who was non-resident and had no need of a second parsonage, (or if he had his own house in the parish or neighbourhood, in which he preferred to reside). Coxwell was in both these positions when he let the parsonage at Barnsley: he was a pluralist, as he had been for most of his career, and he had his father's house in Ablington in which to reside. He had, therefore, no need of the rectory at Barnsley and so chose to let it for £15 a year.[35] Similarly, John Taylor of Bledlow and Weston Turville was able to let the vicarage of the former for £70 per annum.[36] Clearly a clergyman could reap a good return by letting out his parsonage to tenants, and avoid the problem of leaving it empty to decay. Generally tenants of parsonages were lay-people, but occasionally clergymen

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[34] CERC, F4756 1814 survey.

[35] GRO, D269B/F28, F29, F118. Coxwell held Barnsley between 1767-1829; he was also presented to Coberley, 1778-82, Winson, 1778; Marston Meysey, 1782-1817, Badgeworth, 1789-1806, Bibury 1806-1809, as well as being chaplain to the bishops of Bangor (1778) and Bristol (1806) and Rural Dean of Fairford from 1804, and holding various secular offices.

[36] BRO, PR17/3/1/1 Vicar Taylor's Tithe Book.

needed to rent such property from their colleagues, particularly if there was no such house in their own parish. Coxwell's house at Barnsley, was, in the early nineteenth century, "occupied by a worthy Clergyman, Mr Prowett, who is known to Your Lordship, and serves a church in the Neighbourhood, where there is no House for him to reside in."[37] William Cole rented the rectory and some closes near it, at Waterbeach where he "retired" to when he left Blecheley.[38]

Leasing the house was not, of course, always without its problems. Stephen Phillips of Bisley in Gloucester complained of the "annoyance caused by the tenants [of the Rectory House]: not only did they withhold the portion of the tithe which was due to him, but his garden was rendered unpleasant by the odour of the tenants' pigs".[39]

The main predicament clergymen were faced with in regard to their parsonage was keeping it in a good state of repair. Clergymen were entitled to do what they wanted with their parsonage houses—live in it, rent it out, or leave it standing empty— provided they neither sold it nor prejudiced their successors' interests: that is, they did not allow it to decay to such an extent that a succeeding incumbent could not live in it, if he chose to do so. Thus Coxwell, who reported to the bishop that his "Parsonage House is kept in good Repair", maintained it by expending a good portion of the rent he was paid upon repairs to the

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[37] GRO, D269B/F25, Charles Coxwell to Bishop of Gloucester, 8 August 1803.
[38] Cole, *Blecheley Diary*, p. 231.
[39] Rudd, *Bisley*, p. 128.

house.[40] In order to ensure that incumbents did not diminish the value and condition of this property, an incoming clergyman could claim dilapidations, or the sum of money necessary to bring the parsonage to a mutually acceptable standard, from his predecessor, or his predecessor's executors, since the dilapidations of a dead cleric were reckoned amongst his debts. Occasionally parsons died insolvent, as one of the vicars of Ashelworth, James Edwards, did, and his successor had no recourse to his estate for dilapidations, and was forced to shoulder the burden himself.[41] Generally, though, agreement over dilapidations was done by private negotiation and agreement between both parties, but it sometimes led to ill-will on one side or the other, especially if there was little wrong with the house, except that a new incumbent, conscious of his social status, felt it was inappropriate for one of his position. William Cole, for instance, complained that he had "at very great Expence, both entirely new made the Garden, & partly rebuilt the House, & had not received of the Family[42] a Shilling for dilapidations when I came there"; he was, moreover, plagued with worry throughout his incumbency that he would be charged with dilapidations when Thomas Willis succeeded to the benefice.[43] Cumberland, too, was irritated by the behaviour of Dr Bray when

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[40] GRO, D269B/F25, F28, F29, Charles Coxwell to Bishop of Gloucester, 8 August 1803.

[41] CERC, F161 1805 survey.

[42] The advowson belonged to the Willis family and Cole had succeeded Eliot Willis to the living, having been presented by Eliot's father Browne.

[43] Cole, *Blecheley Diary*, p. 331.

moved into the rectory:

> he had treated me with so little Ceremony I shall know how to proceed with respect to Delapidations [sic] which if I am not mistaken will more than make amends. I found the house very clean and well aired, [but]...I found too many repairs wanting to admit any alterations or improvements, of which [I] could make several if I had nothing else to do with money....[44]

Very occasionally negotiations over dilapidations became so protracted or difficult that the parties resorted to litigation, as was the case between Robert Richardson and Luke Heslop when the latter was collated to Adstock in Buckinghamshire in 1777.

Spending money on repairs to the parsonage was not merely motivated by the priest's fear of, or desire to receive, dilapidations. If he was to be resident in his parish, he needed to make the house comfortable and commodious enough for himself and his family. Certainly Anthony Nourse Sanderson, rector of Newton Longueville, regarded the "Affair of Non-Residence" as "almost out of the Question", but he was then faced with the problem that "the House is in the most ruinous Condition, & must be entirely rebuilt".[45] Desiring a "comfortable Dwelling", Sanderson had no objection to rebuilding, and proceeded undaunted, as did many other clergy in both archdeaconries: a new parlour was added at Clifton Reynes, Cole made many significant alterations at Blecheley, whilst William Farebrother of Leckhampsted, Joseph Twining of Sherborne and Windrush, George

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[44] Cumberland, *Letters*, p. 122, Richard to George, 1 May 1777.
[45] BL, Add. MS 5811 f143b, Sanderson to William Cole, 11 May 1765.

Olliffe of Wendover, Salisbury Price of Little Marlow and William Baker at Dowdeswell were all amongst those who, like Sanderson, decided, or were forced by the state of their parsonage, to build new houses during the period.[46]

Deciding what to do with a run-down parsonage could be problematic for an incumbent, especially if his income was not large. When Thomas Twining was presented to his parish near Colchester he wrote that

> I have got a vicarage house that plagues me horridly with the necessity of doing something to it, the impossibility of doing little, the expence of doing much, the doubt what to do, when to do, whether to do &c, &c. In short, it bothers me. If it cd. have been made comfortable for 200£ I shd. have been there by this time.[47]

Some clerics used the dilapidated state of their parsonages as a justification for their non-residence, and that such parsons were amongst the 7 percent cited above who had been granted licence for non-residence because of the "want or unfitness" of the parsonage. But for those clergymen who wished to be resident, in many instances it was cheaper to completely rebuild the house, than to suffer living in a "useless and inconvenient" house which would "be a constant charge and burden" to the incumbent. It for this reason that both James Fussell of Hardwick and Benjamin Robertshaw of Amersham, amongst

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[46] ibid.; LA, D/A/X/9 Faculty Clifton Reynes 1730-1.

[47] Twining, Thomas, *A Selection of Thomas Twining's Letters 1734-1804. The Record of a Tranquil Life*, ed. Ralph Walker, 2 vols., (Lewiston, 1991), vol. 1, p. 84, Twining to Charles Jenner, 13 August 1773.

others, decided it was more economical to build new rectories than to repair the existing building.[48]

The cost of renovation or redecorating could also be swollen if the parson and his family were forced to pay for alternative accommodation during what could be a protracted wait to move into the parsonage. Sanderson was fortunate that he was able to live free of charge in the parsonage of nearby Shenley "which his Friend Mr Knapp has lent him, (*viz*: his House) he living for these last 2 years in Shropshire, till he can rebuild or repair the Parsonage at Newton, almost dilapidated."[49] Very extensive repairs, or major or complete rebuilding of parsonage houses could be formidable and potentially ruinous for a clergyman. Sanderson reckoned the cost of rebuilding at 400 guineas, but his situation was additionally fortuitous in that just he would be forced to contribute just 150 guineas of this sum; the rest "will be readily made up by the [New] College, [and] Dilapidations".[50] The latter were estimated by John Lord as amounting to £120, and would thus be a significant contribution to the cost; he also pointed out to Cole that there were "good Materials" surviving in the old house that could be used for rebuilding.[51] Other clergymen were neither so fortunate as Sanderson, nor perhaps as financially astute as regards rebuilding their parsonages as they might have been. John Lord of

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[48] D/A/X/9 Faculties Hardwick 1741; Amersham 1732.
[49] Cole, *Blecheley Diary*, pp. 5-6.
[50] BL, Add. MS 5811 f143b Sanderson to Cole, op. cit.
[51] BL, Add. MS 5811 f144 John Lord to William Cole, 17 May 1765.

Mursley actually put himself in a difficult financial position when he had "overbuilt himself a too good House" on the income of a very small living and monies from an estate he had inherited, a position compounded by the fact that he had twelve dependent children.[52] Worse though, was the case of Edmund Trott, who was vicar of High Wycombe between 1753 and 1763. He ruined himself rebuilding the vicarage house, and when he died in the West Indies in 1765, he left his widow destitute and forced to rely upon the benefaction of the Sons of the Clergy for her maintenance.[53]

There was in fact little long-term personal incentive for a parson to invest great sums in a parsonage house, since he had only an "interest" in the benefice. As he could neither sell nor bequeath the house, any investments he made in it would not pass directly to his heirs, and the only advantage they might gain from money spent on it would be derived indirectly through a reduction or eradication of the likelihood of dilapidations. The exception to this, of course, was if a parson or his family owned the advowson of the benefice, (or occasionally, if the patron was acquiescent to the presentation of an incumbent's son upon the former's death or cession of living). If this was the case, a cleric could be reasonably certain that his investment would remain in his family, and he could make significant alterations to

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[52] Cole, *Blecheley Diary*, p. 43.

[53] John Parker, *A Brief History of the Church of Christ in connexion with the Crendon Lane Meeting House in Chipping Wycombe...and of the Pastors Presiding over it*, (Wycombe, 1848), p. 106.

the house, with the knowledge that in all likelihood they would benefit his heirs. There are a number of examples of clergy in family livings in both archdeaconries, and it is noticeable that some of them did rebuild or significantly improve the parsonage of their living. Amongst them were Samuel Pickering of the wealthy parish of Bishop's Cleeve in Gloucestershire, who owned the advowson and also improved the large rectory there; Nathaniel Thornbury at Avening in Gloucester rebuilt the rectory in 1779, the year he was presented by a family member. The Earls of Abingdon owned the advowson at Long Crendon in Buckingham, and one member of their family, Rev. William Bertie, built a new parsonage in 1741 because the old house was "so dilapidated that it cannot be repaired".[54] Similarly, at Shenley in Buckingham, Primatt Knapp had inherited the family living from his father, Matthew, and upon his presentation to the rectory Primatt had improved the parsonage, safe in the knowledge that it was to pass in turn to his son, who succeeded to the living in 1793.[55]

It is most unlikely that these clergymen or other incumbents in these archdeaconries were motivated entirely by a desire to make their benefice and parsonage an enduring investment for their family. Moreover, some clergymen seemingly cared little if their investment in

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[54] Joyce Donald, *Long Crendon, a short history*, (Aylesbury, 1983), p. 32

[55] Phillip Sheppard built a new parsonage in Minchinhampton in 1720, and though no other member of his family was presented during the eighteenth century, his family continued to own the advowson; the parsonage remained an investment if the eventuality arose of a cleric in the family, and, further, whilst the house was in good condition, there was less excuse for the incumbent not to be resident.

the parsonage benefited their heirs, especially if they had no children of their own, instead they were content in the longer term to leave whatever alterations they made to the house to their successors, and ultimately to the benefit of the Church. Cole praised John Mackerness of Haversham of Buckinghamshire for this reason; Mackerness had "no children: & has been a good Benefactor by building an excellent Parsonage House of Brick."[56] Ultimately, too, the immediate concern of having a "fit and commodious" house in which to live was predominant.[57] Furthermore, as clergy generally emerged from higher social ranks, and there were more prosperous men amongst them, undoubtedly the worldlier consideration of having a parsonage that befitted their status in the community, as they saw it, as both a clergyman and a relatively wealthy gentleman, became important.

Voluntary Contributions and Fees

Another, usually less common, source of income for clergy was that paid to them as annual voluntary contributions from their parishioners, (as opposed to the one-off donations or legacies to parish or priest). Only a very small number of benefices could count such contributions amongst their property. In the Buckinghamshire parish of Stony Stratford, for example, besides a small stipend derived from several estates, "the curate has no legal demand for any thing more than the

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[56] BL, Add. MS 5836 f155b.

[57] LA, D/A/X/9 Faculty Hardwick 1741.

Contributions given by the Inhabitants being but small and thereby voluntary"; similarly, the curate of Lower Winchenden received "Voluntary Contributions from the Parishioners (chiefly Farmers) a floating & uncertain Income" of about £8 per annum.[58] By contrast, along with his stipend of £32, the curate of Stroud in Gloucestershire received contributions of his parishioners so substantial that his income was described as "pretty considerable". Two of the parishes of the city of Gloucester made voluntary gifts to their parsons: in St Nicholas these were of uncertain amount though the curate Martin Barry said in 1781 that they paid about 5 guineas a quarter, whilst in St Mary de Lode by 1794 they amounted to about £5 annually.[59] In Stinchcombe in Gloucestershire, the minister received "Some Small Contributions on Easter Offerings amounting to abt 9£ p an" but, he went on, these contributions "will be withdrawn as soon as the Bounty doth Commence".[60] This was also the case in Kingswood, another Gloucester parish, where, "by a decree of "ye Court of Exchequer [the] Inhab.^{s} pay 27.12.0 to ye Curate", which they "did by subscription make...up to 40*ll*", a payment which ceased after the parishioners had raised £200 "to procure an augmentation by ye Queens Bounty".[61] In the latter parish, as well as in Rangeworthy, where the curate received £7 a year through the voluntary subscriptions of his congregation, these payments were made in order that there might be extra services:

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[58] CERC, F4449 1750 survey.
[59] CERC, F1896 1747 and 1781 surveys; F1899 1794 survey.
[60] CERC, F4390 Jonathan Hodges to Bishop of Gloucester, 2 May 1741.

in Rangeworthy, weekly instead of monthly, and in Kingswood, twice instead of once, on Sundays.[62] Voluntary contributions clearly had a variable effect upon their recipients' financial circumstances. Though they appear to have made a relatively significant contribution to the income of clergy in what were impoverished livings, by their very nature, they were neither fixed nor certain, and could vary as changes in population occurred in parishes, and as relations with each successive incumbent took their course.

A more common, albeit modest, source of income for clergymen were the fees paid to them by their congregations for the performance of special duties. This property included mortuaries, Easter offerings and surplice fees. The first of these were the small token payments customarily paid by heirs of the deceased to the parson at a burial or upon the settlement of the estate.[63] William Cole of Blecheley in Buckinghamshire, for example, buried a young servant in 1767 "for which I had a Mortuary (*viz*: 10s. as he died worth above £40)...."[64] Such payments were made both "for the pious use of the priest, and the good estate of the soul of the deceased", and also "for all failure in the payment of Tithes and Oblations" over a person's lifetime; they were paid more rarely as time went on.[65] Easter

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[61] CERC, F2668 1751 survey.

[62] CERC, F3894 n.d.

[63] Richard Burn, *Ecclesiastical Law*, 6th edition, 4 vols., (London, 1797), vol. 2, pp. 562-3.

[64] Cole, *Blecheley Diary*, p. 197.

[65] Burn, vol. 3, p. 22; Cole, *Blecheley Diary*, p. 197, n. 1. See Pruett, pp. 94-5.

offerings and surplice fees were what the Hedgerley (Bucks) terrier described as "dues for church rituals".[66] They were "those customary sums commonly paid by every person when he receives the Lord's supper at Easter...[and] also the customary payments for marriage, christnings[sic], churchings, and burials."[67] When Cole performed the burial service for the servant he also received "half-a-Crown for burying him".[68] Fees were also often paid or demanded for consulting the parish register and other services which varied from parish to parish. This last point is most important, since the extent to which all these fees were demanded, collected and paid varied in every parish in England: it is impossible to quantify in general terms the contribution that they made to the income of clergymen in the eighteenth century.

In a few parishes they contributed a significant portion of what was usually a paltry income. This was the case in Gloucester City's St Mary de Lode, for example, where "ten pounds & five Shillings arise from Surplice Fees, Five pounds & four shillings from Easter Offerings", out of an annual income of just £48.6.8 in 1794.[69] In still other parishes, these fees were paid to a third party. Sometimes the impropriator, not the incumbent, collected the fees, as occurred in Sevenhampton (Glos), where, admittedly, they where "trifling and uncertain"; in Preston-upon-Stow (Glos) "all Easter Offerings and

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[66] BRO, PR 99/3/7 Terrier 30 June 1760.
[67] Burn, vol. 3, p. 21.
[68] Cole, p. 197.
[69] CERC, F1899 1794 survey.

Surplice Fees, except for Marriages are paid to the Patron", who in turn paid a small fixed stipend of £8 to the parson.[70] In both Bledington and Ashelworth (Glos) the fees were of "so little value" that, in the former, they had "for a long series of years", been "given up to the parish Clerk", while in the latter they were taken by the curate not the vicar.[71] By contrast, in many other parishes, some or all of the fees were never collected, such as in Oxenton (Glos), where "Surplice Fees are very trifling; Easter Offerings never remember'd to be collected."[72] In most parishes, however, these fees were demanded and paid. The way that this was done, and the amounts requested varied slightly according to custom in every parish. A typical example is provided by the parish of Amersham in Buckinghamshire, where

> there are no Surplice Fees; except ten Shillings for leave to bury in the Church, and a Guinea for the Chancel—be called 10s. Two Shillings is demanded, and duly paid, for the burial of every person, who being not a parishioner, to be buried in the Church-yard; but for the burying or baptising the ordinary Parishioner there is no fee. For every Wedding, whether by Licence or Banns, we have 5 Shillings and for publishing the Banns, two Shillings and sixpence. For Churching and consulting the Parish Register I suppose the Clerk as something usually given him, tho' the Right is not in him, but the Minister. I cannot learn that any Easter Offerings or Mortuarys have been paid in this Parish within the memory of any man living.[73]

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[70] CERC, F4133 1789 survey; F3850 1786 survey. The patron in 1786, a Mrs West of Abscot, also made a voluntary contribution to the curate's income, "a Present every Year of Four Pounds."

[71] CERC, F162 1805 survey; F490 1805 survey.

[72] CERC, F3663 1785 survey.

[73] BRO, PR/4/3/9 Drake's Notebook 1754.

Whether or not these fees were due or collected, in the majority of parishes they were usually "very trifling and uncertain", and never amounted to more than a few pounds, though this might make a huge difference to a poor clergyman. Trifling or not, the existence of, and right to demand, such property was carefully recorded by clerics and their clerks in the parochial terriers, as part of property rights that it was important for an incumbent to preserve for his successors.

Tithes

The majority of clerics depended upon tithes for the bulk of their income, and in rural areas like Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire, fluctuations in harvest yields and agricultural prices directly affected the level and value of tithe payments from parishioners, and hence, the parson's livelihood. The vulnerability of the value of the tithe arose from the fact that it was a direct levy upon productivity, and in this predominantly rural society, mainly upon the produce of the land. Tithes were divided into three kinds: praedial tithes "arise merely and immediately from the ground", such as crops, wood, fruit and vegetables; "mixt" tithes were "things immediately nourished by the ground", and included livestock and their produce, for instance, cheese, milk and wool; personal tithes, finally, were "such profits as do arise by the honest labour and industry of man...being the tenth part of the clear gain, after charges deducted".[74] In each parish

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[74] Burn, vol. 3, p. 408.

there were great and small tithes, the former being the tithes of corn, hay and wood, the latter, the rest of the praedial, and all of the mixed and personal tithes. These could, of course, vary according to local custom, as could their division amongst those entitled to receive the tithe. A clergyman installed as a rector of a parish generally received all of the tithes. If he was a vicar, he was usually entitled to only the small tithes, the impropriate rector receiving the great tithes. Perpetual curates commonly received no tithes, as the tithes had been impropriated before or during the Reformation, but were usually paid a pension or stipend by the impropriator. This provides a brief definition of tithes, the enormous importance of which to the income of parochial clergy will become self-evident as the discussion of the benefice values of both archdeaconries which follows unfolds.

Benefice values in the archdeaconry of Gloucester

Landscape and Geography

The county of Gloucester had a "thriving agrarian economy" in the eighteenth century, as well as significant pockets of industry. [75] It contained three markedly different landscapes within its borders: the hills of the Cotswolds, which gradually undulated east into Oxfordshire; the lowland, vale region, stretching along the length of the Severn and eastwards towards the Cotswold escarpment; and the

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[75] Adrian J. Randall, 'The Gloucestershire Food Riots of 1766', *Midland History*, 10, (1985), p. 72.

forest, mines and wastelands which lay to the west of the Severn River. This latter area, the Forest of Dean, was dismissed by William Marshall in 1789 as "a mere waste"; forming as it did, however, the archdeaconry of Hereford it is not under consideration here.[76]

The large eastern-half of the shire was a distinctive region formed by the Cotswolds hills, which stretched along the length of the county from about Chipping Campden in the north to Hawkesbury and Sodbury in the south. This hill-country was favoured with a mild climate, a good water supply and a "billowy surface".[77] Up until mid-century, however, the land was of little value here and agricultural productivity was unspectacular.[78] A great deal of the region was devoted to grain production, with sheep-farming being the main pastoral activity. The difficulty for farmers was that until around 1750

> this district lay almost entirely in an open state;—namely in arable common field, sheep-walk and cow-down.[79]

Enclosure of the area began in the 1750s, and continued for several decades, proving hugely beneficial to farming in this region. The results were highly praised by late eighteenth-century agricultural writers like Marshall, Turner, and by Rudge in the early nineteenth century, all of whom were proponents of better land-management and modern

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[76] William Marshall, *The Rural Economy of Glocestershire including its dairy*, 2 vols., (Gloucester, 1789), vol. 1, p. 6.
[77] Marshall, vol. 2, p. 5; George Turner, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Gloucester, with Observations on the Means of its Improvement*, (London, 1794), p. 7.
[78] Marshall, vol. 2, p. 10.
[79] ibid., pp. 9-10.

farming techniques :

> Probably no part of the Kingdom has been more improved within the last forty years [i.e. from about the 1750s], than the Cotswold Hills.[80]

Enclosure was carried out in the Cotswolds with greater ease than elsewhere at this time, because of the pattern of land-holding in the area. Large estates prevailed, and there were very few small landowners. Tenants held their land on leases for three lives renewable; landlords on the verge of enclosure let them "fall in" or offered shorter leases so that there would be few obstacles when they wished to enclose.[81] Properties became large - about 200-500 acres[82] - mainly because enclosers wanted "to place as much land as could conveniently be managed, under one tenant, to reduce the necessity of buildings".[83] The valleys were placed in permanent meadow, with sheep the "livestock chiefly attended to".[84] On the sides of the hills arable prevailed (with some dairying), and grains, turnips and "cultivated herbage" were managed according to the latest crop-rotation schemes.[85] The result was, by Marshall's reckoning, a three-fold improvement in the productivity of enclosed areas: better crops

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[80] George Turner, p. 10.
[81] See Marshall, vol. 2, p. 10.
[82] George Turner, p. 8.
[83] Thomas Rudge, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Gloucester*, (London, 1807).p. 52. Arthur Young also mentions this, *Six Weeks Tour through the Southern Counties of England and Wales*, (London, 1772), p. 146. Apparently, though, this did not cause rural depopulation, as the need for agricultural labour resulted in a population increase in this area. George Turner, p. 20.
[84] George Turner, p. 8.
[85] Marshall, vol. 2, p. 11; George Turner, pp. 8, 10.

and healthier, more valuable sheep.[86] The contrast with unenclosed parishes was marked, as can be seen from Arthur Young's 1772 description of the countryside around Aldsworth, Northleach and Eastington, which was not enclosed until the 1780s and 1790s:

> All the country is open, dull and very disagreeable, nor does a rigorous culture of the earth make any amends for those unpleasing circumstances; the crops were generally poor, and mostly full of weeds....[87]

In his study of the county's agriculture, William Marshall divided the Cotswold hills into three sections along the length of the hill-country: the Cotswolds, Stroudwater Hills and Southwolds. The three were, in fact broadly similar, especially the northern and southern wolds. "Lying in a dip" in the middle were the Stroudwater Hills. [88]

Here farming practices were the same as the rest of the area - the deeper valleys devoted to meadow-grazing and dairy, and the hill-sides and tops largely to tillage - but productivity was lower than elsewhere in the Cotswolds. Some of the difference lay in geography of the hills here. Although trees were generally sparse in the Cotswolds, several large tracts of woodland stood in the Stroudwater Hills, notably around Chedworth[89]. Furthermore, "the southern extremity [of this central region was]...various in soil and surface", which in part explains the poor income the vicar of Horsley received during the period.[90] In

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[86] Marshall, vol. 2, p. 10; Rudder described it as a "prodigious improvement", p. 21.
[87] Young, *Six Weeks*, p. 145.
[88] Marshall, vol. 1, p. 7.
[89] Marshall, vol. 2, p. 12.
[90] ibid.

contrast, on the eastern edge of the hills and east towards the relatively low-lying land beyond the Cotswolds, (the south of Fairford deanery and Cirencester area), the rich deep soil produced great crops, though these were "apt to burn" during dry seasons.[91]

Of great significance was that this Stroudwater area had long been the centre of the cloth industry in the county. In the parishes of this part of the Cotswold Hills (which covered most of Stonehouse deanery and the eastern side of Dursley deanery) more labour was involved in some aspect of cloth-making than agriculture, be it wool preparation, weaving, dying, or the manufacture of tools necessary to produce the fine broad cloth of the region. A prosperous industry though it was, it was the clothiers who benefited rather than their workers, who lived a precarious existence, their employment dependant on annual market fluctuations.[92]

The other main region of the archdeaconry was the vale, "which in *richness* and *beauty*, has no where, perhaps, its equal."[93] This too was divided into three sections, the Vale of Evesham or Tewkesbury, the Vale of Gloucester and the Vale of Berkeley. The latter, most southern, was the most prosperous of the three. Although its surface was less uniform that the upper vale, Berkeley was favoured with the consistently rich, deep soil that marked the whole of the vale,

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[91] George Turner, p. 7.
[92] Esther Moir, *Local Government in Gloucestershire 1775-1800: A Study of the Justices of the Peace*, (Bristol, 1969), pp. 11-12.
[93] Marshall, vol. 1, p. 3.

and here on the fertile lowlands many dairy farms and orchards were concentrated.[94] The area, which stretched from the Severn eastward towards the cloth-producing parishes of the Cotswold escarpment and southward towards Bristol, was famed for its cheese and cider production. Dairy herds were of moderate size, about 40 to 50 cows, though there were some of 100 animals.[95] There was very little arable in the lowland area, as the cornfields had been converted to grasslands during the enclosure of the region in the preceding centuries.[96] Farm sizes were increasing, productivity was high and rents were low, especially in comparison to the quality of the land, mainly because of the distance from markets.[97] Few gentry owned land in the Vale of Berkeley, but a considerable yeomanry and the Lords Ducie and Berkeley had estates there, the latter being the greatest landlord of the area.[98]

The northerly parts of the vale region contrasted markedly with Berkeley, in agricultural productivity and in patterns of landholding. The vale surrounding Gloucester had a mixed agrarian economy: the land was used equally both for arable and pastoral farming.[99] The meadows and "stinted pastures" were almost entirely devoted to cattle:

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[94] Marshall, vol. 2, pp. 85, 86.
[95] ibid., p. 98.
[96] ibid, pp. 87, 90; W.E. Tate, 'Gloucestershire Enclosure Acts and Awards', *TBGAS*, 62 (1943), pp. 26, 28.
[97] Marshall, vol. 2, pp. 90, 89. This did cause some complaint as it increased the number of poor, and therefore, the poor-rate. There had already been considerable migration to market towns during the earlier enclosures.
[98] Marshall, vol. 2, p. 89; see also J.P.P. Horn, 'The Distribution of Wealth in the Vale of Berkeley, Gloucestershire, 1660-1700', *Southern History*, 3 (1991), pp. 81-109.
[99] Marshall, vol. 1., pp. 18, 48.

small herds of dairy cows were kept and cattle were grazed for fattening and breeding.[100] Although some sheep-farming occurred, the animals did not generally fare well here, since the wet soil caused a fatal rot in many flocks.[101] Near Gloucester, some land was reserved for the use of townspeople's livestock.[102] In the arable fields, grain, especially corn, was grown, and market gardens and orchards produced food for the city markets.[103]

Despite being favoured with the same fertile soil that marked the entire vale, on the land surrounding Gloucester productivity was not high: it was far lower than the vale of Berkeley. This lack of productivity was almost entirely caused by the farming practices and division of land in this part of the vale. Much of the problem arose from the fact that at least half of the land here was still held in common.[104] More than that, in the open arable fields property was, as Marshall put it, "intermixed in a singular manner". Marshall, as a modernising agriculturalist, criticised not only this but also the "disgraceful management" of crops in these open fields.[105] Marshall estimated that about a third of crops were lost each year "from want of sufficient tillage"[106] The problem was not lack of land, but rather that traditional farming customs prevailed to the detriment of productivity:

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[100] Marshall, vol. 1, p. 18, 211, 219.
[101] ibid., vol. 1, p. 208.
[102] George Turner, p. 33.
[103] Marshall, vol. 1, p. 7; Moir, p. 4.
[104] Marshall, vol. 1, p. 16; most of the enclosed fields were had been so for centuries, p. 40.
[105] ibid., p. 70.
[106] ibid., p. 72.

men were "afraid to make a whole year's fallow lest they should lessen their produce".[107] Near the city of Gloucester, and also at Cheltenham and Deerhurst, there were extensive common fields know as 'Every Year's Lands', which had been sown continuously for more than a century.[108] A period of fallow could never be agreed upon by the occupiers. Here, and in the open arable fields, crops were choked with weeds, and the land was

> worn out by the succession of arable crops, often yielding no more than eight or twelve bushels to the acre, produced very little, though the soil was such that they should have given at least three or four quarters[109] to the acre.[110]

The situation was not much better on the common meadows and pastures. Close to the Severn the grass was rich because of the flooding of the river.[111] But further inland, especially near Gloucester, there was little irrigation, and many of the common fields were neglected, full of weeds, and in some, stock was allowed to graze the land barren.[112] These fields "were overdue for conversion back to tillage".[113]

These problems might have been solved by the introduction of better husbandry, or enclosure and the redistribution of land, but in this

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[107] ibid.
[108] ibid., pp. 17, 65-6; this is discussed more fully by Tate, 'Gloucestershire Enclosure', p. 26.
[109] a quarter was equivalent to 8 bushels.
[110] Tate, 'Gloucestershire Enclosure', p. 27; see also Marshall, vol. 1, pp. 129-31; Rudge, p. 161. Rudge also notes that the produce that did grow was often consumed by flocks of pigeons, p. 325.
[111] George Turner, p. 33.
[112] See Tate, 'Gloucester Enclosure', pp. 29, 30, 32.
[113] ibid., pp. 29-30.

part of the vale there was "no large estate to take the lead, and establish a uniform system of management."[114] Properties were generally small to middling - few were larger than about 300 acres - and belonged mostly to yeomen, rather than gentry, a few of the latter having only small estates in this area.[115] Much of the land was Church leasehold, owned by the dean and chapter of Gloucester, the bishop, and colleges at Oxford.[116] The presence of church-owned land in such quantities actually helps to explain why there was so much common and arable land in this part of the vale. Under its pre-Reformation monastic ownership, it had been kept in arable in order to provide food for the monks, "though the land was not naturally suited to this purpose" and it remained in this state into the eighteenth century, though on enclosure, it "was very generally converted into grass land".[117]

The Vale of Evesham, finally, the northern-most part of the lowlands of Gloucestershire, stretched north from around Tewkesbury. Principally an agrarian area, the main industry was flax-spinning, though by the time Rudge wrote, this was in decline.[118] Farming practices here did not differ markedly from the Vale of Gloucester. There was a great deal of arable land growing a variety of crops; this land was chiefly common field, as in the Gloucester area.[119] The

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[114] Marshall, p. 20.
[115] ibid.; Marshall, vol. 1, p. 48.
[116] ibid., p. 19; George Turner, p. 32-3.
[117] Tate, 'Gloucester Enclosure', p. 27.
[118] Rudge, p. 342.
[119] Marshall, vol. 1, p. 19; George Turner, p. 41.

pastures were reserved mainly for dairying, but herds were bigger here (50-80 cows) than elsewhere in the lowland region of the county.[120] Sheep were less common, as flocks suffered from the same rot that they did in the Vale of Gloucester, farmers losing entire flocks every three years.[121] Properties were larger in this northern part of the vale district than around Gloucester, though tenure was similar, particularly the existence of a considerable amount of church leasehold land. Productivity, too, was not as high as it might have been, especially in more southerly parts of the Vale of Evesham. The potential of the Vale of Evesham is demonstrated by the significant difference in the return of enclosed parishes, which produced "good sound corns" and healthy sheep.[122] Concentrated mostly in the northern parishes were the soil was particularly fertile, enclosure began in the 1770s in the region with some dramatic results: "the parish of Kemerton", for example, "was inclosed and exempted from tithe, about the year 1772, since which time [i.e. by the 1790s] the rent is very much advanced, and the produce more than doubled".[123] What is more, the value of the parish to the rector rose from £130 in 1750 to £300 by 1779.

Kemerton serves as an obvious example of the close correlation, dependency even, between the economic fortunes of parish and parson. In this case, tithes were removed from lands as they were

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[120] Marshall, vol. 1, p. 219.
[121] George Turner, p. 42.
[122] ibid.
[123] George Turner, pp. 42, 44, 46.

enclosed. This was to the benefit of the farmers and to the advantage of the clergyman, who received land in lieu, (thus, also providing an instance of the extent to which some clerics benefited from the enclosure of their parishes in this period.) But equally, in other parishes where tithes endured, whether they were rich or poor benefices, whether farming methods changed or not, very often a distinct relationship can be discerned between clerical incomes and peculiarly local economic, usually agrarian, circumstances.

The geographic regions of the county of Gloucester described above were not coterminous with the decanal boundaries of the archdeaconry. But it is possible to make a reasonable approximation of the two sets of boundaries, albeit that the geographic overlapped the ecclesiastical. The Cotswolds, for instance, encompassed the deaneries of Stow, Cirencester, Stonehouse, most of Fairford, and some of Campden and Hawkesbury deaneries. The Vale of Evesham spread through the deaneries of Winchcombe and part of Campden, while, Dursley and some of Hawkesbury lay in the Vale of Berkeley. Only the deanery of Gloucester and the Vale of Gloucester covered more or less the same region.

Table 1 shows the average value of the parishes in each Gloucestershire deanery in 1750 and 1779, as well as the mean worth of rectories, vicarages and curacies within each region. Obviously these averages mask wide variations in benefice value within deaneries, but they provide a ready means of comparison, and are therefore useful

to this discussion. The table also excludes the income of parishes in the archdeaconry in 1736, simply because only the value of parishes worth less than £50, and identified as such by the secretary of the Queen Anne's Bounty in his nation-wide survey of such impoverished livings, are available, though these too are helpful for comparison of benefice values.[124]

Benefice values in the Cotswolds

From Table 1 it is evident that the overall average value of livings throughout the period was highest in the deaneries along the Cotswolds, particularly Hawkesbury, Stonehouse and Fairford where there were some very large parishes. Further north in the Cotswolds, in Cirencester and especially Stow, clerical incomes in 1750 were clearly not as good, as these areas suffered most under the pre-enclosure farming methods and consequent agricultural yields already described. In Stow, in particular, there had been a relatively high level of impoverished livings earlier in the period. In the 1736 survey, 17 percent of the poor livings of the entire archdeaconry were within this deanery, the second highest concentration of livings worth less than £50 per annum in the archdeaconry. This contrasted with the 'relative norm' for the county of about 9 percent in Stonehouse, Cirencester, Hawkesbury, and an even smaller percentage (3 percent) in Fairford.

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[124] *The Return made by the Governors of the Bounty of Queen Anne, for the Augmentation of the Maintenance of the Poor Clergy*, (London, 1736), pp. 88-92, 128-130.

Looking at it another way, in these latter four deaneries, about a third of parishes were valued below £50 in 1736, but in Stow, 58 percent of livings were at this level.[125] As in most deaneries, all of the curacies were very poor, but in Stow, all of the vicarages were also valued at less than £50.

Over the next fifty years, however, there was a striking improvement in the value of benefices right throughout the Cotswolds, mostly notably in Stow and also in Cirencester. Clerical incomes rose in the former by about a third and in the latter by more than a quarter, so that by 1779 the average value of benefices throughout the hill-country deaneries was greater than those of the vale area. The cause of this augmentation was essentially the enclosure of parishes in the Cotswolds (and the consequent improvement in husbandry and output). It was in these two deaneries particularly, as well as Fairford where livings improved in worth by a fifth, that enclosure was concentrated. And, just as landowners and farmers benefited from enclosure, so too did many clergymen. Whereas previously throughout the Cotswolds tithes had generally been paid in kind, tithes were usually eliminated from the enclosed lands.[126] This relieved farmers permanently from payment of this burden, and discharged clergy or impropriators from the often onerous task of having to collect it. Instead,

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[125] Cirencester, 38 percent, Fairford, 36 percent, Hawkesbury, 30 percent, Stonehouse, 34 percent of livings were below £50.
[126] George Turner, p. 23.

> in the new enclosures, this load [i.e. tithes] has been got rid of by giving up a part of the property in lieu of it. One-fifth of the arable, and one-ninth of the pasture, and in some instances, two-ninths of one, and one-eighth of the other, has been asked and agreed to. As the impropriator [or rector] is exonerated from all expenses, except inside fences, the part he takes is more than equal to a fourth of the arable land, even when one-fifth is allowed....[127]

Thus the tithe-owner had this property commuted for a permanent allotment of land, or very occasionally for perpetual cash payments. Such quantities and apportionment between arable and pasture was reckoned to be fair compensation to the tithe-owner for what was a tax on the *net* produce of the parish, that is upon crops about to be harvested or animals ready for market, and was fairly typical throughout England in the second half of the century.[128]

Ecclesiastical history had been fortunate to Cotswold parsons, in that there was a vast swathe of rectories right across the eastern half of the county, so much so, that there were relatively few vicarages and even fewer curacies. Already having had the benefit of owning all the tithes before enclosure, rectors in particular were well placed to take advantage of the general improvement in agriculture during the eighteenth century, and most especially of the tithe commutations that usually occurred at enclosure. Rectors, and some vicars, as tithe owners, usually did well from enclosure, not least because this property gave them a powerful position when the enclosure settlement was

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[127] ibid., pp. 23-4; see also Rudge, p. 60 and Marshall, vol. 2, p. 11.
[128] Eric J. Evans, *The Contentious Tithe: the Tithe Problem and English Agriculture, 1750-1850*, (London, 1976), pp. 97, 99.

negotiated. In this way, at least a dozen Cotswold clergymen in the period up to 1780 became substantial landed property owners, undoubtedly with the social standing that this might bring, and, more importantly, a rise in their annual income.[129] Instead of relying upon the productivity and co-operation of local farmers and having the inconvenience of collecting their dues in kind or in cash, they were now able to take direct control of their income. They could farm their land themselves using up-to-date husbandry; alternatively they could lease it to tenants, for a greater return than they might formerly have been able to lease their tithes or glebe land.[130]

Accordingly it is possible to see a steady improvement in the value to incumbents of most enclosed Cotswolds parishes: Stratton, for example, was enclosed in 1771. It had been valued at £100 in 1750, and in 1779 Rudder reckoned it to be worth £180; Naunton was worth £140 in 1750, and by 1779, a year after it was enclosed, it had improved to £250. One of the most spectacular improvements was to be seen in the rectory of Stow. Enclosed in 1765-6, it had been valued at £150 fifteen years previously. But by 1779 it was bringing the rector an income £400 a year. Even if the tithes had not been commuted for land at enclosure, as was sometimes the case, there

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[129] The rectors of Barnsley, Cherington, Condicote, Hasleton, Hatherop, Naunton, Stow and Stratton and the vicars of Ampney Crucis, Coln St. Aldwyns, Little Barrington, Bibury and Fairford were all granted land allotments in lieu of tithes.

[130] Sometimes glebes were replaced when enclosure took place, and new land granted in lieu. "Enclosure usually facilitated agricultural improvement, resulting in rents which could be doubled, tripled or even quadrupled within a short space of time", Evans, *Contentious Tithe*, p. 94.

could be an improvement in income for the parson, sometimes because of the extension of tithe-rights onto former, now enclosed, wasteland, and generally because the farms of the parish were usually more productive.[131] The parishes of Acton Turville and Tormarton were together worth £225 in 1750. Enclosed in 1760, the land of the parish of Tormarton was not exonerated from tithe. Yet by 1779, Rudder said that they were together worth at least £400.

Sometimes tithe owners were not granted land in place of tithes, but were compensated with monetary payments instead. These were either straight cash payments or variable payments dependant upon the price of grain, corn rents as they became known.[132] Although this sort of settlement was not common, there is an example of it in the deanery of Stow. In 1756 the rector of Hawling

> quitted his claim to all tithes &c. in consideration of receiving 25s yearly in money for every yard-land; the whole to be reckoned at 30 yard-lands. He likewise gave up his glebe land, consisting 63 acres, in consideration of 10s a year for every acre, to be paid to him and his successors by the lord of the manor.[133]

Whether or not this was a wise agreement is open to question, as the value of the parish rose by only £9 between 1750 and 1779, to £69. Indeed enclosure was not always profitable. The enclosure of Iron Acton in 1779 was "not found to be advantageous"; though the living had been worth £200 already in 1750, and was valued at this level in

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[131] See Best, pp. 62-4.
[132] Evans, *Contentious Tithe*, p. 95.
[133] Rudder, p. 102.

1779, it is not clear if this was post-enclosure, or what its later value was.[134]

Despite the overall improvement in the value of livings in this part of the county, it must not be forgotten that there remained many parishes that did not enjoy the fruits of enclosure. Of the vicarages in Stow deanery, for example, only Little Barrington and the united livings of Sherborne and Windrush were enclosed in the period, and the value of the others still languished below £50 in 1780, as they had fifty years previously. The vicar of Horsley in Stonehouse deanery mentioned above did not see any improvement in his income at this time. In part this was due to the variable land of the area, which meant that his glebe and house ("purchased with a former Lot and Benefaction") brought him only £18 a year.[135] He had, too, it seems, some difficulty with an annual payment "charged on some Coppice-wood in the Parish", which has been "sometimes paid me with some Reluctance", so that he was doubtful whether he could add it to the "certain part of the Income". Besides this annual payment, and despite the fact that he was vicar of the parish, the parson was locked into a fixed payment from the impropriator for his tithes of only £8 a year.

A glance at the incomes of some of the other poorer Cotswold clergymen shows that many others of them suffered from these sorts of payments, be they curates who were remunerated by impropriators

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[134] Bigland, p. 41.
[135] CERC, F2335 Horsley.

with very small stipends, or rectors and vicars who received cash payments instead of tithes, the level of which had sometimes been set decades or even centuries before, and from which it was very difficult for the cleric to break free. Rarely did any of these sorts of payments bear any relation to the cost of living, nor did they take into account any agricultural and industrial improvements, especially the rapid gains of the eighteenth century. They were, however, not peculiar to Gloucestershire, but were very common throughout the Church of England, as will be seen when the value of Buckinghamshire livings is examined.

Potentially the least problematic of the monetary payments in terms of under-valuation that clergymen might receive as income was the composition. This was a cash payment in lieu of tithes in kind, and was usually instigated by the cleric in order to simplify tithe collection. The value of the tithes of just a particular estate, or individual farms in the entire parish might be determined. Alternatively, a cheaper and less complicated composition of the price per acre of each type of crop and for pastoral land might be paid instead of tithes in kind.[136] Such compositions could be assessed and settled annually, though it was more common for the composition to be agreed for a fixed number of years. Its advantages to the parson were that it brought him the security of a guaranteed income whatever the outcome of the harvest, and, in theory at least, it was more easily collected than the produce of

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[136] Evans, *Contentious Tithe*, p. 27.

the parish, and its value was immediately accessible to him, not requiring storage or sale at market. But it had its disadvantages. In order to keep pace with inflation and agricultural improvements it needed to be assessed annually. It was rarely done as often as this, as it could be expensive if an independent valuer was paid to undertake the task and it was troublesome work for the clergyman to assume too frequently.[137] On the other hand, a failure to readily update the value of compositions could lead at best to the clergyman becoming increasingly out of pocket through during the time they were left unchanged due to inflation, and at worst, the composition becoming set almost permanently, something which made it difficult to challenge and to augment, to the obvious material detriment to the incumbent and his successors.

The basic problem for the cleric was negotiation with his congregation. This was not always an easy task for a man in his position, particularly if he had neither the temperament nor a practical education in farming practices. Many clergy preferred to settle for a composition for a fixed period, often for less than the real value of the tithes. As such it represented pragmatic decision to avoid tension in the parish, with rich and poor parishioners alike, and one that saved him the bother of collecting tithes in kind, though in doing this he limited any possible improvement he might make to the income he received from

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[137] ibid., pp. 26-7.

his benefice.[138]

Although most tithes were paid in kind in unenclosed parishes of the Cotswold district of Gloucestershire, an excellent illustration of the problems that negotiating a composition could cause for a parson is provided by Richard Cumberland, the incumbent of Driffield and Harnhill, in the deanery of Cirencester from the 1770s.[139] He calculated when he came to the parishes in early 1777 that his "income for the year, after payment of taxes would not exceed £100", but he added in a letter to his brother George that he hoped "in a few Years to add another £50 without starving the Livings or quarrelling with my Flock".[140] He was, however, in no hurry to settle his financial affairs with his parishioners, since though he planned to "offer them a new composition", he did not propose to do so until he had put himself "precisely in a situation to take up my tithes if they reject it". He intended to "proceed with great caution and do nothing without the advice of those, who are acquainted with this Business, and are neither prejudiced or interested".[141] Unfortunately by the end of the year his attempt to raise the composition for tithes saw him embroiled in a dispute with some of his parishioners, and through their

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[138] ibid., p. 28.

[139] See also other examples such as John Skinner, *Journal of a Somerset Rector 1803-1834*, ed. Howard and Peter Coombs, (Oxford, 1984), pp. 38-9; Thomas Twining, *A Selection of Thomas Twining's Letters 1734-1804. The Record of a Tranquil Life*, ed. Ralph Walker, 2 vols., (Lewiston, 1991), vol. 2, pp. 578, 584. Thomas to Richard Twining, 3 February 1801 and 5 March 1801.

[140] Cumberland, *Letters*, p. 118, Richard to George Cumberland, 25 February, 1777; see also p. 195.

[141] ibid., p. 123, 1 May 1777.

misrepresentations and a series of misunderstandings, with his patron, Mr Smith. Cumberland had accomplished an agreement at Driffield easily enough, assessing it at "3.6 on enclosed, 2.6^{d} on Common Field, 2s on Grassland".[142] It was when he tried to come to an agreement with the farmers of Harnhill that his difficulties occurred. He decided that if he raised the composition in this parish in the same fashion,

> the augmentation would be much greater especially in M^{r} Smiths Farm which would have been considerably more than doubled—accordingly I changed my method and knowing that an assessment on the Pound [i.e. upon the rent each farmer paid] would fall easy on Howell M^{r} S. tenant I declared my Intention of laying it in that manner and to take off Imputation of partiallity [sic] said that Driffield being part Tithe Free I was oblig'd to go by the Acre but Harnhill not having that objection I should take the easiest Method.[143]

After discussing it with his patron and the principal landlord, Mr Smith, who was "perfectly agreeable" to the scheme, Cumberland "called the Harnhill people together, and told them I should accept 3.6^{d} in the pound...and I desired those who chose to agree to sign a paper, signifying that such an agreement was entered into, and was to continue three Years."[144] In doing so he was increasing substantially the amount of tithe that the farmers would have to pay.[145] This obviously disappointed and irritated the farmers, who had initially been "extremely civil" to him, not least because they were under the impression that he meant to take his tithes in kind, "partly from my coming to settle among

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[142] ibid., p. 170, 15 January 1778.
[143] ibid.
[144] ibid., pp. 170-1.
[145] ibid., p. 172.

them and seeming fond of farming, and still more on account of my silence on that head, and making no complaints".[146] They did ask that they might be allowed to consult their landlords before signing the agreement. But the farmer J. Howell, whom Smith had at one stage warned Cumberland was an "artful and cunning man", took the opportunity to try to persuade Smith that Cumberland was trying to deceive his patron, and was "taking 21 pounds a year out of my Benefactors pocket."[147] This maliciousness had its desired effect: Mr Smith's already "fiery temper" was "blown up into...[a] flame" since, though he was

> in his own disposition honest and unsuspecting....[he] was easily persuaded to suspect and in the hands of Sycophants and knaves...worked up into...[a] pitch of extravagance....[The] farmers...used his interest as the means to persuade—and he loving his own property (as most people do) and abhorring ingratitude, readyly [sic] caught at the bait—every thing fell before them, and it was determined you must be wrong.[148]

The result was a series of unpleasant meetings between parson and patron, Smith accusing him of "rapaciousness, Ingratitude and Hypocracy [sic] in Terms nothing but excessive Rage could justify", Cumberland defensive and indignant at such treatment. This ill feeling and unease was exacerbated by the continued accusations of the farmers against Cumberland.[149] Eventually the tithe composition was settled, and tithes were paid in the autumn without further conflict,

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[146] ibid., p. 122-3, 1 May 1777.
[147] i.e. the sum that Smith's tenants' tithes amounted to; Richard to George, p. 171, 15 January, 1778; see also p. 194, Richard to George, 7 August 1778.
[148] ibid., p.160, George to Richard, 16 December 1777.
[149] ibid., p. 193, Richard to George, 7 August, 1778.

though the relationship between cleric and benefactor took a longer time to heal.[150]

In terms of income, the settlement that Cumberland finally made with the farmers of Driffield and Harnhill was below the real value of the tithes. When he came to the livings they did not clear £100 a year, though Smith

> had been offered 1500£s for the next presentation, which I [Cumberland] was sure they were well worth, and asked [him] if he thought any man could have offered the sum he mentioned if they were not capable of great augmentation and added at the same time I was convinced they were worth a great deal more that he had been offered...."[151]

Cumberland hoped to raise each benefice as close to £100 as possible, with £200 a year being "the most, I ever expected to make...."[152] From the outset he had not pushed for his full entitlement, but instead, and "considerably to my own Detriment", he had "contrived to assess Harnhill in such a manner as should be most in his [i.e. Smith's] Favour...and for that purpose had deviated from the plan made at Driffield".[153] He had done so because he was "sensible that either 4.6 or even 4s which M^{r} Ekins [sic] would run up higher than I wished".[154] Thus he had decided upon the composition of 3.6^{d} per pound paid in rent, rather than per acre which would have brought him more income. Smith himself told him at a meeting before they fell into dispute, that though the rent of his farm was £122 per annum, "he had been lately

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[150] ibid., p. 208, 12 September 1778; p. 216, n.d. [Oct./Nov. 1778].
[151] ibid., p. 195.
[152] ibid., p. 170, 15 January 1778; see also p. 195.
[153] ibid., pp. 195-6, 7 August 1778.
[154] ibid., p. 170, 15 January 1778.

offered 50£ a year more for it—that he beleived [sic] Howell the Tennant had a good Bargain" for both rent and tithes.[155] Despite this, he was later forced by his testy patron to charge Howell only 3s per pound (reducing his payment to 18.6^{d}), and so he was them obliged to offer some of the other farmers the same concession.[156] W. Brush, for example, who had offered him a guinea a year initially, in the end paid only 18s.[157] The ultimate result was that Cumberland's income was neither what the living was actually worth, nor was it his full tithe. The consequence was that his circumstances were rather more constrained than he had hoped—when paid half his tithes in the autumn of 1778, for instance, he received only "sufficient to satisfy the Bills I expect btwixt this and Christmas"—a predicament he shared with many other eighteenth-century clergymen in Gloucestershire and England in general.[158]

A alternative to the composition for dealing with tithes, but one which could be fraught with similar problems for the cleric, was to lease the tithes of his living. In this way, the parson also received a fixed and certain income without the bother of having to collect the tithe himself, or even to negotiate with his parishioners or patron. But he too, could be entering into an agreement which was not financially beneficial to himself. The rector of Widford in the deanery of Stow, for example, let

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[155] ibid., pp. 170-1.
[156] ibid., p. 172, 15 January; p. 199, 7 August 1778.
[157] ibid. 199-200.
[158] ibid., p. 216, n.d.

the great tithes for £20 per annum, yet they were worth at least £30 in 1750.

Far more economically troublesome for the cleric of these fixed ecclesiastical payments was the *modus decimundi*, usually known as the modus.[159] This was a nominal customary payment, levied in lieu of the full demand of tithe.[160] Moduses had originated as a means of dealing with tithes of produce that were awkward to collect, such as that of gardens, honey or milk. They were instead replaced with either a small fixed payment, or by an agreement to "take animals in lieu of what they produced", such as hens instead of eggs.[161] A modus might, like a composition, apply only to a specific farm, or alternatively to a particular animal or crop throughout the whole parish. An example of the latter was the payment of 'garden pence' in Aldsworth, a curacy in the Cotswolds peculiar of Bibury, whose total income was only £20 a year in 1750 and 1779. Payments such as these were clearly out of date, having been settled centuries before. Yet it was virtually impossible for clergymen to overturn them; their customary nature gave rise to an equivocal legal situation and, unsurprisingly, they were fiercely defended by those who paid them. The farmers of Harnhill, for instance, were concerned that Cumberland was attempting to set aside a modus and charge them a composition for the full tithes of their

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[159] Burn, vol. 3, p. 431f.
[160] Evans, *Contentious Tithe*, p. 18.
[161] Virgin, p. 37.

harvest.[162] Such permanent and petty payments were a great irritant to the parson: they were scarcely worth the effort they took to collect, and they prevented clerics from enjoying the full tithe and hence the profitability of agriculture, especially in the latter part of the eighteenth century.

The clergy who laboured most under the problem of fixed payments were perpetual curates, whose income was often derived entirely from stipends. Without doubt those Cotswold clergy receiving the lowest incomes were those presented to perpetual curacies. The economic plight of incumbents of such benefices in the Church of England has received much attention from commentators.[163] They were generally in the most vulnerable position of all clergy in the Church - this is effectively demonstrated by the fact that in the Queen Anne's Bounty's survey of 1736, almost three-quarters of curacies throughout the entire archdeaconry were valued below £50, compared, for example, to a quarter of the rectories. Rarely did they have access to tithes—only in Baunton did the parson collect tithes amongst the Cotswolds curacies in this period—being paid a "pension" in their lieu by the impropriator, and only occasionally did they have a glebe. Salaries of perpetual curates were generally very low and they rarely kept pace with inflation. In the Cotswolds with its large number of

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[162] Cumberland, *Letters*, p. 171, Richard to George Cumberland, 15 January 1778; p. 195, 7 August 1778.
[163] See for example, Best, p. 17f; Virgin, p. 90 and passim; Evans, *Contentious Tithe*, p. 3 and passim.

rectories, for instance, there were only a handful (fifteen in all) of curacies, but of these, all but Oldbury were below £50 in 1736; in 1750 only Oldbury and Stroud were worth more than £50, and in 1779, these two and Guiting Power which was worth £52 provided their incumbents with an income of more than £50. Stroud alone, which had been valued at £17.15s in 1736, amongst these curacies was worth £100 in the period: it had reached this level by 1750 and, thanks to the Queen Anne's Bounty and contributions from parishioners, probably more than that by 1779, when Rudder described its income as "pretty considerable" [164]

Another way of demonstrating the predicament of the eighteenth-century curate is to consider the value of the poorest livings in the deanery of Stow, which had proportionately more curacies than any other part of the Cotswolds, yet also the greatest overall improvement in benefice value in the hill-country of Gloucestershire.[165] As mentioned above, the value of benefices improved by 33 percent in the deanery between 1750 and 1779, and while rectories rose in average value by 40 percent, and vicarages by 42 percent, there was no improvement in the average income of curacies. In 1736 about a quarter of rectories (that is, five) were worth £50 or less, while three were below this in 1750, and only Widford, referred to previously, had such a meagre income in 1750. A similar situation prevailed amongst

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[164] Rudder, p. 201.

[165] In Stow 17 percent of parishes were curacies, (i.e. 4), in Cirencester 15 percent (4), Fairford 8 percent (1), Stonehouse, 7 percent (2), Hawkesbury, 6 percent (2).

the deanery's vicarages: all eight were below £50 in 1736, seven were still at the same level at mid-century. Yet three were recorded as having being worth less than this in 1779, though all three had been recently enclosed when Rudder noted their value, and they may have been worth substantially more in a very short time. By contrast the curacies, all four remained at this low figure throughout the fifty years in question, except Guiting Power, which was worth £52 in 1779. Clearly there was little opportunity for curates to improve their economic lot, since their stipend rarely kept pace with inflation, and they usually had no chance of augmenting the value of a glebe or benefiting from agricultural improvements in their parish. These circumstances they shared, finally, with the small smattering of vicars and rectors throughout the Cotswolds who were unfortunate enough to have no right to the tithes of their parish, but like the vicar of Horsley, whose circumstances were described above, through some accident of ecclesiastical history had had their tithes appropriated and were paid a stipend instead.[166] Unless his parish was enclosed as much of the Cotswolds were, these constraints meant that such parsons had no opportunities to exploit the local agrarian situation, be it good or bad, as their neighbours could, a situation which was almost always to the detriment of the clergyman as agricultural prices and yields rose towards the latter half of the century.

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[166] Examples in the Cotswolds also include Bledington, Great Badminton, Ebrington, Stow; in Colesbourne the rector was entitled to only a third of the great tithes and in Coln Roger's, to only one-twentieth of the tithes of the demesne.

Benefice values in the Vale

In spite of these poor benefices, the relative prosperity of the Cotswold parishes compared favourably with the general poverty of livings in the vale district of the county. (See Table 1) This was particularly the case in the middle vale, around Gloucester, for it was in the deanery of Gloucester that highest concentration of poor livings was to be found. The Queen Anne's Bounty found in 1736 that almost a quarter of the parishes in the archdeaconry eligible for augmentation lay in the deanery of Gloucester, more than any other part of the county. Twenty-seven (that is, more than three-quarters) of the thirty-five parishes of the deanery of Gloucester were worth £50 or less in 1736. All but one (Hempsted) of the rectories was below this level, only Arlingham, Hartpury and the combined parishes of Standish, Hardwick and Saul amongst the twelve vicarages were valued above £50, and just four out of nine curacies were not included in the Bounty's list of poor parishes, though Gloucester St Catherine was ignored despite the fact that it was worth only £10, probably because the church there had been demolished in the seventeenth century.

By the middle of the eighteenth century there had been only a small improvement in the value of rectories in the deanery, none worth more than £100, and only two worth more than £50, the average value altogether being a mere £42. In fact the average value of the vicarages at this time was greater, (£68) helped not a little by the £190 that Standish, Hardwick and Saul were reckoned at, and the fact that only

three parishes of those whose income was recorded were still below £50, with Longney reaching £50 in that year. The curacies were, predictably, in a pitiful state, their overall average value being only £24, the same as in Stow deanery. Indeed in 1750 Maisemore and Gloucester St Nicholas were the only parishes at £50, and of the other ten whose value is known, just two—Barnwood and Randwick—had an income greater than £20; Wheatenhurst was valued at £8 and the curate of Elmore had a stipend of £3 per annum.

Despite improving in value by almost a quarter in the following thirty years, the fact that the augmentation of the parishes of the deanery of Gloucester started from a very low base renders it less meaningful in practical terms. The combined average value of livings in this deanery rose to only £55 by 1779. The rectories of the region improved by 30 percent during this period, to a mean value of £60. All but Matson and Lassington had earnings of more than £50, but none reached the £100-mark, let alone the level of the vicarage of Standish and its attached parishes which was appraised at £230 in 1779. Indeed, none of the other vicarages in the deanery came near to Standish, and although only Gloucester St Mary de Lode, whose income was about £30, still languished under £50, the average value of vicarages rose by a less dramatic 18 percent to £83 in 1779. Once again, the perpetual curacies lagged well behind their other benefices in terms of economic standing, though at least their values improved here, unlike those in the deanery of Stow. Curacies in the deanery of Gloucester rose in overall

average value by about 29 percent to a still meagre £34. Some saw drastic improvements, such as Wheatenhurst, which improved to £50 by 1779, while Maisemore and Randwick continued to be the most valuable curacies at £60. The value of Elmore is uncertain in 1779, though it appears that the impropriator and patron, Sir John Guise agreed to raise the stipend to from £3 to 20 guineas per annum in 1765.[167] By the end of the period only four curacies had a income of £20 or less, but all but the two worth £60 suffered an income of £50 or less. It was statistics such as all these which saw the deanery of Gloucester consistently the poorest deanery in the archdeaconry right throughout the period from 1730 to 1780.

Benefices in the part of the Vale of Evesham coterminous with the Vale of Gloucester were only marginally better off than their southern vale counterparts. The Vale of Evesham was made up of two deaneries, the deanery of Winchcombe and part of the deanery of Campden, and though circumstances were generally less severe for clergy further north in the part of the vale lying in the latter deanery, certainly many clergy in Winchcombe did not enjoy large incomes from their livings. The average value of benefices in Winchcombe was only just above those of Gloucester, £58 in 1750, and improving by 27 percent by 1779 to £79. The main difference between the values of benefices in the deaneries of Winchcombe and Gloucester appears, on the surface at least, to be the rectories. Only one of the seven in

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[167] CERC, F1627, John Lewis to Queen Anne's Bounty, 4 March 1765.

Winchcombe, Swindon, was noted in 1736 as less than fifty pounds, and by 1750 it was worth £60. In 1750, all of the rectories were above this mark, and they averaged £107 together, a figure which rose by 35 percent in thirty years to a remarkable £164, higher than the mean value of some of Cotswolds rectories. These figures are, however, somewhat misleading, since the primary reason for this high average was the peculiar of Withington, which increased from £300 in 1750 to £500 in 1779, probably due to the growing value of the large glebe appended to it. The distinctiveness of the wealth of Withington is evident when the rest of the rectories are considered, which ranged in value from about £50 to £100 in 1750 and from £60 to £200 in 1779. Without Withington, the rectories averaged £75 and £108 respectively in these years, and though these averages were clearly greater than those for rectories in Gloucester, the rise in their average value (30 percent) was actually equivalent to that in Gloucester.

Despite the conspicuous difference between the value of rectories in the deaneries of Gloucester and Winchcombe, there was little distinction between the vicarages and curacies in the two deaneries. Indeed, the average worth of each of these in the latter deanery was lower than those further south in the vale. Half of the vicarages in Winchcombe and almost a third of the curacies were identified by the Queen Anne's Bounty as impoverished, and in 1750 the vicarages averaged only £52, the curacies a mere £21. None of the vicarages mentioned in 1736 had managed to rise above £50 by 1750

nor were any above £100; of the curacies, all but Ashchurch were paid £20 or less, and the latter received just £26. The improvement in the value of vicarages in Winchcombe by 1779 was not quite as great as in Gloucester (16 percent as opposed to 18 percent), and at £62, it fell far below the £83 to which that deanery's vicarages improved. The income of perpetual curacies in Winchcombe did not improve at all, and for Cheltenham, Charlton King's and Ashchurch, Rudder records *lower* stipends than were noted in the bishop's diocesan survey some thirty years earlier.

Further north in the Vale of Evesham, in some of parishes of Campden deanery, economic circumstances were slightly better for clergy, since overall these livings averaged £95 in 1750 and £122 in 1779.[168] About a quarter of benefices here were noted by Queen Anne's Bounty in 1736, and half of these were vicarages. In 1750 vicarages in this part of the vale averaged about £46, and £65 in 1779, which put them at about the same level as those in the rest of the Vale of Evesham and Vale of Gloucester. The parishes of Aston-under-Hill and Quinton were enclosed in the 1770s, and the value of these vicarages may have improved greatly after the publication of Rudder's *History*. The only curacy in the district was Great Washbourne, which had "neither House nor Lands, nor Great nor Small Tithes", and which

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[168] These figures differ from those given in Table 1 for the deanery of Campden, because not all of the deanery lay in the vale, some of it also being in the Cotswolds.

was worth £3.10s in 1736, and £5 in 1750 and 1779.[169] More than half of the benefices in this part of vale were rectories, and it was their presence and increases in value that saw the generally better statistics for benefices revealed above. Only the rectories of Pinnock and Wormington were included in the survey of the 1730s. By 1750 Wormington at least had reached £50, and £70 in 1779, when Pinnock (£30) was the only parish below £50. Indeed by 1779, only three parishes were valued less than £100, and Aston Subedge was likely to improve in value having recently been enclosed. Weston Subedge, enclosed in the 1760s, went from £300 to £500 by 1779, and Kemerton was also amongst those parishes in this area, the enclosure of which helped to raise the average value of all of the rectories in the northern vale of Evesham from £125 in 1750 to £155 in 1779. Such figures demonstrate the fact that rectories in the parts of Campden lying in the vale were the most prosperous of these three deaneries. They also display the consistency of values of rectories in this part of Evesham, since there were more than twice as many rectories here than further south in Winchcombe deanery and in the Vale of Gloucester.

There was a small pocket of livings in the northern vale that lay on the Severn between the deaneries of Gloucester and Winchcombe known as the peculiar of Deerhurst. Four of the seven parishes here were in the 1736 survey, and all seven averaged just £56 in 1750 and £69 in 1779. Only the rectory of Hasfield and the vicarages of

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[169] CERC, 1771 Survey, F4880.

Staverton and Boddington were worth more than £100, with Deerhurst itself worth £6 in 1750 and £20 in 1779, and Forthampton, £13 throughout the fifty year period in question.

Explanations for the very meagre standard of benefice values generally in the Vales of Gloucester and Evesham rest with the same economic and ecclesiastical obstacles identified in the Cotswolds. However these problems occurred in a rather more intense fashion in these middle and northern vale parishes than they did in the hill-country. Ecclesiastically, for example, there was a far higher concentration of perpetual curacies in the deaneries of Gloucester and Winchcombe, than any where else in the archdeaconry: 42 percent of parishes in the former deanery were curacies, and a third of benefices in the latter. There were fourteen curacies in the deanery of Gloucester alone, (the same number occurring throughout the entire length of the Cotswold Hills), and a further eight in Winchcombe. Curates' salaries were just as low as in the Cotswolds, and they enjoyed no great rise in value, nor did the overall worth of curacies in this region improve, particularly in the deanery of Winchcombe, where they rose in worth by only 5 percent between 1750 and 1780. There were also a small number of rectors and vicars in these deaneries who did not collect tithes, but were paid a stipend in the same way that curates were. Examples include the parish of Twining, where the vicar was paid a fixed stipend of £30 between 1730 and 1780, and received the remainder of his £43 income from a moiety of an estate in the parish; the vicar of the Gloucester

parish of St Mary de Lode was paid a similar salary by the dean and chapter of the cathedral, while the vicar of Pebworth received a stipend of £14.16.8 paid by the "Earl of Salisbury, out of the great Tythes...which belong to him [the Earl], and which Stipend has been paid time immemorial".[170]

The payment of such stipends in these and other rectories and vicarages in this district, and, more significantly, the very high proportion of curacies here was largely a result of a concentration of pre-Reformation monasteries in the north and west of the county, at Winchcombe, Tewkesbury, Hailes and Flaxley as well as St Oswold's priory and the abbey in Gloucester.[171] During and after the dissolution of the monasteries, the tithes of many surrounding parishes, having originally been appropriated to the monasteries' use, subsequently fell into the hands of lay families, secular and clerical corporations or were attached to ecclesiastical offices.[172] Similarly, much land in this area had been owned by the monasteries, and it too had passed into lay and ecclesiastical hands at the Reformation:

> A vast deal of land in this district is the property of the Church. The whole of the parish of Barnwood, a great part of Wooton [?Wolstone] and Cranham, and nearly all of Tuffley [?Turley], with many estates in every parish in and near the city, belong to the dean and chapter of Gloucester; the parish of Maisemore to the bishop of Gloucester; and

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[170] CERC, 1814 Survey, F4756; 1793 Survey, F3705. Other examples include Hasfield, in Deerhurst peculiar, and Leckhampton in Winchcombe, where some of the tithes of the rectory were impropriated; in Hinton on the Green, in Campden, the rector was entitled to only one-third of the great tithes.

[171] VCH, vol. IV, p. 292. Llanthorny Priory had also acquired the patronage of three parishes in the city of Gloucester.

[172] See George Turner, p. 32-3.

several estates to colleges at Oxford.[173]

Whether or not it had been retained in Church ownership, much of this land also presented a problem to those clergy who *were* entitled to collect tithes, since old monastic land not paying tithe at the time of Dissolution remained exempt from tithe afterwards, thus producing large areas of tithe-free land in many parishes from which the eighteenth-century parson could draw no income.[174] Of the parishes of the city, for instance, only Saints Mary de Lode, Michael and Owen still collected tithes from land outside Gloucester.[175] Furthermore, as the generally low benefice value indicates, those clergy in this part of the county whose income was derived from tithes were often little better off than their salaried counterparts, their annual tithe receipt suffering from the inferior productivity of agriculture in this region described previously.

In the vale around Gloucester tithes were chiefly compounded, "but only yearly, and therefore, in the event of an improved husbandry, the full value of the tithe would doubtless be exacted".[176] Clergy here were seemingly settling below the real value of the tithe, probably in order to avoid parochial tension, particularly since the area's low productivity can scarcely have left the farmers in a satisfactory economic position. It may have been too, that the vicars of this area

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[173] ibid.
[174] Evans, *Contentious Tithe*, p. 17; Virgin, p. 36.
[175] VCH, vol. iv, p. 292.
[176] George Turner, p. 39.

suffered due to the "depression of small tithe revenues" that commonly occurred near towns, and that this kept their incomes at such low levels.[177] Given the extent of such low benefice values, annual commutation of tithes seems seldom to have been to the advantage of the parson in this district, as it might have been in other regions, though they were able to raise their incomes slightly during the period. In the deanery of Winchcombe a comparable situation prevailed for the cleric: the high density of curacies, as mentioned, and a similar concentration of church-owned land, and, indeed, former monastic land. The main difference was that throughout the Vale of Evesham tithes were collected in kind, except in enclosed parishes.[178] The fact that tithes were taken in kind seems to have made little difference to the clergy in this part of the vale in comparison to their southern counterparts, since the agricultural yields brought the clergyman as small a reward here as they did in the vale of Gloucester. Cheltenham and Leckhampton were the only parishes enclosed in Winchcombe during the period, and it had scant effect for the curate of the former, since he continued to receive a stipend. But the rector of latter, had witnessed an improvement in his remuneration between 1750 and 1779 from £100 to £140, and, since his parish had been enclosed in 1778, may not yet reflect the effects of enclosure.

Circumstances combined more fortuitously and brought larger

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[177] Evans, *Contentious Tithe*, p. 8.
[178] George Turner, p. 46.

incomes for clergymen in the upper part of the Vale of Evesham, than those to be found in the deaneries of Gloucester and Winchcombe, as described above. There were vastly more rectories in this most northern part of the vale, with about 68 percent of parishes here falling into this category. Most of these were of a fairly consistent, moderate value, which was probably due largely to the fact that agricultural productivity was better in this part of the vale and that there was less church-owned land here. This last point meant that rectors and vicars suffered less from impropriation of tithes than they did in the vale near Gloucester and Tewkesbury.[179] Furthermore, since about half of the parishes in Campden—as well as almost half of the vicarages—were enclosed in the period up to 1780 (and especially from the 1770s), the absence of appropriation of rectorial and vicarial tithes meant that these clergy were able to enjoy the fruits of enclosure, in a similar fashion to the clergy of the Cotswolds. One parish augmented in such a way was Child's Wycombe, which, though it had an unremarkable income of about £60 in 1779, had in fact improved in value by two-thirds through a grant of land in lieu of tithes at its enclosure in 1763, having been worth only £22 in 1750, and £18 in 1736. The example of Kemerton, too, is another instance of the benefits enclosure could bring to a parson. In general terms, the combination of agricultural and ecclesiastical circumstances to be found this part of the vale, saw the incomes of clergy here lag less distantly behind their Cotswold

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[179] Pebworth is the only instance in this part of the vale.

counterparts than the rest of the incumbents in this region.

The only other parishes in this middle part of the vale whose worth have yet to be considered more closely are those to be found in the city of Gloucester. The situation in the city was not an easy one for the parochial clergy. In five parishes there existed no church-building: St Catherine had been pulled down in 1659 and St Owen in 1643, Holy Trinity was demolished in 1699, St Aldate did not have a church until 1756. The congregations of these parishes, and also those of St Mary de Grace, attended other churches in the city. While this may have served to rationalise church services and maximise use of those churches which remained, it did little for benefice values, which generally stood at a pitiful level in the eighteenth century, as they had done since the sixteenth century.[180] None of the parishes brought great reward to their parsons, whether the living be rectory, vicarage or curacy, and even if it was attached to or presented with another, this did little for the remuneration of the incumbent.[181] All the parishes in the city with the exception of St Nicholas (and St Catherine, as mentioned above) were included in the Bounty's 1736 list of impoverished parishes, and overall, they averaged altogether only £31 in 1750 and £46 by 1779. The most valuable were St Michael with St Mary de Grace, which was valued at £12 in 1736, £50 in 1750 and £80

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[180] Victoria Country History, vol. iv, p. 292-3.

[181] Holy Trinity and St Bartholomew's Hospital were joined to St Nicholas, St Catherine to St Mary de Lode, St John the Baptist to St Michael, St Owen to St Mary de Crypt.

by 1780, and St Nicholas. Having lost their land outside their city, and the right to collect tithes through monastic appropriation in all but two parishes in pre-Reformation centuries, clerical incomes in the city were derived from a mixture sources, including voluntary contributions paid by parishioners, surplice fees and Easter offerings, prayer charities, gift sermons and benefactions, Queen Anne's Bounty augmentations, and stipends paid by the deans and chapters of Gloucester and Bristol and city of Gloucester. In St Mary de Crypt and St John the parsons also drew income from profits from the rents of properties belonging to the parish. Tithes were paid only to the rector of St Michael and small tithes to the vicar of St Mary de Lode. The disparate, uncertain and paltry nature of the city's benefice values made the situation for the clergy there very difficult, not least because they had to manage small receipts from many different sources. Such circumstances led one of them, Martin Barry, to comment as he described his income to the Queen Anne's Bounty, "in short, Mr Secretary, I hope it will never be your Misfortune to depend so much upon Caprice for a Maintenance as the Curate of St Nicholas ever must...", sentiments with which his colleagues in the city undoubtedly concurred.[182]

In marked contrast, the most southern part of the vale, the Vale of Berkeley, was a rather more prosperous area for clergymen. (Table 1) Just 6 percent of poor livings of the archdeaconry were to be found

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[182] CERC, F1896, Martin Barry to Robert Chester, (Secretary of the Queen Anne's Bounty), 24 Jan. 1782.

within the deanery of Dursley, and though this constituted 35 percent of the deanery's parishes, (about the same as the Cotswold deaneries), in Dursley this was actually equivalent to only seven parishes. Furthermore, these poorer parishes, aside from the curacy of Hill and the vicarage of Frampton upon Severn, were concentrated in the cloth-producing, hill-country area of the deanery, which was not strictly part of the vale region. Overall, the benefices of the deanery averaged in value about £98 in 1750 and £103 in 1779. The former puts it at about middle-rank in comparison with the other deaneries of the county, easily above the averages for other parts of the vale. The latter figure, however, ranks Dursley well behind the average benefice values in the deaneries in the Cotswolds, and clearly illustrates the fact that benefice values in Dursley failed to keep pace with those of their Cotswold counterparts. This point is further evinced by the fact that in Dursley the rise in average benefice value was just 5 percent during these thirty years, which was the lowest overall increase throughout the county. The virtually static nature of the value of livings in the deanery is also evident too, when the average income of rectories is considered. Although there was an improvement in their value by 9 percent (from £125 to £138), in fact this rise is due to an increase in the profits of just three rectories: Beverstone and Kingscote (held jointly), Ozelworth and Uley rose in value by 1779 from their 1750 levels of £200, £40 and £100 by £40, £20 and £40 respectively. All of these parishes, however, lay in the centre of the cloth producing area, rather than the vale, and so

their augmentation had little relevance to the value of the small group of vale rectories, whose incomes were, quite clearly, stationary during this period.

Amongst the vicarages too, clerical earnings remained fairly inert: their average value improved by 11 percent, rising from £106 to £119, which was actually the second lowest improvement in the archdeaconry in the period between 1750 and 1780. Of those vicarages in the vale, just Berkeley and Thornbury improved in value, the first from £150 per annum to £170, and the second from £180 to £200 by 1779.[183] Only two parishes in the area, besides the curacies, were handicapped by the impropriation of their tithes. Both were vicarages of low income, although this is relative to their neighbours, since both received far more income than many of their counterparts further north in the vale. In Cam, which lay in the Cotswolds, the vicar was paid a stipend and had an income of £70 per annum, and in Frampton upon Severn, the vicar received only one-third of the profits from the impropriator and the privy tithes, which amounted to £60 a year. Predictably, the curacies were of lowest value, averaging about £39 in 1750 which was compared favourably with most other parts of the archdeaconry, and £51 in 1779, which was an improvement by about 25 percent. These statistics include the case of Kingswood, which is a is puzzling one, since its income seems to have dropped from £67 in 1750

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[183] Coaley, which was in the deanery, but lay in the Cotswolds also improved in value during these three decades, from £40 to £60.

to £26 in 1779. This may be a mistake in one or other of the sources. But it may also be due to the augmentation of the living by the Queen Anne's Bounty in 1751. Up until this time,

> by a decree of ye Court of Exchequer Inhab^{s} pay £27.12.0 to ye Curate, wch is ye whole of his Salary. They did by subscription make y^{s} up to 40*ll*, in order to y^{e} having Service twice on Sundays, but on raising 200££, to procure an augmentation by the Queens Bounty, it was agreed y^{t} y^{s} Subscript^{n} sh^{d} cease.[184]

Perhaps the curate had enjoyed *both* the stipend and the voluntary contributions, and when the latter was discontinued following the augmentation, his income suffered, but there is no other evidence to indicate if this was the case. Furthermore, the rise in value of curacies by a quarter may be a somewhat misleading statistic, as there was no income recorded for Oldbury, a chapel of ease to Thornbury, in 1750, but Rudder suggested that it was worth £90 in 1779, and it was included in the average for that year. Without it, the curacies of Dursley averaged just £41 in 1779, which though it remained higher than elsewhere in the vale, represented virtually no improvement at all.

The main reason for the failure of the value of livings in this deanery to rise significantly, let alone to keep pace with the dramatic level of augmentation clergy in the Cotswolds enjoyed in their ecclesiastical income, was due to the stability of landholding and farming in the region. As described, the Vale of Berkeley had been enclosed for a considerable time; no enclosure took place here in the

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[184] CERC, F2669, 1751 survey

period, and there were no significant changes to the way land was farmed or to the productivity of the area, beyond those produced by advances in farming techniques. The general consistency of incomes both between benefices, and over time, and the small increases in the value of livings, therefore, was probably due only to inflation, to the rising value of crops, which produced a parallel tithe increase in the amount of tithe collected—generally in kind—by the parson. Despite the virtually constant character of incomes in this deanery, and of those in rectories and vicarages particularly, they remained throughout at a tolerable, if not respectable, level.

A similar state of affairs prevailed in the deanery of Hawkesbury. Although the level of benefice incomes in the deanery as a whole increased in value between 1750 and 1780 by about 20 percent, from £118 to £142, almost all of this improvement occurred in the Cotswold part of the deanery. By contrast those parishes in the vale, along the boundary of Dursley and diocese of Bristol, had fairly static, and indeed, generally consistent incomes. As a whole, livings in the region improved from £146 to £163, about 10 percent overall. Rectories increased in value by slightly more than this, about 12 percent, from an average of £151 in 1750 to £171 at the end of the 1780s; vicarages, of which there were only five, went from an average income of £136 to £146, a small, seven percent growth. The sole curacy, Rangeworthy, also improved slightly in value during the period between 1736 and 1779, by £7 per annum. This £7 was "raised by

voluntary contribution, yt there might be services every Sunday, except one of ye Month...." And though Francis Gold, the curate, believed that "the 7££ per an[num]...is likely to be continued, but there can be no security given it shall be", providing further evidence, if indeed it is needed, of the precarious financial situation of most curates in the Hanoverian Church.[185]

Despite the near standstill in the majority of benefice values in the vale parishes of Hawkesbury, there were some dramatic improvements. Two of the parishes amongst those which witnessed the most startling progress in value had been included—with just two others located in the hill country to the north—in the 1736 survey. In Bitton and Marshfield incomes rose from £50 and £44 respectively to £150 and £200 in 1750 and both £200 in 1779. Yet even Marshfield, once having risen in value, continued at a stationary level. Other parishes which had significant increases in the incumbent's income were Wickwar, which went from £200 to £300 by 1780 and Tortworth from £130 to £250 in the period from 1750 to 1779. The near doubling of the value of the latter is an excellent example of the way in which a parson, resolutely determined to improve the value of his property by breaking old tithe compositions and collecting his full entitlement of tithe, in kind if necessary, could achieve success, even if it was a lengthy, and time-consuming process. Dr John Bosworth was rector of

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[185] CERC, F3894, survey, n.d. [?1765].

this dairying parish between 1768 and 1786.[186] By 1772 he had given his parishioners notice that he wished to receive his tithes, particularly the "valuable" milk tithe, in kind, since he was receiving "less in quantity that the fair full tenth part of the milk" and other produce.[187] Apparently, "no tithe...[had] been set out for fifty-five years preceding", and several farmers set up obstacles of various kinds to prevent Bosworth tithing in kind.[188] The rector offered to accept instead a composition of "three shillings in the pound, according to the rent, in lieu of all tithes, which was refused"; still hoping

> to prevent litigation, [he] voluntarily offered to accept *two shillings and six-pence in the pound for all tithes*; and in a subsequent treaty with Mr *Richard Hall*, the steward of Lord *Ducie*, the plaintiff [Bosworth] consented to accept a sum after the rate of *two shillings and four-pence in the pound, as a compensation for all his tithes*; but these terms also were rejected by the lord and his tenant."[189]

Due to the unrelenting recalcitrance of this trio of farmers, who had the support of their landlord, Lord Ducie, he was forced to pursue a tithe suit in Court of Exchequer in 1777, and to defend an appeal by the farmers to the House of Lords in 1779. But the rector was successful in both trials, and more importantly, in collecting more tithes and raising the value of his living substantially.

The wealth of the parishes of the deanery of Hawkesbury that lay in the vale was unmatched in the archdeaconry. The prosperity of

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[186] John Rayner, *Cases at Large concerning Tithes*, (London, 1783), vol. 2, pp. 809ff.
[187] ibid., p. 815.
[188] ibid., p. 829.
[189] ibid., p. 818 note.

the Hawkesbury parishes was even greater than that of its vale neighbour, Dursley. There are several possibilities as to why this difference existed between the two deaneries. One may have been the fact that many of the parsons of Hawkesbury enjoyed substantial glebes. Examples of those parishes known to have had large quantities of land attached to the parsonage included Deinton (80 acres), Frampton Cotterell (50 acres), Didmarton (52 acres), Tortworth (60 acres), Dyrham (80 acres), Pucklechurch (50 acres), and Yate, whose glebe was worth £80. Rudder recorded the extent of very few glebes in Dursley, but of those he did note, most were substantially smaller than identified in Hawkesbury: Slimbridge, 25 acres; Rockhampton, 26½ acres, Uley, 16 acres, and Cam, had a glebe and house worth £10.[190]

Such differences in glebe-size between the two deaneries obviously had some consequence for clerical incomes, since the parson could derive a significant portion of his income from farming or leasing this property. In Hawkesbury, secondly, there were coal strands along the southern boarder of the deanery, in Yate, Acton, Westerleigh, Rangeworthy, Pucklechurch, Bitton, with copper ore in the latter as well. The presence of such minerals may have contributed to the relative prosperity of all these parishes, with the exception of course, of the curacy of Rangeworthy.

The difference between the level of prosperity of the two

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[190] The known only exception to these small glebes in Dursley was the glebe of the Cotswold parishes of Beverstone and Kingscote had an immense glebe of 287 acres

deaneries, finally, had little to do with dramatic differences or improvements in agricultural productivity through improved husbandry or enclosure, or, indeed, with the commutation of clerical property for land during enclosure. Having been enclosed at an earlier period, there were only two parishes enclosed in this entire area in the eighteenth century before 1780, and although both were in Hawkesbury, the action had little effect on the income of the parsons involved. Iron Acton's enclosure, as mentioned above, did not prove to be profitable; the contiguous parish of Frampton Cotterell was also enclosed in the 1770s, but this does not appear to have made a difference to the rector's income, which improved only slightly between 1750 and 1779 from £120 to £130, though it is uncertain if this remained the case subsequently, or whether his 50 acre glebe dated from this enclosure or not. Generally, the stability of agricultural techniques and yields was uniform throughout the southern vale region, whether it be the deanery of Dursley or Hawkesbury, which accounts for the widespread solidity and consistency of benefice incomes in this area.

Differences which existed in the value of livings had more to do with the type of benefice they were than anything else. This was the case both between these two deaneries as a whole and, indeed between individual parishes within the deaneries. In Hawkesbury, for instance, there was just one curacy and only a few vicarages. Most of the parishes here were rectories, especially along the border with Dursley and in south of Hawkesbury; the general superiority of the rectory

values to those of vicarages and curacies has already been demonstrated, and in Hawkesbury, the rectories were no exception. In Dursley, though there were very few curacies, most of the parishes that lay in the vale were vicarages, whose income left them behind the majority of their colleagues in the deanery of Hawkesbury, and even rectors in their own deanery. Despite their size, for instance, since together they comprised more than half of the land of the deanery, the fact that they received only the small tithes limited the amount of the income of the vicars of Berkeley to £150 in 1750 and £170 by 1779, and Thornbury to £180 in 1750 and £200 thirty years later. These were not inadequate incomes by any means, especially when they are compared to those of the clergy of the middle and upper vale, but they do compare somewhat unfavourably with the income of the vicar of Berkeley's neighbour, the rector of the smaller parish of Slimbridge, who enjoyed £300 throughout the period. Ultimately injustices of this sort were normal in the eighteenth-century Church. The majority of the clergy of the deaneries of Dursley and Hawkesbury could count themselves fortunate that they enjoyed tolerable, even substantial, incomes right throughout this period—albeit that they improved only slowly—unlike those suffered continually by many parsons elsewhere in the archdeaconry, particularly clerics further north in the Vales of Evesham and Gloucester.

Benefice values in the archdeaconry of Buckingham

Buckinghamshire Landscape and Economy

Eighteenth-century Buckinghamshire was a predominately rural county, having no city such as Gloucester, its biggest townships being four medium-sized market towns. Buckinghamshire was chiefly agricultural: lacking the minerals and other resources to be found in Gloucestershire, the only manufacturing production in Buckinghamshire was the cottage industries of lace making and strawplaiting, and some furniture manufacture.[191] In fact farming may be regarded as the county's principal industry, since much of the produce of the farms of the county was destined for a London-market, particularly the grazing cattle being fattened in the Vale of Aylesbury.

Like Gloucestershire though, Buckinghamshire was broadly divided into differing geographic regions. The first stretched from the north of the county to the Chiltern Hills, and incorporated the rich low pastures of the Vale of Aylesbury, the clay plain of north-west Buckinghamshire and undulating hills in the north-east. Across the centre of the county lay the chalk escarpment of the Chilterns, "with its south-east facing dip slope", and thirdly, to the south, was a "region of lighter soils" alongside the rivers Thames and Colne.[192]

In agricultural terms, however, the county may be divided into

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[191] The market towns were Aylesbury, Buckingham, Chipping Wycombe and Newport Pagnell. Richard W. Davis, *Political Change and Continuity, 1760-1885: A Buckinghamshire Study*, (Newton Abbot, 1972), pp. 16, 17.

[192] George Turner, p. 39.

two distinctive regions. Parishes in the northern area were, in the main, compact and medium-sized, except for a broad strip running across the county on the edge of the Chilterns in the hundreds of Aylesbury and Cottesloe (the deaneries of Wendover and Wycombe), where they were large, long and narrow in shape because of their vale and scarpland topographies.[193] Throughout the entire of region north of the Chilterns, however, pastoral and dairy farming predominated.[194] There were some small, scattered pockets of arable fields throughout this region, and in the deanery and hundred of Newport which lay in the extreme north-east of the county, about half of the farms were arable, a third were dairy, and the remainder were mixed farms.[195] Certainly the Vale part of the county was well-suited to grazing stock, since James and Malcolm believed that

> perhaps...no land in the kingdom is better calculated for this purpose that the Vale of Aylesbury. Its amazing fertility soon makes a visible alteration in the appearance of the animal, and the extraordinary size they afterward attain, is a proof of the quality and ability of the land.[196]

Most commentators remarked favourably upon the rich soil of the north of the county, but Arthur Young, writing twenty years prior to James and Malcolm, felt that the land management of the area needed

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[193] See George Turner, p. 42; Harry C. Keiner, 'Clergy and Community: The Church of England in Buckinghamshire, 1830-1914', University of Connecticut Ph.D. thesis, 1981, pp. 7, 8.

[194] Priest, p. 11.

[195] Priest, p. 5; James Joseph Sheahan, *History and Topography of Buckinghamshire*, (London, 1862), p. 36.

[196] William James & Jacob Malcolm, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Buckingham with Observation on the Means of its Improvement*, (London, 1794), p. 17.

great improvement, not least through better drainage and, of course, enclosure.[197] Although extensively enclosed before the parliamentary enclosure movement of the eighteenth century, much of the pasture and meadow land in the north was a product of relatively recent enclosure: farmers had suffered from the low grain prices of the 1730s and 1740s which had brought about a trend amongst landlords to switch to dairying because they could achieve higher rental values and lower management costs.[198] More than a third of Buckinghamshire was enclosed by Act after 1750, but, in fact, this enclosure was almost entirely concentrated in this northern part of the county in the later eighteenth century: between 40 to 50 percent of the land in the each of northern hundreds was enclosed by parliamentary enclosure, compared to less than ten percent of the southern hundreds of Burnham and Desborough and Stoke.[199] As Turner explains, the one exception in north Buckinghamshire to this high density of enclosure after 1750 was the hundred of Ashenden (that is, the deanery of Waddesdon) which was lower than elsewhere because of the "ancient royal forest of Bernwood and parts of the extensive old enclosed estates of the Earls of Verney and the Earls and Dukes of Buckingham."[200] One of the greatest innovators or "improvers" of farming techniques and land

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[197] Young, Arthur, *The Farmer's Tour through the East of England*, 4 vols., (London, 1771), vol. 1, pp. 16, 20; Priest, pp. 16, 25, James and Malcolm, p. 7.

[198] See Michael Reed, 'Enclosure in North Buckinghamshire, 1500-1750', *Agricultural History Review*, 32 Pt. 2 (1984), pp. 133-144.

[199] See Michael Turner, *English Parliamentary Enclosure: Its Historical Geography and Economic History*, (Folkestone, 1980), pp. 39-41. The hundreds were equivalent to the deaneries of Burnham and Wycombe.

[200] ibid., p. 41.

productivity was Sir William Lee, patron of Hartwell, Great Missenden, Stone and Fleet Marston and one of the few nobles with a seat in the north of the county, whose institution of new methods of crop rotation and enclosure was much admired by the contemporary agricultural commentators.[201]

It is impossible to determine exactly the extent to which enclosure benefited the farmers of Buckinghamshire. It is certain that it had a generally beneficial economic effect, since

> in every conversation we have held with different gentlemen in the several parts of the county, on the subject of inclosures, they have uniformly given it as their opinions, that the advantages already derived, and consequently still to be derived by enclosures, are an addition of rent to the landlord, an increase of produce to the farmer, in quantity and quality, and an improvement on the face of the soil, by draining, &c....[202]

Because only one set of complete county-wide figures exist for the livings of Buckinghamshire, it is difficult to say what effect the enclosure of the northern parishes of the archdeaconry had upon their incomes. It is highly likely, given the Gloucestershire model, that the combination of enclosure and generally improved husbandry, meant that benefice values moved generally upward during the period, whether tithes were collected in kind or not.[203] Certainly most vicars and rectors of enclosed parishes received allotments of land in lieu of their tithe entitlement, which would have brought these parsons improved

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[201] James and Malcolm, pp. 11, 21.
[202] ibid., p. 25; Priest, p. 25; George Turner, p. 79.
[203] James and Malcolm, p. 60; See Keiner, p. 83.

income and, furthermore, a subsequent steady rise in earnings, since Priest commented that it was a "pleasure to see the value of church land keeping pace with all other landed property".[204]

The southern half of the county differed significantly topographically and agriculturally from north Buckinghamshire. The Chiltern hills were chalky, and covered with great stands of beech trees. Parishes were very large and expansive on these hills, and further south in the Burnham deanery, they were also large, but rather long and thin in shape.[205] In agricultural terms, although there were some mixed farms, arable farming was predominant, with wheat, barley, oats and beans being the principal crops grown.[206] Enclosure of the open fields in the south of Buckinghamshire was "at once more piecemeal, more protracted" than in the north of the county.[207] Much of the land in region had been enclosed before 1750, mainly through private agreement: the very few enclosure Acts passed pertaining to land in the extreme south of the county were simply conversions of commons and wasteland to active production.[208] In fact most commentators note of this part of Buckinghamshire, that though it was "very much inferior to the northern part for richness of soil"[209], it was, as Priest put it, "under as good management as that soil is capable

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[204] Priest, p. 74.
[205] Keiner, p. 7.
[206] Sheahan, p. 36; Priest, p. 26; James and Malcolm, p. 26.
[207] Reed, p. 133.
[208] George Turner, p. 89.
[209] James and Malcolm, p. 10.

of'.[210] James and Malcolm ascribed this good management and innovations introduced that produced it to the

> great influx of wealth...of late years [that has] been the means of making that property more general. That this may tend to cultivate a spirit for improvement is very probable, since wherever gentlemen's seats, and the more opulent yeomanry, are found, it is in those neighbourhoods that the introduction of new systems or improvements upon the old ones are to be found."[211]

A far heavier concentration of noblemen and "gentlemen of first consequence" occurred here than north of the Chilterns meant that the land was farmed intensively, and wages paid to labourers here were much higher than in the north, though rents remained fairly moderate and farms large for economic viability.[212]

Turning specifically to the value of benefices throughout the archdeaconry, the general prosperity of the agriculture and the spirit of improvement which seemed to prevail amongst landowners and farmers, can only have been beneficial to clergymen dependent on tithes or property rents for their income. Unfortunately the only complete figures for Buckinghamshire available are for 1780, so it is impossible to evaluate the progress of benefice values as it was done for Gloucestershire. It is possible, though, to assess individual parishes over time, to see the advancement or otherwise of many parishes included in the 1736 survey by 1780, and indeed, to paint a general portrait of the state of value of livings at the end of the period, which

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[210] Priest, p. 5; James and Malcolm, p. 26.
[211] Priest, p. 10.
[212] James and Malcolm, pp. 10, 39; Priest, p. 67; Keiner, pp. 7-8.

may be used to compare Buckinghamshire with Gloucestershire. (Table 2)

Benefice values in southern Buckinghamshire

As with Gloucester, it is perhaps most useful to analyse the value of livings in the archdeaconry of Buckingham in the two regions which parallel the agricultural division of the county. The southern part of the archdeaconry, the Chilterns and beyond to the south, which incorporated the deaneries of Burnham and Wycombe (except for Saunderton and Radnage), and the Chiltern parishes of Great and Little Missenden. This region was far smaller than the northern part of the county, containing only forty-one parishes; they were almost equally split between vicarages and rectories, with the balance in favour of the former at 49 percent. The rectories, which lay in a pocket on both the western and the southern edges of the Chilterns, made up 44 percent of the parishes in this district, and curacies a mere 7 percent, there being none in the deanery of Wycombe. Benefices throughout this area were generally of better value than their northern counterparts, although there were, predictably, great variations of worth amongst the livings of this region as there were everywhere in the Church of England. Unsurprisingly the best returns were to be had amongst the rectories, particularly those on or near the Chilterns. In Burnham, the rectories had the highest average value of the entire archdeaconry at £182, and there was a general consistency of income amongst them, though this

was less the case in Wycombe where they averaged £138. The "poorest" rectories were some of smaller parishes that lay in the extreme south, but this paucity of income was relative to the substantial values of the larger rectories in the north, since none of those of lesser value was below £100 in 1780, and, indeed, some in the southernmost part of the deanery, like Horton and Taplow (enclosed in 1779) had an income twice this. In the west of Wycombe, the rectories of Hedsor and Bradenham were not of substantial worth, the incumbent of the former suffered from an unfavourable composition and the latter apparently merely from the vagaries which a very small parish often brought.[213]

As mentioned the rectories on and near the Chilterns, in both Burnham and Wycombe, had very considerable incomes, some, like Chalfont St Giles, Denham and Hambleden of £300 or more in 1780. Amersham, for which no value was given in 1780, was even more valuable.[214] The rector Thomas Drake recorded his income in 1754 as being almost £600 before tax, the tythes alone, "lett in general at 2^{s} p acre", being £468 12s.[215] The reasons for such favourable incomes are manifold. The early enclosure of this area and general trend towards improvement by landlords of this area described meant that the land was highly productive, and farmers could take advantage of rising

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[213] CERC, F2243 Hedsor 1810 survey; F555 Bradenham 1801 survey; there is no earlier evidence of the sources of the income of the vicar of Bradenham, and the income had declined by then, from £60 to £48.6.4.

[214] Its value is not included in Table 2.

[215] BRO, PR/4/3/9.

prices. Tithing in kind was reported to be a common practice throughout all of Buckinghamshire, even towards the end of the century, and this part of the county was no exception, though sometimes they were compounded, as in the case of Amersham.[216] The large size of the parishes, too, meant that the parson had a significant area from which to collect tithes, and there seems not to have been much tithe free land here: Drake wrote of Amersham, for instance, that "there is not an acre of Land in the whole parish either Tythe Free or subject to a Modus".[217] What is more, since rectors were entitled to great tithes of wood, as well as of corn and hay, the rectors of parishes such as Amersham, Hambledon, Beaconsfield, Fingest, where substantial stands of beech trees existed, were well placed to take advantage of this woodland, not to mention the arable farming that prevailed in this region. This is evident by the high value of the first three parishes, (no figure being available for the latter). The way such rectors were favoured can also be seen when one considers that there were also substantial beech stands in Great and Little Marlow, Penn and High Wycombe, but all of these being vicarages meant that the incumbents had no access to the tithes of this timber, and their lesser values reflect this.[218]

This difference in value is evident when the vicarages of Wycombe are considered. Despite their predominantly large size, only

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[216] Evans, *Contentious Tithe*, p. 22; Virgin, p. 38.
[217] BRO, PR/4/3/9.
[218] BRO, PR140/3/1 Survey of Great Marlow.

incumbents in High Wycombe (£145), Woburn (£140) and Hitchenden (£130) amongst the eight vicarages in the deanery of Wycombe earned more than £100 per annum, and this may also reflect lesser agricultural productivity in these chalky woodland hills compared to elsewhere in the south of Buckinghamshire. In fact, overall, the vicarages of the southern half of the county actually had a substantial average of slightly more than £100. In both deaneries there were clearly wide disparities of incomes amongst vicarages. Once again, several of the smaller parishes in the south of Burnham were worth very little, especially Dorney (£36 in 1776), Datchett (£50) and Upton cum Chalvey, all parishes subject to Thames flooding. They suffered, too, the types of fixed income identified in Gloucestershire as limiting clerical earnings in this period. Upton's value languished at £45 because of the presence of two large tithe-free farms, which meant a small tithe composition, and also a paltry stipend in kind from the impropriator; more than half of the income was derived from the rental of the glebe and vicarage house, together worth £26.[219] In Datchet, where the church was dilapidated throughout the century, a stipend of £25 was paid to the vicar by the Chapter of Windsor, as well as income from rental of land bought through a Queen Anne's Bounty's augmentation.[220] But there were others of better value, such as Burnham, whose vicar received part of great tithes, which was worth

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[219] CERC, F4778 1786 survey.
[220] CERC, F1362 1811 survey; Felix Gameson, *A History of Datchet: the Changing Village*, (Datchet, 1981), p. 28.

£150, as was Chesham, the unification of its two parts, Woburn and Latimer, in 1767, improving its value from £50 each in 1736, and Wryardisbury in the far south was valued at £120.

The richest vicarage by far was Chalfont St Peter, valued in 1780 at £320. This income is remarkable, not least because in 1736 it was worth a mere £10. There is no direct or certain explanation for this striking rise in value. The parish was not particularly large, in comparison to others in the area, no parliamentary enclosure took place, and open fields continued in the parish until the nineteenth century.[221] But the vicar leased the great tithes, and he may have done so on very favourable and profitable terms: it is likely that these tithes were valuable because Chalfont St Peter's neighbours, the rectories of Denham (£300), Beaconsfield (£200) and Chalfont St Giles (£300) were all wealthy, lying in the region of lighter soil and intensively-farmed land to be found in this part of the county. There is, finally, a note in the 1783 church inventory indicating that in 1770 a Mr William Courtney left £400 in 4 percent stock to the church, intended to be used to purchase bread for eleven poor women and for the clerk every Sunday after Divine service.[222] It may be that this benefaction was also used to assist the vicar, or that there was an additional legacy for his use alone. Whatever the case, (and it may, ultimately, have been a miscalculation), it was certainly a dramatic improvement in value.

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[221] Geoffrey Edmonds, *A History of Chalfont St Peter and Gerrards Cross*, 2nd ed., (Gerrards Cross, 1968), p. 59.
[222] BRO, PR36/3/1.

Because of a lack of a complete set of figures for Buckinghamshire before 1780, there is no way of undertaking an assessment of the overall improvement of benefice values here as was made for Gloucestershire. It is possible, though, to make some kind of evaluation of the rise in benefice values in the southern part of Buckinghamshire, by comparing the 1736 survey with the livings remaining below £50 in 1780. In the southern half of Buckinghamshire, 56 percent of parishes were identified as being worth £50 or less at the first date, but in 1780 this had dropped by 41 percent to only 12 percent, which is less than the proportion to be found in the north of the archdeaconry by the same date. In Burnham, all but two of the vicarages and the one curacy whose value is known—that is one-third of the benefices—were listed as being valued at £50 or less. By contrast, in 1780 only 7 percent of parishes in the deanery were below this figure. An even better improvement can be seen in Wycombe deanery. In 1736, 56 percent of parishes, including two-thirds of vicarages and almost half of the rectories, were included in the Queen Anne's Bounty list. But by 1780 just 13 percent were at this level, in fact a mere two benefices. All these amount to a remarkable rise in overall values given that only six parishes in this southern region, (that is 15 percent of livings), were augmented before 1780 by Queen Anne's Bounty, and must owe much to improving agricultural productivity and prices. It may also be due to the fact that there were very few impropriate livings, especially curacies, in this part

of Buckinghamshire: no curacies existed in Wycombe and there were just three in Burnham deanery. Since it was this type of benefice that it was most difficult to improve in value, (even with the augmentations of the Queen Anne's Bounty), because curates' stipends were rarely increased by impropriators, their near absence contributed to the significant improvement of poor livings and generally good average benefice value in the southern half of Buckinghamshire by 1780.

Benefice values in northern Buckinghamshire

The northern half of Buckinghamshire was a far larger area, having four times as many parishes, than the southern region. There were, too, noticeable differences in the proportion of each kind of benefice between north and south. Far more rectories lay in the north, especially in the deaneries of Buckingham and Newport, where they amounted to around two-thirds of the parishes. There were also more than twice as many curacies in these northern deaneries, though they were largely concentrated in Waddesdon, where they made up 36 percent of the livings. Overall 56 percent of the parishes in the northern deaneries were rectories, 18 percent were curacies, and the remainder, 26 percent, were vicarages, which was about half of the number to be found in the south.

Comparing the values of the poorer livings in 1736 and 1780, it is evident that the overall improvement was not as great as it was in the south. In 1736 40 percent of livings north of the Chilterns were worth

£50 or less; by 1780 this had dropped to 19 percent. Clearly the rate of improvement was generally slower, and there remained many more livings in this lowest income bracket in the north as opposed to the south, especially when one remembers that there were far more parishes in the former half of the county. The biggest difference between the two regions was the presence of significantly more curacies in the north, which, as indicated, were difficult to improve in value, although the Queen Anne's Bounty did assist many more such benefices (that is, 28 livings, or 18 percent) here than it did in the southernmost deaneries. Even the enclosure of many of the parishes in the north during the period failed to assist most perpetual curacies, and the patchy occurrence of enclosures throughout the region ensured that there were always parishes left out, whose incumbent may have benefited from the commutation of his tithes to an allotment of land.

The greatest improvement of benefice values in a single deanery was in Wendover, the deanery which lay on the edge and north of the Chilterns. Here, in 1736, more than half of the livings were valued at or below £50, yet by 1780 a mere 7 percent of those whose value can be ascertained were in this category, in fact, just two parishes. The result by 1780 was that livings in the deanery overall averaged £111, with rectories averaging £137, and vicarages £114. These figures arose from a mixture of benefice values in the deanery, which were concentrated broadly in two main districts, incomes in the one hovering just under £100, and in the other just above this. The former were

concentrated mostly in the south and west of the deanery, while the better-valued benefices lay, in the main, in the rich vale around Aylesbury. The favourable incomes amongst these vale rectories and vicarages were undoubtedly due largely to the enclosure of this region in the 1770s, and it was the consequent improvement in their value that had contributed to the decline in the proportion of livings less than £50 in the deanery. Aylesbury, Hulcot, Stone and Wendover were all less than this in 1736, yet by the end of the period, they had all at least doubled in value. The enclosure of these and other parishes in the vale district, as well as an enthusiasm for agricultural modernisation, led by men such as Sir William Lee and inflamed not a little by rising prices, and the unification of poorer livings such as Haddenham and Cuddington, can, altogether, account for such a vast reduction in the proportion of poor benefices, and for the reasonable average worth of the rectories and vicarages of this deanery.

Casting aside decanal boundaries for a moment to consider the long thin benefices that lay along the Chiltern escarpment from the Oxfordshire border to Bedfordshire, across the deaneries of Wycombe, Wendover and Mursley, in these parishes existed an excellent example of the vagaries of the eighteenth-century clerics' income. Though there were variations in size, with Wendover and Ivinghoe being larger than the others, they all lay on the same kind of land, where the same kind of farming prevailed. Enclosure affected only Wendover in the period, and this, being a partial enclosure designed to get rid of the small plots

of the parish, in preparation for the enclosure Act of 1794, had little impact on the vicar's income.[223] Overall these twenty parishes averaged £110 in 1780, only slightly less than the average for all of the parishes above the Chiltern Hills. Of course the very best incomes were to be found amongst the rectories, Saunderton £200, Weston Turville £240 and Aston Clinton £320, but it was these fairly small parishes alone that pushed the average value of rectories to £133. The mean of the remainder, at £81, amounted to little more than that of the vicarages (£77). Indeed, though the difference in value between the remaining benefices was not large, ranging from £110 at the top (Ellesborough) to £50 at the lowest extreme (Prince's Risborough and Great Kimble), there were obviously disparities in their value. This may be attributed to any number of local peculiarities, such as their relative size differences, idiosyncratic ecclesiastical and agricultural customs, and various landlords. But perhaps the most tangible cause of their differing values was that the vicarages and curacies were able in only a few instances to match the value of the rectories, even amongst the lesser-valued rectories, let alone their far wealthier counterparts. Ultimately, the fact that only rectors were entitled to both the great and the small tithes in a parish was perhaps the most significant cause of those discrepancies of value to be found between each of these parishes bordering the Chilterns.

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[223] James and Malcolm, p. 29; Leonard West, *History of Wendover in the County of Buckingham*, (Aylesbury, 1909), p. 76.

The poorest deanery in Buckinghamshire was Waddesdon, at least in overall terms. This average was lowered considerably by the presence of a significant pocket of curacies in the south-western corner of the deanery, the presence which may be accounted for by the medieval abbey and convent at Notley. Half of the curacies in northern Buckinghamshire were in Waddesdon; more than a third of the livings in this deanery were curacies, and all but one, North Marston, lay together in this concentration. In 1736 they were all included in the survey (along with North Marston), and they were the only parishes in the deanery that were. With only vague chances of significant augmentation in the interim, by 1780 all but two were lower than £50 and their average value was just £38. Although this was the same as the mean for the whole of the north of Buckinghamshire, it was this meagre average which lowered the decanal average. In fact, the rectories in Waddesdon were at a consistently good level, Oving and Fleet Marston being the only exceptions, all above £100, and averaging together £146. The situation amongst the vicarages was not as favourable, and it was Shabbington's presence alone (ironically, adjacent to the cluster of curacies), where the vicar actually collected great as well as small tithes, that put their average much above the £50-mark, at £85. The presence in Waddesdon of the ancient royal forest mentioned above would undoubtedly have been the main cause of the reduced level of vicarial incomes, because such lands were tithe-

free, being deemed "naturally barren".[224]

Considered in a wider context, though, it is evident that throughout the part of archdeaconry north of the Chilterns vicarages were extraordinarily mediocre in value, except in Wendover. A glance at Table 2 shows that in every other part of this region they averaged less than £100; all but Shabbington and the extensive vicarage of Wing in Mursley had incomes under £200. Even in Newport, which contained many prosperous rectories and was the most wealthy deanery in the north, the best of vicarages were worth little more than £100, and averaged half that of the value of the rectories. Comparison with the vicarages of the southern region is also adverse. In 1736 three-quarters of the small number of vicarages to be found in the south were identified as being worth £50 or less. By the end of the period this had fallen to around 20 percent, the same proportion as in the northern deaneries, which had begun in 1736 with around 50 percent less than £50. Such statistics demonstrate a substantially less favourable rate of improvement of vicarage values in the north of Buckinghamshire during the period, which is further reinforced by comparison of the average incomes in each of the two halves of the county by 1780: it was £101 in the south, but just £86 in the north.

While the reasonable value of vicarages in Wendover has been discussed above, the generally low value of this type of benefice throughout the rest of northern Buckinghamshire is surprising in a

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[224] Evans, *Contentious Tithe*, p. 17.

predominantly dairy and grazing area, since animals and their produce were subject to tithes, and were paid as part of the small tithes to both vicars and rectors. Although this is further evidence of the way in which vicars enjoyed lower returns than their colleagues who were rectors, ultimately parochial idiosyncrasies were to blame for vicarial circumstances. A small number of vicarages, for example, were enclosed before 1780, and in instances like Swanbourne and Hanslape it appears to have been beneficial to the vicar. In others, such as Westbury, Olney, Whitchurch, and Winslow (partly enclosed), it seems to have brought only small reward to the incumbents.[225] Certainly the last two parishes doubled their value by 1780 from the 1736 value given for them but only to a mere £70. The others, though not included in the 1736 list of parishes of £50 or less, were also worth just £70 in 1780, which suggests that the clergymen had not benefited greatly from the enclosure, unlike the parsons of many enclosed Gloucestershire vicarages. Elsewhere, other local circumstances played their part in curbing Buckinghamshire vicars' earnings. Thus, in Edlesborough, for example, the small tithes were worth very little, and little was to be gained from surplice fees and benefactions[226]; in Caversfield, the vicar's income was circumscribed by a modus and a sort of ancient tithe composition. [227] In Thornborough the vicarage

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[225] BRO, PR230/26/3 Quantity of Land allotted to the Vicar of Whitchurch in Inclosure of Parish 1772.
[226] CERC, F6355 1786 survey.
[227] CERC, F914 1780 survey.

was valued at £47 16 8 which arose from a

> composition for the Vicarial Tythes, & paid by the several occupiers of Lands in ye said Parish, five pounds for a half yard Glebe lands in the open fields, & 16 shillings & Eight Pence paid by Earl Temple, suppos'd to be a modus of his Lordship's inclosed Dayry [sic] Farm in the said Parish.[228]

Attempts to break moduses or improve to compositions for tithes were not guaranteed of success, as has already been shown in the case of Gloucester benefices. In 1776 the vicar of Lavendon's bid to establish a realistic payment in lieu of tithes from Sir Charles Chester failed when the latter proved an "unbroken payment of small moduses of 10s in lieu of tithes from 380 acres and 6s 8d in lieu of all tithes from 172 acres".[229] Local factors such as these small fixed payments, or the low value of tithes even when collected in kind, to be found throughout the vicarages of Buckinghamshire gave rise to their variable but mediocre incomes; but, problematically, such factors are unquantifable in anything other than a general and anecdotal sense, because they occurred so erratically and differed uniquely from parish to parish.

Such a random mixture of excellent, tolerable and poor benefices was also to be found amongst the rectories in the north of Buckinghamshire. There was little consistency or order to the values that the rectories achieved in the northern part of Buckinghamshire. In each of the deaneries, livings of both good and indifferent standards lay

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[228] CERC, F1333 1778 survey.
[229] BRO, D/C/2/107, Matthew Barton to Sir Charles Chester, 1 April 1776, cited in Evans, *Contentious Tithe*, p. 18.

adjacent to each other, and thus it is possible to find benefices like the impropriate Stanton Barry (£30) next to the enclosed parish of Haversham (£200+), or Maids Moreton which was worth £230 alongside Akeley (£75). One part of the region where incomes were consistent was a prosperous stretch of rectories to be found on the southern edge of Newport deanery, along one side of the ancient Roman road known as Watling Street. These parishes were all worth more than £200 in 1780: Great Brickhill (£220+), Stoke Hammond (£260), Shenley (£330), Blecheley (£260) and Calverton (£250). Such prosperity was due, in the main, to tithes collected from the well-managed land and profitable farms of these parishes: Cole described the land in Great and Little Brickhill, for example, as being of well cultivated arable and pasture fields.[230] These fields were more productive that those which lay on the opposite side of Watling Street. The land was markedly different here, (Cole depicted Bow Brickhill, for instance, as being of "barren, healthy sandy Soil, yet covered in some Places with beautiful Tufts of Trees") and benefice values were significantly lower.[231] The vicarage of Wolverton was worth only £50, and though the rectories of Simpson (£180), Loughton (£160), Wroughton (£140) and Bow Brickhill (£150) were all of good value, they obviously compare unfavourably with those mentioned above.

The part which enclosure played in raising the value of these

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[230] Cole, *Blecheley Diary*, pp. 328-9.
[231] ibid., p. 328.

benefices to such a good standard was not as straightforward as it was in Gloucestershire. While Shenley and Great Brickhill on one side of Watling Street, and Loughton, and Simpson on the other were enclosed by Act before 1780, the remainder were not, yet they were able to maintain their worth alongside their enclosed counterparts in spite of this. This was in fact the case throughout much of northern Buckinghamshire. A glance at the value of enclosed parishes shows that clerics in all such livings enjoyed fairly good incomes, ranging from £120 (Hartwell) up to £330 (Shenley), though, as ever, there were exceptions to this, such as the small parish of Great Woolston (£70), or Padbury (£50), where the allotment granted in lieu of tithes was not profitable since it lay upon "mostly poor land not likely to produce more rent".[232] Furthermore, there were parishes amongst those with the highest incomes which were not enclosed by Act by 1780, like those mentioned above in Newport deanery, as well as the large rectory of Quainton (£300) in Waddesdon, Maids Moreton (£230) and Marsh Gibbon (£280) in Buckingham deanery, Hogston (£240) in Mursley, and in Wendover, Aston Clinton (£320). It is likely that parishes such as these had seen some early (at least partial) enclosure predating the eighteenth-century parliamentary movement that completely enclosed the north of the county.[233] But the fact that the level of benefice values was so good, (since tithes were still

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[232] CERC, F3682 1816 survey; Padbury was enclosed in 1795, but this did little for the value of the benefice, which in 1816 was only £84.
[233] See Reed.

generally collected in kind), suggests that these parishes were farmed intensively and productively. They were satisfactorily able to accommodate increased livestock numbers and advances in agricultural husbandry for most of the eighteenth century without further enclosure: only Calverton and Bow Brickhill amongst all those mentioned above were subsequently enclosed by parliament. But landlords and farmers in other parishes of more mediocre productivity and, parenthetically, with correspondingly lower earnings for parsons, desiring to replicate such agricultural practises and yields as well as to improve rents, were induced, by the latter part of the century, to enclose by private Act of Parliament. Clergy were generally allocated land in lieu of tithes by parliamentary enclosure Acts, and thus it is probable that rectors in north Buckinghamshire consequently enjoyed an improved annual income, if not by 1780, (since many parliamentary enclosures were carried out only late in the 1770s, and even more in the following decades), at least in subsequent years.[234]

The speculative tone with which such improvements are mentioned arises from the fact that is it difficult to determine the extent to which the value of rectories in the north of the archdeaconry improved during the period between 1730 and 1780. The only measure of improvement over the period is to consider the poorer rectories, and in this instance, there was a distinct reduction in the proportion of these livings by about two-thirds, from 9 percent to just 3 percent.

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[234] Priest, p. 75.

The size of this reduction was similar in the south of Buckinghamshire, though the proportion of poorer rectories was higher in both 1736, when they made up 17 percent of this type of living, and in 1780, by which time they had fallen to 6 percent. Overall, though the value of the eighteen southern rectories, together averaging £167, exceeded that of the north, the 89 rectories that lay north of the Chilterns also had a good average income of £114. The level of this average is actually heightened when considered in the context of the great range of rectory values throughout this northern region: that this average was achieved in spite of such variability, demonstrates, paradoxically, the relative consistency of the incomes of the majority of the very large number of rectories here.

Comparison of benefice values in Buckingham and Gloucester

In general, it is more difficult to discern regional patterns of benefice values in Buckinghamshire than in Gloucestershire, though this is truer of the north of the archdeaconry than the south or Chilterns, which may be considered distinctive regions in themselves. But the large northern part of the archdeaconry was less obviously geographically disjointed, and was also almost uniformly pastoral. Patterns of smaller "regional economies" are far hazier within these five deaneries than they were in the archdeaconry of Gloucester. In the latter it is easy to identify areas where benefice values were concentrated at more or less the same level, (essentially because of the

regions' peculiar geographical, economic and ecclesiastical circumstances), and it is possible to contrast the prosperity or otherwise of such areas with each other, such as the middle and upper vale with the enclosed Cotswolds. The only examples vaguely similar to this in north Buckinghamshire were more nebulous geographic areas like the prosperous benefices around Watling Street, the impoverished curacies in Waddesdon, and perhaps the mediocre elongated parishes adjoining the Chilterns that stretched northwards towards the richer Vale of Aylesbury. Wealthy, middling and inferior livings jostled against one another in both archdeaconries as has been seen, but in Buckinghamshire, especially in the north, this occurred in a generally haphazard fashion than was the case in Gloucestershire, where it was a more exceptional occurrence. Clergy in Buckinghamshire, of rich and poor living alike, would not necessarily share their situation with their neighbouring clergy, each owing their circumstances to the peculiar idiosyncrasies of their parish, as opposed to the more widespread regional characteristics discernible in the archdeaconry of Gloucester.

It is evident, too, that there more material differences between benefice values of the two archdeaconries. Generally speaking, benefice incomes were better, or perhaps more consistent, in the archdeaconry of Buckingham than they were in Gloucester. Comparison is, of course, impossible for anything other than the poorest parishes at the start of the period, but even then the proportion of such benefices present provides an indication of relative poverty of

the archdeaconries. In this case, Buckingham was definitely better-off, since, despite the fact that just over one-third (35 percent) of its benefices were identified by Queen Anne's Bounty in 1736 as being worth less than £50 per annum, in the archdeaconry of Gloucester at the same time, almost half (46 percent) were in this impoverished condition.[235]

By 1779-80 both archdeaconries had witnessed a substantial decline in the proportion of benefices in the lowest income bracket, the ratio of such parishes falling to 16 percent in Buckingham and 26 percent in Gloucester of the livings whose value is known. Such a noticeable improvement in the value of poorer benefices was common in the eighteenth-century Church, which is surprising, because poorer benefices were often harder to improve in value than those of average value, their poverty being a product of the fact they usually had either inferior quality, or little or no land attached.[236] It was, after all, the increasing return that land could bring its owners that caused benefice values to rise; this often encouraged land owners (clergy included) to make improvements such as enclosure to their properties, developments which in turn further enhanced the profits that the land produced. The value of benefices with limited land attached, or with land unsuited to improvement, was obviously harder to augment, a

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[235] This compares with half of all parishes in England. But great regional variation existed: 18 percent in Winchester; 79 percent in Llandaff. Walsh et al., pp. 6-7. In Oxfordshire this was 45 percent. McClatchey, p. 13.

[236] Virgin, p. 73.

situation that the Queen Anne's Bounty and other benefactors sought to rectify by making grants for land purchase in many impoverished livings during the period. Since there were fewer livings in this precarious position in the archdeaconry of Buckingham than in Gloucester at the start of the period it is only to be expected the number which remained in 1780 was greater in the latter than in the former, and that because of this Gloucester remained marginally worse off as a whole than in its Midland counterpart. [237]

The difference between the archdeaconries is actually remarkably small when one compares the average value of all the livings for which an income is known in each archdeaconry: those of the archdeaconry of Buckingham averaged £117, whereas Gloucester's were marginally less, at £113.[238] The advantage that Buckingham had over Gloucester was that there was, in the former, a consistency or solidity amongst benefice incomes that belied the random pattern in which they lay throughout much of the archdeaconry. There were, for example, altogether fewer livings at either end of the income spectrum. Thus, there were no benefices identified as being worth more than £400 in Buckinghamshire in 1780, compared to a tiny number to be found in Gloucestershire; but on the other hand, though very poor

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[237] In Kent in 1736 about 39 percent of parishes were worth less than £50, which by 1758 had fallen to around 26 percent, a fall of 13 percent. By 1780, therefore, there may well have been an even greater improvement in Kent. Based on statistics in Gregory, 'Thesis', p. 386.

[238] The value of 170 Buckinghamshire parishes and 240 Gloucestershire parishes is known for 1780 and 1779.

parishes were not eliminated from the archdeaconry of Buckingham, as seen above, it did have about 10 percent fewer livings than Gloucester at this bottom end of the scale. The average for Gloucester hides the extremes that were evident in benefice incomes throughout the archdeaconry.

An interesting parallel between the archdeaconries becomes apparent when contrasting the percentages of livings broken into the convenient, though arbitrary, £100-divisions. Very broadly speaking, the majority—between 46 percent and 56 percent—of livings whose value is known in both were worth less than £100. Likewise, roughly one-third of livings had an income somewhere between £100 and £200, and not much more than a tenth in either were to found with incomes in excess of £200. Allowing for the specific differences between the proportions in both archdeaconries, it is possible when using these £100-blocks to divide their benefice incomes into a pyramidic model, the greatest section being the large group of poor livings at the base, extending in decreasing numbers towards the small collection of very wealthy parishes at the apex. Where there is a difference between the two in this model, it is in the smaller "step" between the bottom the middle layer of incomes for Buckinghamshire, once again demonstrating that there were fewer impoverished benefices in the heap in that archdeaconry than in its counterpart.

This aside, such a broad model may be applied to the benefice values in many other archdeaconries or dioceses within the eighteenth-

century Church of England.[239] Incomes of benefices in Kent in 1758, for example, fell very much into this model, and have a striking similarity to those of Gloucester in 1750. What is more, the proportions are not hugely dissimilar to Gloucester and Buckingham, providing allowance is made for Kent's subsequent improvements in the ensuing two decades: about two-thirds of livings were valued below than £100, a quarter less than £200 and just over 10 percent more than £200 at this time.[240] And Oxfordshire, too, had the makings of sharing these characteristics, since in 1786, 45 percent of livings were described as "poor and inadequate".[241]

Perhaps the most definitive similarity between Gloucester and Buckingham, and in the Church in general, was something that has become very readily apparent throughout the discussion of benefice values in both archdeaconries: that is, that the incumbents of each of the three categories of livings often enjoyed very different economic fortunes. (Table 4) Exceptions to this in each of the three, of course, abound, but on the whole such anomalies have been discussed above. But each type of benefice shared very similar characteristics in terms of their range and average value, and all three differed markedly from each other within both Gloucester and Buckingham. Predictably, the best incomes were to be had amongst the rectories. In 1779-80, the

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[239] e.g. Evans pp. 2-3, Sykes pp. 212, 226-30, Virgin, p. 33, Gregory, 'Thesis', pp. 150-151; John Lawrence Salter, 'Warwickshire Clergy, 1660-1714', University of Birmingham Ph.D. thesis, 1975, vol. 1, p. 24.

[240] Based on figures in Gregory, 'Thesis', p. 386.

[241] M^{c}Clatchey, p. 13.

overall average of rectories in Buckinghamshire (£149) was marginally smaller than that of Gloucester (£151), but this is a remarkable similarity given the differing circumstances of each county. This arises from the fact that most the known value of these livings in both archdeaconries fell between £100 and £200 a year (60 percent the former and in 58 percent the latter). Broken down into £50 divisions, Buckinghamshire rectories were actually slightly better-off overall, since almost one-third were worth between £101 and £150, whilst the same proportion in Gloucestershire were worth from just £51 to £100. Indeed, less than a third of rectories in Buckinghamshire, as opposed to two-fifths in Gloucester, had an income beneath £100. Furthermore, in Gloucester, there were about 5 percent fewer rectories with incomes in excess of £200 than there were in Buckingham. It is, in fact, within the rectories that extremes of benefice incomes are most apparent, since only amongst this type of living and only in Gloucestershire (3 percent), were there any benefices worth more than £400 a year. It is this small group of very prosperous rectories that contributed to the archdeaconry's good average value: at the other end of the spectrum there were almost three times (8 percent) as many rectories with an income of less than £50 per annum, twice as many as were to be found in the other archdeaconry.

The discrepancy that generally existed between the incomes of the types of benefice is effectively demonstrated by the markedly differing proportions of impoverished rectories and vicarages of both

regions in 1779-80. In Gloucestershire, for example, there were four times (32 percent) as many vicarages with an income under £50 than there were rectories, and in Buckinghamshire there were more than five times (22 percent) as many poor vicarages than rectories. Moreover, the gap between the two types of living is apparent when the average value of vicarages is considered. In the former archdeaconry, they averaged £95, and in the latter, £91, a deficiency of about £60 compared to the average income of the rectories, the difference between a cleric's entitlement to all the tithes of a parish, or the small tithes alone. In both archdeaconries, about three-quarters all vicarages were worth less than £100 (75 percent in Buckingham and 72 percent in Gloucester). Only a very small proportion of vicarages were to be found amongst those livings with the highest values. There were slightly more such benefices in Gloucester (7 percent) with a value exceeding £200 than in Buckingham (4 percent), though the very best vicarial values were only to be found in the latter, where 2 percent of vicarages worth over £300 a year. As with the rectories, the margin between the average value of vicarages of each county is in favour of Gloucestershire, and it was a slightly larger gap in this instance. This reflects the relatively mediocre worth of many of Buckinghamshire's vicarages; in fact, more than half (53 percent) of them had a value of only £51 to £100, compared to 40 percent within this range in Gloucestershire. Rather less of them, however, fell below £50 in Buckingham (22 percent) than they did in the other archdeaconry,

where almost a third of the latter's vicarages were valued below this level, a statistic which is indicative of the real poverty endured by many of Gloucester's vicars, especially by those in the vale deaneries.

As already explained, it was curates, though, who generally suffered most often from poorest value livings, and they remained throughout the period almost universally amongst the lowest paid clergy in these two archdeaconries, and in the Church in general. The average value of curacies in 1779-80 for both archdeaconries was pretty dismal, though in this instance Buckinghamshire had the slight upper hand, £38 as opposed to £32 in Gloucestershire. The difference between them was due to the fact than in the first region about 5 percent of curates enjoyed over £100 a year, the best parish being Soulbury, valued at £115 following its 1772 enclosure. None of their fellow curates in Gloucestershire enjoyed such good fortune. In all, at least 80 percent of curacies in both regions were worth £50 or less per annum, even in 1779-80, and in both, there was prospect of great improvements to the value of these livings, except by some form of external benefaction.

II *CLERICAL INCOMES*

Generally speaking, any combination of the sources of income discussed above might together comprise a benefice's worth. But it is important to appreciate that however *benefice* incomes were composed, these did not necessarily constitute *clerical* incomes: possession of livings in plurality meant many clergymen received higher earnings than a glance at benefice values might suggest. It is difficult to determine precisely the level of pluralism in either archdeaconry during the period simply because it is not always possible to identify incumbents' additional livings—mainly those lying outside the two archdeaconries—hence the relatively large proportion of clergymen who fall into the 'uncertain' category in Table 5. This latter group renders somewhat equivocal the proportion of clerics who were either pluralists or in possession of a sole benefice, but it is clear from Table 5 that least a third of parsons of Buckingham and Gloucester between 1730 and 1780 at some stage of their incumbency enjoyed the fruits of more than one living. Breaking these statistics into decadal intervals to illustrate fluctuations during the fifty years in question does provide proportions similar to the more general figures. These statistics have, however, not been shown here, as the slight distinctions between each decade are made rather meaningless by the presence of numerous incumbents for whom it is impossible to determine whether or not they were pluralists. But if one allows the clergymen in the 'uncertain' group a similar distribution to those already ascertained, these figures

broadly correlate with Peter Virgin's analysis of studies of non-residence and of pluralism in the eighteenth century. Virgin calculated that pluralism had generally stood somewhere between 15 percent and 25 percent in 1705 and he estimated that it peaked and consolidated at around 36 percent by the mid-1770s or thereabouts.[242] Unsurprisingly, great variation in the extent of pluralism existed from diocese to diocese at different times during the period: in Durham in 1774 55 percent of the parochial clergy were pluralists;[243] in Leicestershire almost 40 percent of livings were held in plurality in 1714, a figure which rose to 49 percent in 1750;[244] 124 (47 percent) of the 262 clergy officiating in Wiltshire in 1783 were pluralists,[245] whilst in Hampshire in 1765, 103 of the 184 parishes (56 percent) whose replies to the bishop's visitation queries survive "were held by men with other preferments and 54 [29 percent] without".[246]

The inexactitude of this analysis, indeed, the difficulty of arriving at an accurate portrait of pluralism in the Hanoverian Church of England, arises from the problem of tracing and matching on a national scale the pluralities of all benefice-holders. Even at the more localised level of the archdeaconry, difficulties exist in discovering

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[242] ibid., pp. 73, 192-3, 259.

[243] W.B. Maynard, 'Pluralism and Non-Residence in the Archdeaconry of Durham, 1774-1856: The Bishop and Chapter as Patrons', *Northern History*, 26, (1990), pp. 103-4.

[244] Pruett, p. 53.

[245] Mary Ransome, ed., *Wiltshire Returns to the Bishop's Visitation Queries, 1783*, Wiltshire Record Society Publications, vol. xxvii, (1972), cited in Evans, p. 4.

[246] W.R. Ward ed., *Parson and Parish in Eighteenth-Century Hampshire: Replies to Bishops' Visitations*, Hampshire Record Series, vol. xiii, (Winchester, 1995), p. xx.

many parsons' pluralities lying outside that region, let alone the value over time of these additional benefices. It is thus far more constructive to this discussion of clerical incomes to consider pluralism *within* each the respective archdeaconries. To do so provides a clearer insight into the earnings of many of the clergymen in these counties during the eighteenth century.

The evident similarity in the overall level of pluralism in Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire during the fifty-year period that is shown in Table 5, in fact masks some distinctive differences between the two archdeaconries: these become apparent when one considers pluralism simply within each of their respective boundaries. Internal pluralism was actually more prevalent inside the archdeaconry Gloucester than in Buckingham, as both Tables 6 and 7 indicate. The former table shows that during the five decades in question only one-third of pluralist clergymen in Buckingham, compared to two-thirds of the known pluralists in Gloucester, were in possession of benefices entirely within that single archdeaconry. The differing ratios of indigenous pluralism in each county are also apparent in Table 7, which shows its fluctuation during the half-century. Whilst in both archdeaconries the level of internal pluralism peaked around 1750, in Buckingham thereafter, it appears to have gone into decline, falling by 1780 to about the same proportion it had been in 1730; in Gloucester, though, it remained static at this high point at least until 1780.

These fluctuations may be false, because of the large unknown

quantity in the statistics. But to the extent that they were real, they arose from a number of causes. Undoubtedly they were in large measure due to the unpredictable coincidence of clerical resignation and mortality on the one hand, and the inheritance and purchase of advowsons by patrons with divergent interests, on the other. Furthermore, the declining numbers of admissions to the universities, and more importantly, of the number of ordinands between 1740 and 1760, almost certainly forced patrons to choose local, established clerics to fill benefice vacancies.[247] As the number of ordinations rose and steadied in the 1770s and 1780s it was possible for patrons to look further afield for incumbents, as was the case in the archdeaconry of Buckingham.[248] The differing proportions of internal pluralism between the two archdeaconries lay mostly in their geographic and ecclesiastical idiosyncrasies. The archdeaconry of Buckingham was located in the centre of the midlands; long, thin in shape, it was bordered by several other archdeaconries where many of the pluralists of Buckinghamshire had their additional livings. More than that, it is very near to London, close enough, in fact, that the country parishes of Buckingham might act as the rural retreat for many clergy in the capital; conversely, metropolitan benefices and offices might provide an attraction for a long-suffering country parson, drawn towards the society and—actual or potential—riches of London. Ecclesiastically,

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[247] Virgin, pp. 135, 136.
[248] ibid., p. 136.

the archdeaconry of Buckingham was part of the sprawling diocese of Lincoln. The consequence of this fact was that episcopal or capitular collations often resulted in clerics being presented to additional benefices in other parts of this large diocese, rather than simply within a single archdeaconry. By contrast, the archdeaconry Gloucester was rather more isolated, at least from the enticements of London. Fewer parsons seem to have had livings in the capital: most of the other benefices extra-archidiaconal pluralists held lay in the segment of Gloucestershire west of the Severn (which formed the archdeaconry of Hereford), or in the adjacent counties and Wales. Ecclesiastical influences played their part here too, but presentations by bishop, dean or chapter were more likely to result in a clergyman accumulating benefices within the archdeaconry, simply because the small diocese was virtually coterminous with the archdeaconry. Finally, as has been shown above, there were more poor livings within this archdeaconry than in Buckingham, which, if poverty is to be used as a cause or justification for pluralism, would explain the prevalence of internal pluralism within the region.

Clergymen's motives for indulging in pluralism has been much considered by both contemporaries and historians. Traditionally two broad arguments prevail. Some commentators argue that pluralism was indicative of the rapaciousness of clerics who succumbed to the lure of the wealth it might bring. Others criticised the disparities of income within the parochial system of the Church of England, and

contended that the inadequacy of many livings during the period forced impoverished clerics to combine livings in this way.[249] In both cases, pluralist clergy of the eighteenth century were portrayed as paying little more than lip-service to the restrictions of the 41st Canon regarding presentation to multiple benefices.[250] The repercussion of either contention was that the pluralist would neglect one or all of his congregations, since he could not hope to be in two or more places at once, let alone devote to them the full attention each supposedly warranted. Modern historians, however, have recognised that both of these polarised views could be equally valid, and further, have produced more sophisticated analyses of pluralism, less shaded by the censorious comment of many of their predecessors and of eighteenth century critics.[251]

Some clergymen were undeniably motivated towards pluralism by material aspirations or even greed. The accumulation of benefices, however, especially of valuable livings, also provided a means of self-made promotion, or career advancement for ambitious clerics within an establishment which had a finite number of higher offices with which to reward such promising clergymen. An aspiring cleric might rationalise, too, that to refuse a proffered benefice could be detrimental to his

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[249] Many critical pamphlets were published by eighteenth-century anti-clericals, reaching their acme in the early nineteenth-century works such as Wade, pp. 32, 40, 54, 67. Subsequently many historians, especially in the nineteenth century, were severely censorious of what they regarded as the corruption of pluralism.

[250] See Burn, vol. 3, pp. 104, 318.

[251] For example, Gregory, 'Thesis', pp. 163, 172; Evans, pp. 3-5; Virgin, pp. 191, 194; Sykes, pp. 189, 227; Walsh, et al., pp. 8-9.

career, and perhaps even churlish to his patron, despite such qualms—if any—he may have had of holding more than one benefice. At the other end of the scale, moreover, pluralism clearly presented a ready and practical way of alleviating some of the financial difficulties of poor clergymen, although obviously it did nothing to eliminate disparities of income within the Anglican parochial system in a more permanent way.

This notion has received some criticism from modern historians, such as Mitchison, who contended that poorer livings worth less that £50 a year were rarely joined in plurality with each other.[252] But in Buckingham and Gloucester at least, the fact that economic necessity played a significant part in motivating clerical pluralism during the eighteenth century is perhaps sustained by the fact that the bulk of pluralists in each archdeaconry, whatever their income, possessed at least one benefice included in the 1736 Queen Anne's Bounty survey: in Gloucester, 63 percent, and in Buckingham, 75 percent, of *all* the internal pluralists had one or more of these meanly-valued parishes. Yet even when they held these benefices in plurality they were often little better off. John Abbot, for instance, who held Gloucester St John's and Witcombe Magna earned just £33 altogether from them, whilst Thomas Andrews, who was incumbent of Ebrington and Pebworth, had an income of £30 from the former and just £18 from the latter. In the archdeaconry of Buckingham, too, there are

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[252] Mitchison, p. 190.

such examples: John Nicolson, for instance, earned just £35 a year from his two parishes of Whitchurch and Nether Winchenden.

Ecclesiastically, one of the main reasons for criticism of pluralism was because of the likelihood that many of the parishes concerned would receive little attention from their parson. Certainly pluralism could not be regarded as tenable in this situation, but, in fact, a cure probably suffered little from a pluralist incumbent, provided he employed a competent stipendary curate, or alternatively, (if he attended to them himself), that all his benefices were contiguous or close together. It was unquestionably better that a parish was served than left entirely vacant. Thus a patron, upon discovering that a meagre living failed to attract any cleric willing to minister to it alone, could sometimes find a willing incumbent in a local clergyman, who would serve it in tandem with the other benefices he held. In 1783 Richard Cumberland, for instance, expressed interest in the vacant living of Ampney Crucis which lay adjacent to Harnhill, adding that at £80 per annum, the "preferment is of little value unless to a Person who has something contiguous".[253] Ironically, therefore, pluralism was sometimes a sensible way of ensuring that oft-neglected parishes might be served, and that normally poverty-stricken incumbents received a more equitable income.

It is evident that pluralism was a more complicated phenomenon in the eighteenth-century Church than its critics are

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[253] Cumberland, *Letters*, p. 296, Richard to George Cumberland, n.d. [Feb. 1783].

perhaps prepared to acknowledge. In fact, the contradictory consequences of pluralism were clearly juxtaposed: in some situations, it fostered clerical non-residence, and even dereliction of duty, whilst at the same time, it ensured that the congregations of other parishes were not neglected. In terms of clergymen's incomes, it helped to ameliorate inequalities of income at the bottom of the scale, but simultaneously it also created wide disparities of income, by greatly enriching a few fortunate clerics, whose income was probably already beyond those of their less-prosperous colleagues. And it is important, finally, to reiterate that notwithstanding the complaints of Victorian critics, pluralism occurred amongst a minority of clergymen of the archdeaconries of Gloucester and Buckingham, and indeed the Church in general, during the period. This meant that most parsons were still in possession of only one benefice at any one time, and this, as has been evinced from the preceding discussion, through the vagaries of the parochial system might bring them an income of hundreds of pounds per annum, or very little at all.

Summary of clerical incomes

Drawing together all of the previous discussion regarding the sources of clerical incomes, about benefice values, and also on pluralism, it is possible to discern some distinct trends with regard to clerical incomes in the two archdeaconries, which had important implications for the place of the parson in his local community.

Indeed, by combining the figures gathered above on benefice values and pluralism, it is possible to arrive at a statistical summary of the incomes received the incumbents Gloucester and Buckingham during the eighteenth century from their livings, which can be seen in Table 10. The statistics contained in this table are a very useful tool for drawing conclusions about the wealth of these parsons, with the important caveat that whilst they are as accurate as possible, there is an inherent crudity to them: there remains a significant proportion of incumbents for whom it was impossible to determine an income; there are clergy who it is known had benefices lying outside of these archdeaconries whose income thus could not be accurately calculated; and conversely there are undoubtedly others included in it whose income does not take account of additional benefices they possessed outside these regions which were not uncovered during this research. (Incomes for those clerics who were pluralists have also been separated and are displayed in Table 9.)

One of the key things which these tables demonstrate is the improvement in clerical earnings as the eighteenth century went on, something which has also been noted by historians of the Church in other regions.[254] This can best be shown by considering the incomes of the poorest incumbents during the period, and is evident in spite of the limited information available for benefice values in 1730, where the incomes of only about one-third of Gloucestershire clerics and one-

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[254] e.g. Virgin, Chapter 3.

quarter of all Buckinghamshire parsons can be assessed. All of these parsons held one or more impoverished living at this time: the majority of them in both regions, not surprisingly, received an annual income of £50 or less at this time. The income of such incumbents 'fortunate' enough to be pluralists was, in most instances, higher than this; but given the source of the information regarding benefice values used here, it is perhaps unsurprising to find that most of the pluralists whose receipts can be determined still earned less than £100 per annum.

By 1750 some improvement is apparent in the circumstances of the very poorest incumbents, but clearly it had not been very substantial because the majority of clergy in Gloucestershire still received less than £100 a year; there had been only a small reduction in the proportion of the poorest incumbents earning £50 or less in the twenty year interval since 1730. This was due to only slight increases in the value of more impoverished benefices of the archdeaconry, and an almost negligible increase in the number of benefices pluralists held together at one time. Pluralism continued to provide succour to incumbents of some of the poorest livings: whereas more than one-third of Gloucestershire's benefices were worth £50 or less per annum, less than one-quarter of incumbents earned a similar income in 1750.

It is not possible, because there are no existing statistics to demonstrate it, to determine whether the rate of improvement of the earnings of Gloucestershire's wealthier incumbents was better than that

for the poor during this thirty-year interval. And even amongst the poorest, the rates of change in their incomes could be dramatically different. For some parsons, the improvement in their income was trifling, as indeed, were their earnings themselves. One of the best examples of this was Edward Loggin Griffin, who served Ampney St Mary and Ampney St Peter for a pitiful £19 per annum in 1750, although this sum included a increase of £10 a year since 1730. Rather contrasting circumstances were dramatic improvements experienced by Henry Bond. The combined income he received from his parishes of Coaley and Stroud advanced from £53 to £140 a year by 1750, thanks largely to an £83 rise in the value of the latter. Obviously there were clergymen between of these extremes, whose income had witnessed more modest, but steady improvements between 1730 and 1750, due to the rising values of the benefices they held. Ultimately, it is apparent that the incomes of most Gloucester clergymen remained very low; more than two-thirds of the benefices in the archdeaconry were worth under £100 in 1750, and though the proportion of clergy who actually suffered this indignity was smaller, slightly more than half of them still received an income from their parishes of less than £100 a year.

Clerical incomes improved far more markedly in the interval between 1750 and 1780, even allowing for the greater proportion of unknown clerical incomes in the latter year. One rough indicator - and these figures must be employed with the same caveats applied to Table 10 - of this is that the *average* income of Gloucestershire clergy whose

earnings are known, rose from close to £120 a year to about £150. This improvement was due largely to substantial rises in the value of many benefices, prompted by the advances in agricultural productivity and the upsurge in enclosure described previously. The other reason for improvements in clergymen's earnings was the apparent increasing readiness for some pluralists to acquire more than two benefices, especially in the archdeaconry of Gloucester. Thus, returning to the example of the poorest clergy in that archdeaconry who earned nowhere near the £150 mark, the rate of decline in the proportion earning less than £50 was higher from 1750 to 1780 than in had been between 1730 and 1750, and by the latter date they amounted about 15 percent of incumbents whose earning are known. A similar proportion of clergymen had incomes between £50 and £100 annually in 1780, which represented an even more significant decline in their number - and consequently another indicator of the improvement of parsons' earnings - since 1780. Overall, in fact, the decline in the numbers of the less-well remunerated clergy had been substantial: more than half of parsons had earned under £100 a year in 1750; by 1780 this had dropped to just under one-third of Gloucester incumbents.

That a similar rate of improvement had occurred in the Buckingham is highly likely. Certainly there was a similarity between the level of the poorer clergy in each: in Gloucestershire, 32 percent still had an income below £100, whilst in its Midland counterpart, 29 percent earned less than this amount. It seems, though, that the

situation in Buckingham was a marginally better one. This may be inferred from the fact that there were almost twice as many parsons in Gloucestershire (15 percent) who earned less than £50 a year from their parish or parishes, as there were in Buckinghamshire (8 percent) at this time. Added to that, there remained pluralist clergy in the former in 1780 who accumulated less than £50 per annum: in Buckingham there were none at all. Ultimately, it may be that the rate of improvement there had been better than in Gloucester, but this is impossible to substantiate accurately. However, a glance at the partial figures for 1730 in comparison with 1780 gives a very rough indication that the improvement of poorer clerical incomes may have been better in Buckingham than Gloucester. There had been a 14 percent decline in the proportion of clergy in the former with incomes below £50, compared to just a reduction half that size in their numbers in the latter by 1780. Whatever the case, the fact remains there had been an overall increase in the incomes of the poorest clergymen in both archdeaconries, especially during the latter half of the eighteenth century. Numerous parsons still enjoyed neither a large, nor even an adequate income by 1780, but their ranks were shrinking, and their lowly incomes were rising gradually; abject poverty was no longer the condition of the *majority* of incumbents in these two regions by 1780.

Yet it was not simply the poor clergy who witnessed an improvements in their incomes by 1780. As clerical incomes rose, it is readily apparent from looking at the incomes of the wealthiest

incumbents, that their earnings were not unaffected, nor, indeed, were the numbers of parsons enjoying more wealth. To consider these men briefly, given some of the benefice values described above, it is not unexpected that in Gloucestershire even in 1750 there were some quite affluent clergymen, though these men were, unsurprisingly, very much a minority of the incumbents of the archdeaconry. Just over a tenth of all the parsons there earned in excess of £200 per annum, the wealthiest man being Thomas Chamberlayne Coxe, the minister of parishes of North Cerney, Preston, Wick and Little Rissington, whose combined value reached £580 in 1750. By 1780, however, a fifth of all incumbents whose earnings are known within the archdeaconry received more than £200 a year: this represents a doubling of the proportion of parochial clergymen within the echelons of the highest incomes during the thirty year interval.

Again, it is difficult to compare the 1780 incomes in Buckingham with anything except those of Gloucester, as there are no earlier figures for the former. But in that archdeaconry an even larger proportion than in Gloucester had incomes in excess of £200 a year, 17 percent in comparison to 10 percent. Table 10 suggests that, as with benefice values in the region, that the range of clerical incomes in Buckinghamshire was smaller than in Gloucester, with no parson exceeding £500 per annum. This is not to suggest that the former was generally better-off that the latter; the actual differences between clerical incomes in the two archdeaconries can only be inferred.

Indeed, a rough calculation of the overall average of known clerical incomes in the two regions puts them both at about £150 by 1780. But this, and also Table 10, may be somewhat deceptive, since if it were possible to take account of the existence of benefices, and other ecclesiastical offices held by incumbents of Buckingham, the range of clerical incomes would undoubtedly be spectacularly higher. Whilst this last point could be said of both archdeaconries, it applied particularly to Buckinghamshire, which experienced a far lower rate of indigenous pluralism. Coupled with the better benefice values in this archdeaconry, it is certainly plausible to suggest that Buckinghamshire clergy may well have been better-off as a whole than their Gloucestershire colleagues.

This conclusion is reinforced if one employs the same pryamidic model applied to benefice values to consider clerical incomes. Using the same £100 intervals for the bottom two tiers, and coalescing the remainder as before, it is evident that in 1750, and even 1780, clerical incomes in Gloucester still fit comfortably within this model. Applied to Buckinghamshire, however, and it becomes apparent is that the proportions of the three levels are more evenly distributed; a wide gulf still existed between rich and poor parsons and the 'rich were getting richer', but slowly the poorer clergy were becoming more comfortable, and the less-badly off were becoming wealthier. While rich and poor clergy lived side by side in both archdeaconries, within the bounds of Buckingham, their incomes were perhaps becoming more equitable at a

faster rate than in Gloucester.

Another trend which is evident when examining these Tables is the effect that pluralism had upon clergymen's incomes. Pluralism is a contentious issue historiographically, as has been intimated, but while each historian draws different conclusions about its cause and ecclesiastical effect, few can argue about the economic consequences that it produced for eighteenth-century clerics. In short, it gave them more money. A comparison of the value of benefices (Table 3) and the incomes of clergy (Table 10) in either archdeaconries shows that parsons as a whole earned more than the value of their livings. Thus, for instance, while 8 percent of Buckinghamshire parsons whose income is recorded received under £50 a year, there were twice as many parishes with this value. In Gloucester, too, no parish had a value in 1780 above £500, yet there was a tiny percentage of incumbents who it is known earned above this figure. Obviously these statistics cannot be compared entirely accurately, because of the unknown values in both sets, but the effect is clear: pluralism demonstrably helped parsons to improve their earnings, and had more clergy been pluralists, undoubtedly the contrast between benefice values and income levels may well have been even greater.

All in all, the incomes of the clergy of the archdeaconry of Buckingham and Gloucester demonstrated to differing degrees much of what have become truisms in the historical study of the eighteenth-century Church: clerical incomes were rising as a whole, and though

the lot of the poor parson was slowly ameliorated and the number of clerics who languished in poverty declined, simultaneously, an increasing number of his clerical brethren lived in great comfort and style. This was the idiosyncrasy that was the early modern Church: broad trends are evident, but when one descends from the generality, to the particular, rich incumbents' enclosures jostled along side paltry glebes and modest cottages of their brethren in the rural landscape; all parishes, every parson, each archdeaconry had much in common with each other, but they also had their own quirks and peculiarities, distinct flaws and benefits, that they contributed to the edifice that was the eighteenth-century Church.

III *Clergy, Their Property & The Community*

Having established both the value of benefices and the level of income they provided the incumbents of Gloucester and Buckingham, it is important to provide a context for the value of this property in relation to the rest of the community. Throughout the foregoing discussion the notions 'poorer' and 'wealthier' have been used to distinguish the differing extremes of benefice values and clerical incomes, but it is important to provide some contexts for understanding just how rich or poor the clerics were in reality, as well as clerical and community perceptions of that wealth.

Several historians have undertaken studies of incomes in the early modern period. Francis James, who in the 1940s actually compared clerical incomes with those of other classes, suggested that eighteenth-century agricultural workers earned about £10-15 per annum, whilst skilled craftsmen received around at most £25-50 a year.[255] As he also notes, these groups had neither the advantage of security of employment enjoyed by the beneficed incumbent, nor in most instances were they provided with houses as most clerics were.[256] James' figures probably apply to the first half of the century, for by its end, a "superior village craftsman" might receive £60-70 per year, and the average annual wage of an agricultural labourer was about £30-

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[255] Francis James, 'Clerical Incomes in the Eighteenth Century', *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, (Sept. 1949), p. 318.
[256] ibid.

50.[257] These workmen's wages were selected for comparison because such labourers and craftsmen formed a large section of eighteenth-century society, and would have comprised a significant proportion of the congregations that the incumbents of Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire encountered in the predominately rural communities in which they lived. It is evident that at the start of the period at least a quarter of the parsons of both archdeaconries earned an income no better than a skilled craftsman received at that time. Worse than that there were at least 9 parsons in 1736 in Gloucestershire whose income from their benefices was equivalent to that of a farm labourer, including two clerics who served churches in the City of Gloucester; six clergymen can be identified at that date in the same position in Buckinghamshire, two of whom served not one, but two parishes that were always held together.[258] A similar situation prevailed in Gloucester in 1750, where almost a quarter of the clergymen whose income has been identified earned an income no more than that of a craftsman, and there were still about seven parsons falling into the same wage level as a labourer.[259] And by 1780, when both clerical and

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[257] Evans, *Contentious Tithe*, pp. 9-10.

[258] *Gloucester:* John Avery, Great Badminton, £13; Stephen Bryce, Compton Abdale, £7; William Hayward, Oxenten, £6; John Jones, Whaddon, £12; Benjamin Newton Snr, Gloucester St Nicholas and Trinity, £6; John Nixon, Seisincote, £8; Edward Payne Robinson, Gloucester St Mary de Crypt, £15; Thomas Strafford, Horsley, £8, John Wall, Maisemore £14; *Buckingham*: No incumbent known, Ekeney cum Petsoe £9, Little Linford, £10, & Nettleden, £10; Rice Evans, Hulcot, £7; Peter Hill, Choulsbury, £12; Morgan Leyson, Brill and Boarstall, £8; Edward Morse, Chalfont St Peter, £10; Thomas Snow, Linslade, £14; Christopher Wells, Chilton with Eastington, £10.

[259] John or Henry Dean, Moreton Valence & Whaddon, £15; Frances Gold, Rangeworthy, £9; John Hughes, Sevenhampton, £10; Thomas Payne, Great

lay incomes had improved, it is evident from Table 10 that about 15 percent of Gloucester incumbents and 8 percent of Buckinghamshire clergy still earned less than what the skilled artisan had received earlier in the century, let alone what he might be paid at this later date. Many of those clergy included in the £51-100 band in Table 10 would also have earned about the same as such a workman. And remarkably, there remained two parsons in Gloucester, and just one in Buckingham in 1780 who, notwithstanding the improvements in clerical incomes, earned less than £15 a year, including the long-suffering George Roberts who still served Oxenten and Great Washbourne for £11 a year.[260] While the reduction in the number of these very poor parsons is testament to the improvements made in clerical incomes during the century, there existed in 1780 a tiny number of parsons, in the main, perpetual curates, whose benefices provided only a subsistence living, and many others whose living ranked them no better than the craftsmen or farmers they lived alongside.

But the eighteenth-century parson was no wage-labourer or skilled craftsman. His vocation was increasingly reserved for men of erudition: he was more likely as the century progressed to be university educated and the son of an educated man, and thus more removed from the skills and the work of labourers and artisans. Certainly, in

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Badminton, £13; George Roberts, Oxenton & Great Washbourne, £11; Jasper Selwyn, Wheatenhurst, £8; John Wickes, Cold Salperton, £8.

[260] Besides George Roberts, in Gloucester these incumbents included Charles Page, Compton Abdale, £10; and in Buckingham, John Ramsey, Choulsbury £12.

terms of experience and learning, the cleric was increasingly more akin to members of a newly burgeoning group in early modern society, that of the professional man: doctors, military men, surveyors, and lawyers, people in the community who offered skilled services that "required long and expensive training".[261] Like the Church, within the ranks of all types of professionals remuneration remained "unstandardised" and there was wide variation between the eminently successful, and "minor" professionals and young beginners who found themselves "clinging onto the margins of financial success".[262] Thus naval officers wages ranged from £15 to £365 a year, government clerks in the 1740s mostly earned £50 to £80 a year[263], rank-and-file barristers made about £100 at the start of the century, but the earnings of the successful few could range as high as £10,000 a year by 1800.[264] Massie's 1759 calculations provide some sort of yardstick here, since the estimates of wealth all derive from the same source. He suggested, amongst others, that most lawyers earned £80-199, as did military officers. Massie placed clerical incomes in two bands, with only a relatively small group earning £80-199, compared to the bulk who received £50-79 per annum.[265] According to these figures, then, the majority of clerical incomes trailed a little behind other professionals' earnings, a constant

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[261] Penelope Corfield, *Power and the Professions: Britain 1700-1850*, (London & New York, 1995), p. 176.
[262] ibid., pp. 230, 232.
[263] James, pp. 318-9.
[264] Corfield, p. 234.
[265] Langford, *Polite and Commercial*, p. 64; Gregory, 'Just and Sufficient', p. 326.

clerical lament of the Hanoverian era. As one clergyman wrote typically, clergy

> are in general educated at a greater Expence than those who are trained up in the several Branches of Trade and Commerce. Yet these latter for the most part accumulate large Fortunes...whilst the Incomes of the Clergy, as such, are in general much too mean for Persons liberally educated .[266]

This difference was exacerbated by the fact that unlike other professions such as the military, within the clerical profession there was no guarantee of vocational, and thus remunerative, promotion in accordance with accumulated experience or skill.

Comparing like with like, however, and ranking the incomes of Gloucester and Buckinghamshire clerics alongside their fellow clergymen, it is evident that the earnings of the bulk of the clergy of the two archdeaconries easily fell within the ranges of Massie's groups, and were certainly more akin to the lower, rather then higher figure. Whilst regional variations abounded within the Church, the broad similarities between the two archdeaconries show that their incumbents were certainly no worse off than the elsewhere, and indeed, a higher proportion in both enjoyed better incomes than many of their Welsh or northern counterparts.[267] The incomes of Anglesey's clerics, for instance, peaked at £111 in the mid-eighteenth century, whilst eighty-

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[266] Clergyman of Wiltshire, *Reflections upon Tithes, seriously Addressed in behalf of the Clergy to the Gentlemen associated for the purpose of considering an equivalent for the payment of tithes in kind: demonstrating that no equivalent can be devised, which these gentlemen will not think liable to the same complaints and objections*, (Salisbury, 1773), pp. iii-iv.

[267] Walsh et al., p. 6. Virgin, pp. 90-1.

five years later, in 1835, the median income of Cumbrian clergy was still just £108.[268] Having said that, most Buckingham and Gloucester parsons did not enjoy the level of incomes that were to be found in London parishes during the eighteenth century, where by 1732 the median income was already £150 per annum.[269] Indeed, as has been shown, it took until 1780 for the average remuneration of clergy in these two archdeaconries' to match that median, and there were still parsons in both languishing well below £50 in 1780.

A "sufficient settled provision"?[270]

Turning to consider what was an adequate or even a necessary level of income for an eighteenth century cleric, it was considered that the bare minimum, "below which discharge of pastoral duties became difficult or embarrassing, was £50 at the beginning of the century, and about £150 by the early nineteenth century."[271] Although latter figure undoubtedly takes into account the inflation of the Napoleonic era, the acceptable figure for 1780 was not likely to be greatly lower. Moir describes Gloucestershire livings of this decade as very poor if they were worth less than £100 a year.[272] An interesting perspective of a

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[268] G. Nesta Evans, *Religion and Politics in Mid-Eighteenth Century Anglesey*, (Cardiff, 1953), p. 26; Virgin, p. 91.
[269] Earle, p. 64.
[270] Queen Anne's Bounty's First Charter, cited in Best, p. 515.
[271] Evans, p. 3; see also W.R. Ward, ed., *Parson and Parish in Eighteenth-Century Hampshire: Replies to Bishops' Visitations*, Hampshire Record Series, vol. xiii, (Winchester, 1995), p. xx.
[272] Moir, p. 26.

contemporary layman's opinion of what was an acceptable income for a parson at this time may be inferred from the fact that the Earl of Nottingham and Winchilsea would not permit incumbents to hold his benefices in plurality; one wonders what his attitude might have been had his Buckinghamshire parishes been worth much less than the £100 and £180 that Ravenstone and Middleton Keynes respectively paid by 1780. The Church itself set its own demarcation of an acceptable baseline for incomes in 1718, by establishing £50 upper limit for which benefices would be eligible to receive assistance from the Queen Anne's Bounty, and stipendary curates' salaries were required to be between £20 and £50 a year from 1713, though for various political reasons it failed to update these sums as the century progressed.[273] In essence then, below these minimums of about £50 at the start of the period, and £100 to £150 by 1780, it was very difficult for a parson adequately to support himself. This situation was well encapsulated by an observation of Rudder, who, commenting on augmentations made by the Bounty and parishioners to raise the value of Deerhurst to £20 a year, wrote that

> ...it was a laudable act in the people, so far as it extends, but ineffectual to any good purpose, for the clergy, like other men, have need of meat, drink, and cloathing [sic], which this pitiful income cannot supply.[274]

A parson's income was not merely required for domestic

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[273] Best, p. 93ff; Virgin, p. 223-224.

[274] Rudder, p. 405.

expenses, however humble they might be. His vocation and situation required the discharge of numerous other disbursements. Farming, probably essential for a poor parson, and tithe collection incurred costs as well, such as the purchase of stock and equipment, harvesting, collection and storage of produce, and the inescapable customary tithe feast or celebration. He is likely to have had at least one farm or domestic servant's wages to provide, as well as the land tax to pay. Professional expenses included entrance and visitation fees, (and first-fruits and tenths for livings worth over £50 a year). Added to this were other parochial financial responsibilities: keeping the chancel, in the case of rectors; books and writing materials for sermon writing, and clerical vestments for services; a horse might be required too, to travel to any additional churches served, or to minister to the congregation of a large parish. Most importantly he would be expected to provide hospitality and also charity to his parishioners, be it monetary donations, the poor-rate or other assistance, and to set an example when charitable assistance was for extra-parochial causes.[275] These are just some basic outgoings, and those of the single man. Provision for a wife and children on a daily basis, as well as the attendant costs of educating and securing the vocational and matrimonial futures of his offspring magnified these costs enormously, "for a family cannot be maintained by texts and pretexts".[276] For many clergy, meeting these

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[275] Felicity Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England*, (Oxford, 1990), pp. 298-9.
[276] Eachard, vol. 1, p. 78.

costs was a constant struggle and an incessant worry, especially since their incomes were not necessarily "settled". Those collecting tithes were dependent on the vagaries of the harvest, and even those paid stipends were at the mercy of those responsible for its payment for its full and regular appearance.

> The occasion of my troubling you with this Letter, is an indiscretion that I must own I have been guilty of. It has generally been your custom hitherto to pay me for serving your Cure of Preston, by or before this time of the Year....I am, though with y^{e} utmost regret, now constrain'd to petition you for assistance.
>
> The Tradesman's and Schoolmaster's demands from Winchester on my Son's account, are the cause of my present perplexity.[277]

The personal circumstances conveyed by this plea of Joseph Greene, whose livings brought him about £40 a year, to his patron for his overdue stipend of just £8 for Preston-upon-Stow (Glos) was shared by many of his fellow clergy, though there were obviously parsons who were worse off than him.[278]

But ensuring adequate income for the parish clergyman was about more than simply providing sufficient income to pay for tradesmen's bills or for a list of vital commodities. It was also the minimum required for a cleric to enjoy an appropriate standing within the community. It was a persistent concern of the period that clergymen be able to preserve their dignity in the community, that they

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[277] Joseph Greene *Correspondence of Rev'd Joseph Greene: Parson, Schoolmaster and Antiquary*, ed. Levi Fox, (London, 1960), p. 75. Greene to James West MP, 7 June 1756.

[278] He also served Weston-upon-Avon.

would not be treated with contempt by the congregations because they were dependent on charity akin to that which they ought to have been bestowing. Further, there was a certain anxiety to see that the clergy carried out their work and daily lives without over-dependence upon patrons or benefactors. This was more than a desire to avoid the embarrassing social spectacle of 'Mr Collins-like' sycophancy by clergymen: independence was also sought for clergy so that they had the dignity and moral authority to guide and to admonish *all* members of their flocks, not merely those inferior to themselves. Many commentators wrote in this vein, especially members of the Church hierarchy, such as Bishop Richard Watson of Llandaff:

> I do not wish...to see the clergy rendered insolent by an accumulation of wealth and power...[but] we must all of us ever wish to see them rendered so independent of all men, that they need not be afraid to tell any man of his sins; that they may reprove, rebuke, exhort and teach the word of God with sincerity and truth, without shrinking from this part of their duty from an apprehension of being turned out of their benefices.[279]

The Bishop of Gloucester himself also made a similar pronouncement in his sermon to his clergy at his visitation in 1750. According to Benson, a cleric ought to have

> not indeed a maintenance so low, as to derive contempt upon ye character we wear, but not so high as to endanger ye corrupting of those who are to be ye means of reforming others. It is to be sure desirable y^{t} ye Ministers of ye Gosp[el] shd be freed from y^{t} solicitude & those inconveniences w^{ch} attend poverty,

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[279] Richard Watson, *Anecdotes of the life of Richard Watson, bishop of Llandaff; written by himself at different intervals and revised in 1814*, ed. Richard Watson, (London, 1817), p. 114. See also Gregory, 'Just and Sufficient', pp. 324, 327.

> as well as from pride, luxury & other too common consequences of too great abundance.[280]

Such interest in the dignity and integrity of the clergy also went beyond the ecclesiastical, since it also had a social dimension. Clergy needed adequate remuneration to ensure that they could sustain themselves and their families, not merely at subsistence level, but in a manner appropriate to that of a man of the cloth. For clergy, who along with other professionals had once occupied a rather nebulous position in the social hierarchy, were increasingly perceived by their Hanoverian contemporaries to be members of the middling ranks.[281] This integration within the middle class was helped not a little by the growing tendency for clergy to be educated and to have better social origins; in small rural communities, such as existed in Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire they might have found themselves amongst the social elite on these grounds alone. Rather than alienating themselves from inferior parishioners as some historians have suggested, moreover, the expectations of observers of lesser ranks may actually have been satisfied by the rising social status of their parson, given his singular vocation with its inherently paternalistic capacity, and the growing tendency for him to possess education and skills vastly

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[280] BL, Add. MS 39313 Berkeley Papers X, Martin Benson's Sermons and Charges, 'Charge deliver'd to the Clergy &c of the Diocese of Glocester. At the Fifth Triennial Visitation 1750', f. 167v. I am very grateful to Dr Stephen Taylor for directing me to this source.

[281] Langford, *Polite and Commercial*, pp. 72-3; Walsh et al., p. 7; Corfield, p. 177.

different from their own.[282] Changes to clerical property, especially towards the latter half of the century, certainly reinforced this trend, when, as seen, a growing number of clergymen became proprietors of enclosed landed estates of varying sizes.

All of these things helped to ensure the emergence of the clergy body into the society of the middling class. But as such, in an age where appearance or display was requisite, they were expected to live and conduct themselves as gentlemen:

> A clergyman from his education, from his use to society, from his commission,....is certainly upon the footing of a gentleman; at least while he acts as such....[283]

This required a certain level of material consumption, even at the lowest level. The extent to which clergy were able to do so obviously depended upon their incomes. It has been suggested that the absolute minimum income that was required even to aspire to middling status was £50 per annum, an interesting correlation with the sum that a parson required to undertake his vocation acceptably.[284] Such aspirations and expectations were all very well for those more fortunate amongst the clergy whose remuneration allowed them a comfortable standard of living and to be "successful in the competitive lifestyle"; for parsons at or below this income level, these social and

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[282] Eric Evans, 'Some Reasons for the Growth of English Rural Anti-Clericalism c.1750-c.1830', *Past and Present,* 66 (1975), p. 99.
[283] Hutchinson, p. 14.
[284] Langford, *Polite and* Commercial, p. 62.

material ambitions were more difficult to attain.[285]

Another consideration when determining the sufficiency of a clergyman's income was his own tastes and expectations. These might operate on an number of levels. Firstly, as has been suggested, the differing social origins of clergy might bring a variety of expectations of an adequate income. Similarly, the needs of a married parson differed greatly from those of a bachelor. The age or career progress of a parson might also make a difference to his expectations: the material expectations of a new ordinance, who saw a poorer benefice as a stepping-stone to a more prosperous living, might not be as high as older, more experienced men. Though many incumbents achieved this ambition, this notion might often have been hard to countenance in a vocation were a man was not automatically rewarded for experience or "according to his industry and application", and indeed, where many other parsons served their entire lives in very poor benefices.[286] Vocationally, too, there may have been a tacit expectation amongst clergy that they would make some reparation from their career for the investment in time and money - as much as £60 a year -that their education had cost them.[287] Certainly one gets the sense that clergy in this period had an awareness of the skills and demands of what was a twenty-four hour job, and of the material reward that they received in return for utilising them, if only in the negative sense of their

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[285] Corfield, p. 236.
[286] Hutchinson, p. 5.
[287] Earle, p. 63.

complaints about the paucity of the remuneration some earned in return for their work. The complaint of James Evans, curate of Brill and Boarstall in Buckinghamshire, who remarked that the stipend he received was "too inconsiderable for the Duty of one of the places, much inferior [sic] to the Care of both Parishes", is reiterated frequently throughout the Queen Anne's Bounty papers of both archdeaconries.[288] This, and the fact that there is evidence to suggest that they were often willing to increase the services for increased remuneration, is a sign of increasing vocational awareness amongst clergy, and functional expression of what was an income appropriate to their dignity and profession.

Certainly the incomes of the incumbents of Gloucester and Buckingham overall were heading in the right direction to meet these mingled material, vocational and social requirements: the overall prosperity of the clergy in these regions was rising. There were a growing number of parsons in both archdeaconries who enjoyed very comfortable lifestyles, especially those rectors and vicars with incomes in excess of £150 or £200 a year, who constituted between about a quarter and a third of the incumbents of these regions by 1780. Such parsons were able to purchase not only the basic necessities, but also luxury items for their households and tables, they could improve or rebuild their parsonage houses, dispense largesse, provide for their

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[288] CERC, F646 Brill and Boarstall, James Evans to Henry Montague (Queen Anne's Bounty), 25 December 1744.

children and pursue their personal interests with relative ease. The style in which they lived depended upon their varying family sizes, the personality, tastes and ambitions of the parson concerned. In general terms, they would afford the comfortable lifestyle that epitomised the traditional portrait of the late-Hanoverian parsonage, and of which the diary of the Buckinghamshire parson William Cole provides a stereotypical example.[289]

For others, circumstances were not so easy. Some incumbents made it difficult for themselves. There are instances of avaricious clergy who, living in an acquisitive age, had material ambitions which exceeded their incomes, and who ruined themselves in pursuit of a comfort and a standard of living that they could ill afford. The most extreme example of this was that of the unfortunate macaroni parson, William Dodd, hanged for forging a bond, whilst in possession of the Buckinghamshire parish of Wing which was worth £240 a year. Ironically, since at the time his total preferments amounted to £800 per annum, his justification for this action was that he "was pressed extremely to pay some tradesmen's bills".[290] Other less extraordinary cases included that of William Gardiner of Clifton Reynes and Hardmead (Glos), together worth £147, but which were sequestered in 1777 because he had incurred debts of £1064 9s, or Edward Trott mentioned above, who ruined himself rebuilding the parsonage at High

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[289] His parish of Blecheley was worth £260 per annum by 1780.

[290] William Dodd, *Historical Memoirs of the life and writings of the late Rev. William Dodd L.L.D.*, ed. John Duncombe, (London, 1777), pp. 42, 50.

Wycombe, a living worth about £145.[291]

Obviously though, the bulk of clergy who had trouble providing adequately for themselves found themselves in that situation, not because of excesses, but because they did not earn enough from their benefices. The proportion of clergy in this position certainly fell in the interval between 1730 and 1780, as has been shown. But it has also been demonstrated that about 10 or 15 percent of the incumbents of Buckingham and Gloucester in 1780 had incomes that failed even to exceed the £50-level. For them, circumstances were very straitened; they simply struggled to fulfil their basic requirements with what they earned from their benefices. Another thirty to forty percent of the whole earned between £50 and £100 a year; in this situation, making ends meet was more manageable, but they certainly could not aspire to great social advance or material enrichment on the basis of the value of their livings alone. The stratification of the wealth and social standing of the parochial clergy, so evident in other localities of England, was just as manifest in the archdeaconries of Gloucester and Buckingham.

Supplementing clerical incomes

Non-ecclesiastical sources of incomes: private property

> The ways whereby temporal Men provide for themselves and their Families are foreclosed unto us. All that we have to sustain our miserable life with is but a remnant of God's own treasure, so far already diminished and clipt....[292]

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[291] GRO, GDR Sequestrations.

[292] Hooker, vol. 3, book 8, p. 284.

By the eighteenth century Hooker's remarks about the limits of clerical earnings had certainly been challenged in the sense that parsons did not necessarily confine their earnings to those which the Church could provide. A combination of both financial necessity and the lure of pecuniary advancement were strong inducements for eighteenth-century parsons to look beyond their livings for sources of income to supplement the remuneration that the Church could provide. It was by no means only poor clergy who did this, and in many cases it was the more prosperous clergy who could most readily supplement their income from outside sources. Certainly this was case with regard to private property that parsons owned. Such property would most often have been inherited from a clergyman's family, but may have also have been accrued through fortuitous marriages or through a parson's own professional ability and good fortune in being presented to well-rewarded benefices or offices.

Such private income might derive from a variety of different types of property. One of the most materially and professionally useful forms of property a clergyman could own was the advowson of a benefice. Since "they offered a cheap way of cashing in on any improvement in benefice values", an energetic speculative market existed in advowsons in the eighteenth century. [293] The sale of the right of presentation for a fixed number of "turns" could also provide

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[293] Virgin, p. 181, also pp. 182-5; Langford, *Public Life*, pp. 18-19.

ready money without the complete loss of the property. The probable value of an advowson on the open market was recognised by Rev. Charles Hughes of Coln St Dennis, who stipulated in his will that the advowson of that parish that he owned be sold to provide for his wife after his decease.[294] Had he a surviving male heir, which apparently he did not, it is unlikely that Hughes would have wanted the advowson sold: an advowson owned by a clerical family was doubly valuable, since besides its material worth, it could provide a benefice, and thereby a career and income, for successive generations of a family. Clerical ownership of advowsons was widespread in both archdeaconries during the period, and became more commonplace as the century progressed.[295]

Some clergymen had sufficient money to invest in stocks, bonds and annuities, which would bring a generally increased return over time. Examples of clergy with this sort of property included Matthew Knapp, who had money in Orphan's Stock, Peter Le Grand of Dyrham had £3000 in consolidated three percent annuities, and Tetbury's John Wight, who had £1050 in South Seas Annuities.[296] Charles Coxwell, perhaps the wealthiest parochial clergyman in Gloucester during the period, had £7600 invested in government securities and £1800 in three percent consolidated bank annuities.[297]

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[294] GRO, Will 15 1775.
[295] See Table 19.
[296] BRO, Will of Matthew Knapp, D/A/We/84/185; PRO, Prob. 11/1227; GRO, will of John Wight D48/F1.
[297] Moir, p. 82 n. 116.

Henry Mease of Alderton also was a "shrewd and hard-headed businessman" who made considerable profits by carefully invested loans. In 1732, for instance, he had seven mortgages totalling £900, and seemingly had few moral or ethical qualms about charging interest to his borrowers.[298] Occasionally, clergymen had investments in rather unusual sources, such as John Warren of Kempsford and Naunton (and also a Prebend of Gloucester), who had money invested in the "Foundry Trade".[299]

Unsurprisingly in a landed society, the most common form of personal property which clergymen owned was land. A rough survey of the extant wills of the clergymen of the archdeaconries of Gloucester and Buckingham, shows that at significant proportion of them bequeathed landed property to their heirs. From the evidence the wills, much of the land the clergy owned was to be found the archdeaconry in which they were beneficed. Very often it was within or close to the parish that they served. Clergymen purchased land with the same intentions as laymen: they were motivated by a desire to sink superfluous income into a traditional, profitable and secure investment. In doing so, they would hopefully reap a reasonable return. More than that it might entrench themselves more fully into the local community,

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[298] A. Tindal Hart, *Country Counting House: the Story of Two Eighteenth-Century Clerical Account Books*, (London, 1962), p. 96; see also B.A. Holderness, 'The Clergy as Money-Lenders in England, 1550-1700', in Rosemary O'Day, & Felicity Heal eds., *Princes and Paupers in the English Church 1500-1800*, (Leicester, 1981), p. 196.

[299] ibid., p. 59.

especially if they had been newcomers to the neighbourhood, establishing roots in the area where their benefice lay, perhaps for generations to come. Some clergy who were from wealthy and gentle backgrounds were fortunate to inherit the landed property they owned. This land was most often in the same archdeaconry as their benefice, a consequence of the fact that a significant proportion of clerics were beneficed in the county where they were born. But there were several with land outside the borders of both archdeaconries, especially in Oxfordshire. Others, however, had estates in rather more far-flung corners of the country, and even empire; again these were usually in places from where they or their family had originated. Amongst them were William Cole, whose father had left him "a very decent & comfortable" estate in Cambridgeshire; the rector of Avening, Nathaniel Thornbury, had estates in Surrey and Gloucestershire, and similarly, James Webster of Dursley and Stroud had land in the latter, as well as in Lancashire.[300] Benjamin Gatton of Dinton owned property in Suffolk, and Robert Armistead of Ellesborough had land in Yorkshire where he was born, whilst Richard Rice of Quenington and Winrush had lands (and an advowson) in Berkshire, Gloucestershire, and Ireland; Penniston Hastings of Bledington died in possession of land in Gloucester and Barbados.[301]

All these sources of private income might supplement a

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[300] Cole, *Blecheley Diary*, p. 335; GRO, D131/T9; D48/F1.
[301] PRO, Prob. 11/673 sig 186; BRO, D/A/We/80/91; GRO, GE 155, DS307/41.

parson's earnings affording him a more comfortable lifestyle, and provide particularly welcome relief if the benefice was not well endowed. In many instances, however, it was not the incumbents of the poorer livings who had the benefit of a private income. All the clergymen just cited, with the exception of Penniston Hastings, had been presented to benefices worth more than £100, and many of them were in possession of livings with an income of more than £200. Blecheley was worth £260 in 1780, and probably not much less than that to Cole; Avening was valued at £200 during Thornbury's incumbency, while Rice's benefices brought him £140 and £33 a year respectively, and Warren had livings worth £230 and £250 per annum.

Clearly many clergy already in the fortunate position of having a private income were presented to the better-valued benefices. Possession of this personal wealth in most instances preceded the parson's clerical career: such clergymen generally came from the middling or upper echelons of society, from propertied families of which they were amongst the heirs. Additionally, their social status provided them with a network of relations, friends and acquaintances and contacts who could present them to a wealthy benefice, if their family was not in possession of an advowson itself.

A prime example of such a clergyman was Charles Coxwell. Son of a gentleman, he was born into a family that had been prominent in Gloucestershire since the sixteenth century. Coxwell inherited the family estate in Ablington, property to which he subsequently made

additions. During his clerical career he was presented to five benefices (and held several curacies), amongst them, Bibury, one of the most lucrative livings in the diocese. Coberley also brought him at least £200 a year, and Barnsley, which he held for his entire career, was worth £140 in 1779, twice that by the time of his death in 1829. He was also chaplain to the bishops of Bangor and Bristol. The combination of earnings from his career as well as inherited and accrued property, managed with great financial acumen, made Coxwell a very wealthy man, who left more than £26 000 in cash legacies alone to his heirs.[302]

Of course Coxwell is a rather extreme example, but his case illustrates well the connection between a cleric's private wealth and the progress of his career. Certainly there were other clergy of lesser origins, who by virtue of erudition and good luck caught the eye of a patron able to present them to a comfortable living; in this way, they might amass sufficient money to invest in non-ecclesiastical property such as that described above. But this route to affluence was more uncertain, difficult, and undoubtedly rarer, for clergy who had not enjoyed the good fortune of being born into a propertied family.

Non-ecclesiastical sources of income: other employment

Another important source of additional income for the clergy of the

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[302] GRO, D269B, Will of Charles Coxwell.

eighteenth century was that derived from preferments held, or from employment undertaken by a cleric in addition to his ministry. There were numerous clergymen throughout the Church at this time who had both ecclesiastical and secular preferments beyond their benefices. Sometimes this was through a decision on their part to retain positions already occupied before they were presented to their benefice. This was particularly the case for university men, generally those whose colleges had presented them to a benefice, but who continued to hold fellowships and academic preferments within their colleges or the university. Unsurprisingly, given the proximity of both archdeaconries to Oxford in particular, there are numerous instances of incumbents of these areas who were in this fortunate position, such as Thomas Bray, Cumberland's predecessor at Driffield, who was Rector of Lincoln College in Oxford; Joseph Spence of Great Horwood in Buckingham was also Professor of Modern History at Oxford, whilst his colleague at Foscott, William Cleaver was Principal of Brasenose College. The presence of Eton College in the archdeaconry of Buckingham similarly saw several incumbents of the region, like Henry Sleech, (Farnham Royal), William Cooke (Denham), John Pitts (Great Brickhill) or William Langford (Hedsor), retain fellowships or teaching positions at the College when they were installed in benefices.

There were, however, other clergy with both archdeaconries who did not hold preferments such as these, but did undertake paid employment outside of their ecclesiastical duties. It is unclear exactly

how many parsons had such a supplementary income or employment, but it is possible to discover the variety of work that some of them undertook, and to gauge the varying effects such work may have had upon their various material circumstances.

The vast majority of such clergy were involved in teaching, which is unsurprising given both their education and the catechismal aspects of their clerical work. Teachers included men like Cumberland, who set up a school in his home and who hoped to receive between £150 and £200 a year; similarly, in addition to his financial investments and his living, Henry Mease set up a school, which was also provided an extremely lucrative income for him.[303] Others were appointed to well-established schools: John Washbourne of Siddington St Mary and St Peter (£210) was master of Cirencester School, and Benjamin Newton Snr of Sandhurst and Brockrup (£118) was a schoolmaster at the Gloucester Cathedral School. In Buckinghamshire, Timothy Tripp Lee of Towersey (unknown value) taught at the village school at Thame for twenty-six years, and John Kipling had also been a teacher there, which undoubtedly provided a great supplement to the pittance he received from Chearsley and Chilton with Eastington.[304] Some parsons taught on a smaller scale with a few pupils at home or as tutors to the children of the elite, such as John Pitts, who besides Eton, was

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[303] Cumberland, *Letters*, p. 116, Richard to George Cumberland, 14 January 1777; Hart, p. 96.

[304] Chilton and Eastington were worth just £10 by 1780 and Chearsley's value was put at £6 in 1736.

also the tutor of Sir Peter Warburton. Tutoring could sometimes prove lucrative beyond the immediate financial rewards, because it might provide useful contacts for the future: William Dodd had been the tutor to Lord Chesterfield, to whose patronage he owned his benefice of Wing.

Teaching was by no means the only activity that clerics of the eighteenth century used to supplement their incomes, though examples of others are rather less prevalent. There may have been some money to be made in the sale of published works, and there were certainly a number of authors of theological and secular works amongst the incumbents of Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire. On a more utilitarian level, some incumbents worked in the medical sphere: Thomas Bradbury of Bradwell (£70) was an apothecary, John Lord of Murseley (£100) was described by Cole as "practising Physic" and Theophilus Hill of Hedgerely (£105) was a university-educated doctor, work which undeniably added to the rather mediocre incomes they derived from their benefices.[305] In the case of Lord, such work was definitely motivated by economic need, for he had "12 Children grown up, & hanging upon him, with a small Living,...an encumbered Estate, & his sons, not doing the best for themselves".[306] Undoubtedly there were other clergymen besides these who provided medical treatment to

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[305] Cole, *Blecheley Diary*, p. 43; Michael Rice, *A South Bucks Village: the History of Hedgerley*, 2 vols., (Hedgerley, 1982), p. 45. Hill was fortunate enough to derive income from several sources: as incumbent of Hedgerley, as a prebend of Peterborough, and as a doctor.

[306] Cole, *Blecheley Diary*, p. 43.

members of their parishes, both as an act of charity and as a supplement to their living. Similarly it is likely, though no examples were found, that there were parsons who acted as scribes or notaries for members of the community, and many were probably recompensed for this work.

Whether this work was motivated by actual economic necessity because of poverty, by desire for material improvement for those better-off parsons, or by an interest and calling beyond the Church, depended upon the individual means and personalities of each cleric concerned. In many respects, the undertaking of such additional employment could be a double-edged sword for clergymen. He might be accused of neglecting his duties, as was the case with Joseph Gegg of Corse and Ashelworth (then worth around £90 a year). He was cited to appear in the Gloucester Consistory Court in 1740 for neglect of his parishes, charges arising from the fact that he allegedly was too busy "acting as the master of the Collegiate School in Gloucester" to attend them.[307] Socially, a parson might be regarded as undermining his dignity if the work he undertook was viewed as too menial for one of his status; but such opinions very much depended on the nature of the work, the motivation for its being undertaken, the character and circumstances of the parson concerned. Indeed, it might be argued that such employment helped to entrench the parson within his

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[307] GRO, GDR B4/1/775.

parish.[308] He might bring skills or services to a community in which they had previously been lacking, and it certainly assisted in his integration into the every-day life of the parish in whatever social or financial circumstances he found himself.

Augmenting ecclesiastical incomes and property

There were incumbents who had neither skills, nor the good fortune, nor inclination to look beyond the Church for a livelihood. But many of them, along with their colleagues who did have external incomes, were not averse to maximising or ameliorating the property bestowed upon their living, or seeking to capitalise upon the opportunities afforded to them by their vocation. It has already been shown that there were parsons who furthered their prospects and their property by acquiring livings outside the two archdeaconries studied here, and holding them pluralistically with their Buckingham or Gloucester benefices. There were also incumbents of Buckingham and Gloucester who successfully exploited other chances offered to them within the Church and the Establishment, accruing ecclesiastical offices and promotions, accepting lectureships, or seeking chaplaincies to royalty and nobility, regiments and hospitals. There are numerous examples of clergy who enjoyed such higher preferments amongst the parsons of the two archdeaconries, and altogether they represented about 5 to 10

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[308] See also Mark Smith, 'The reception of Richard Podmore: Anglicanism in Saddleworth 1700-1830', in Walsh et.al., p. 119.

percent of all the incumbents in each during the period between 1730 and 1780. It is difficult to clarify their numbers exactly because of the problems in tracing the careers of all the incumbents in the two regions.

Certainly there appears to have been little difference in their proportion in each region, despite the location of a cathedral, with its inherent offices, within the archdeaconry of Gloucester. There was a noticeable proportion of clergy beneficed in Gloucester who had preferments in the local chapter, but there were also other clergy who had external preferments in several other cathedrals, as well as with nobles and the royal family. This was matched in Buckingham by an even wider variety of cathedrals of which its incumbents were members, including Lincoln unsurprisingly, as well as others throughout England, and a similar sprinkling of other ecclesiastical positions with peers, royalty and institutions.

Such clergymen were very fortunate, for the earnings and property of such dignities, appointments or additional benefices would undeniably enhance the income that they received from their parochial preferments in Gloucester and Buckingham. With so many variations and variables, however, it is impossible to calculate the exact difference remuneration from such offices made to the incomes of local incumbents. Many of those who rose to the highest echelons of the Church originated from the middle and upper ranks of society, a status which also gave them ready access to a private income. It was possible that in some spectacular cases, benefice earnings made only a small

contribution to a cleric's worth: Cole was amazed at the affluence of some of the clergy in the highest echelons of the Church, comments prompted by his discovery that Bishop Thomas of Salisbury, the former bishop of Lincoln, had amassed a fortune of £150,000 at the time of his death.[309]

Such higher clergy (and extra-archidiaconical pluralists) had a greater significance than their earnings derived from their additional ecclesiastical commitments might suggest: in many instances these commitments took them to live and work in places beyond their benefices, making them non-resident. The pitfalls of non-residency for the Church and laity alike have been well rehearsed by contemporaries and historians alike. These aside, non-residency could bring benefits for clergymen other than its practitioners, in that it provided employment for other clerics. Often non-resident clergy would engage an outsider as stipendary curate to perform his duties in his absence; such appointments were generally made during prolonged absences and established on a long-term basis in return for a fixed (often meagre) stipend and usually accommodation as well. But sometimes a non-resident incumbent would not employ a newcomer to the community as his stipendary curate, looking instead to the clergy who were resident in nearby livings to undertake the cure of his parish. He could also make a stipendary arrangement with a particular local incumbent, or he could instead make a looser, temporary arrangement with a neighbour

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[309] Cole, *Blecheley Diary*, pp. 52-3.

or neighbours. These "temporary" curacies could arise because the commitments of the non-resident meant that his absences were erratic, rather than a permanent occurrence.[310] In a similar fashion, parsons who were absent whilst involved in personal matters such business, study, or recreational travel, or who were too ill or infirm to conduct their parochial duties would frequently arrange for another local incumbent to act in their place. It might also be applied to vacant livings where a patron might recompense a parson who performed services until the benefice was presented. This locum-type arrangement was quite commonplace and was normally made on an informal and ad hoc basis, or might involve a sort of casual agreement amongst several neighbouring clergy. The following quotation from the diary of Robert Gegg, who was acting as his father's curate in Ashelworth at the time of writing, illustrates the way such arrangements could be made:

> Engaged to serve the Church of Maisemore tomorr[ow]. Mr B. Webb being gone to London to take Priest's Orders, and his Brother having engag'd Mr B. Newton to take my Turn at St Michael's To morrow [sic] Morning. A[t] 8. O.Clock received a note from Mr Sparkes, desiring to Exchange with him Maisemore for Hartpury. Granted.[311]

In this way a parson could serve several parishes on a Sunday: Cumberland had noted in the letter quoted in the Introduction that he

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[310] The term is used by Best, p. 16.

[311] GRO, D1770 Gegg diary.

had returned from "serving 3 Churches" one Sunday.[312] Timothy Shaw of Bierton (Bucks) was known as the "Angel of the Seven Churches" because he served not only Bierton and its "annexed members, Stoke Mandeville and Buckland" but he "very frequently extended his assistance to the neighbouring Clergy of less Activity", having at one time "no less than that number to provide for".[313] William Cole, too, was not averse to serving for his neighbouring clerics, filling in, for instance, for Edward Dicey at Walton and Anthony Nourse Sanderson at Newton Longueville.[314]

Such a commitment might involve conducting only the Sunday service or it could involve all clerical duties. Cole, for example, on one day churched a woman, and on another married a couple at Newton Longueville during Sanderson's absence, magnanimously forgoing his fee for the latter, but ensuring it was paid instead to "Mr Sanderson...on his Return".[315] The recompense clergymen received for replacing another cleric depended very much upon the relationship between the men concerned, and in some instances may have been conducted as favours, swapped with each other as the year unfolded. In other instances, incumbents were paid for all the services they performed, and were allowed to keep the fees received from any additional rites they performed: Cole provides yet another example

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[312] Cumberland, *Letters*, p. 274, Richard to George Cumberland, 20 January 1781.
[313] Lipscomb, vol. 2, p. 102.
[314] Cole, *Blecheley Diary*, pp. 86,87, 93, 126.
[315] ibid., pp. 86, 87.

here, as he had preached on occasion for the curate at Whaddon, who reciprocated for Cole while he was abroad in Paris. Upon his return Cole paid him for this service, 3 Guineas for the "6 Sundays he had officiated for me only once a day".[316]

The benefits of this type of arrangement were various for clergy and community alike, something of which, despite their abhorrence of clergy serving more than one church, even the episcopacy were aware.[317] It ensured that parishes were served every week, and that, in spite of an absent or incapacitated incumbent, the pastoral needs of parishioners were met to varying extents. That the officiating priest was a man located within or close to their community may well have been an advantage (over, say, a curate who rode out weekly from an Oxford college to preach), in addressing the pastoral demands of the congregation of the non-resident incumbent. It created, too, a network or community between the clergymen of a locality, who could offer this type of professional support and assistance to each other. Most importantly in this context, payments received for work as a temporary or stipendary curate provided an extra income for the officiating parson, a sum which may well have provided pocket-money for middling clerics, and a welcome augmentation to the earnings of poverty-stricken or less-comfortably placed incumbents.

This redistribution of the local ecclesiastical workload and

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316 ibid., pp. 4-5.

317 BL, Add. MS 39313, 'Charge deliver'd to the Clergy, Ch W[s] &c of the Diocese of Gloucester. At the Fourth Triennial Visitation 1747', f. 157r.

finances clearly was not confined to any particular rank of clergy, nor would it necessarily supply a great or secure income. Essentially, the most effective way to make a more secure improvement to clerical incomes in both the short and long term was to augment benefice values, which might provide the added advantage of commitment to duty. Such improvements might mitigate the need, if not the desire, of parsons to look beyond their livings for worthy remuneration.

In the case of poorer clergy, especially those earning less than £50 per annum, augmenting the value of their benefice was "an easier thing to lament y^{n} to know how to remedy", not least because the root of the living's impoverishment in most cases lay in its lack of a landed endowment and/or the impropriation of its tithes.[318] As has been shown, this often made it harder to take direct advantage of the changes that occurred to agricultural production and land tenure during the period. If clerics were, moreover, reliant upon a stipend, it was rare for their income to keep pace with the rising value of the tithes paid by parishioners to the impropriator, if indeed, it improved at all, as has been illustrated above.

In instances such as these clergymen often required outside assistance to secure an improvement in the value of their deficient livings. In this respect, the work of the Queen Anne's Bounty, which has been referred to in numerous instances throughout this discussion, and the contribution that it made to improving the value of benefices

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[318] ibid., f. 155r.

should not be underestimated.[319] In providing grants of £200 (both by lot and to meet the equivalent benefactions), it attempted to achieve the immediate and the long-term improvement of *benefice* values and thereby clerical incomes, rather than granting directly to a particular cleric by whom it might be squandered. This notion was reinforced by the fact that the grant was invested in land, viewed as the most secure and important form of property by eighteenth-century society. Undeniably, the legal and political constraints imposed upon the Bounty meant that its work was piecemeal, and the results erratic: some benefices in need were left untouched by augmentations both by lot or from a private benefaction; others were awarded several grants. The degree of improvement such grants made to livings varied from parish to parish and is difficult to quantify; certainly fortunes were not made, but circumstances were usually ameliorated, if only a little. Virgin estimates that once invested in land, an grant could raise the value of a living by about £10 a year.[320] In all, some 28 benefices in Buckingham and 59 in Gloucester received assistance from the Bounty in the years from 1730 to 1780, which represented close to one-third of the parishes on the 1736 list in the former, and about 40 percent in the latter. That such grants amended rather solved the plight of these low-valued parishes is measured by the fact that many remained eligible for assistance from the Bounty despite having received not just one but

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[319] See Best for a full description of the work and effectiveness of the Queen Anne's Bounty.

[320] Virgin, p. 65.

several grants. This is illustrated by the fact that the 28 parishes augmented in Buckingham received a total of 36 benefactions between them; likewise in Gloucester, the 59 benefices endowed there received 91 grants during this period. Aside from the fact that the Bounty administrators concentrated in the first instance upon livings worth under £10 a year, and from 1747, less than £20, the award of benefactions by lot was just that, and was as truly arbitrary as the lottery of rectories, vicarages and curacies that made up the Church.

In both archdeaconries the number of augmentations made by lot exceeded those made to match private benefactions, in Gloucester by about two to one, and in Buckingham by a slightly smaller ratio. If it had been possible for the Bounty to persuade more private benefactors to provide funds for augmentation, logically, more benefices in both areas would have had the advantage of additional financial support. Of course a greater proportion of livings (those worth up to £35 from 1736 until 1757, when it became £45 or below) were also eligible for augmentation if supported in this way. There certainly appears to have been no shortage of good-will towards the endeavours of the Bounty amongst lay people who might potentially have acted as benefactors. The evidence of the Bounty files of the parishes in this period shows many patrons and impropriators willing to improve the stipends they paid to their incumbents, and even to guarantee payment that stipend as part of a arrangement for the benefice to receive a benefaction. This good-will may have been

prompted by genuinely charitable or pious motives, but may also have emanated from the fact that an improvement in a benefice's value also benefited the patron should he wish to sell the advowson.[321] Indeed, it was in instances where augmentations trod upon a patron's own property rights that reluctance to assist augmentation becomes apparent. A donative curacy could not receive money from the Bounty unless its patron agreed that it would become subject to episcopal jurisdiction, thereby curtailing the rights of its owner.[322] Some patrons were grudgingly acquiescent to this. Sir John Guise made great concessions to his parish of Elmore, not only increasing the stipend, as mentioned previously: then Bishop Benson "with much difficulty at last prevailed upon...[him] to suffer his Curate at Elmore to take a Licence"; ultimately it seems Guise had "an intention of augmenting afterwards this Cure in conjunction with ye Queen's Bounty."[323] Other patrons were not convinced:

> I have seen Mr. Wither since I was at your Chambers, I am afraid an Augmentation to the Cur[acie]s of Barton and Chetwood [sic] will not take place this year; Mr. Wither being very apprehensive that he shall lose the right of Nomination to those Cures if they receive the Benefit of Queen Ann's [sic] Bounty. I have used every Argument in my power to convince him to the Contrary but without Success.[324]

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[321] See ibid., p. 69.

[322] Best, pp. 90-1.

[323] CERC, F1627 Elmore, Martin Benson to Queen Anne's Bounty, 28 December 1748. Benson's underlining.

[324] CERC, F297 Barton with Chetwode, William Wither (incumbent) to Robert Chester, 15 November 1781.

Concerns such as these, allied with the impact of the Mortmain Act, and perhaps the relatively large sum required for such benefaction, combined to limit private augmentations of benefices with the Queen Anne's Bounty to the numbers and proportions seen in the two archdeaconries.

The work of the Queen Anne's Bounty can, in overall terms, account for the improvement in value of only a small proportion of the benefices of Buckingham and Gloucester. The unification of a handful of other poor benefices in both archdeaocnries assisted in augmenting a few others.[325] But it was increases in the value of tithes, whether paid in cash or kind, improved farming practices on glebes, and the enclosure of parishes which made the most significant contributions to the widespread improvement in incomes many of the clergy of these archdeaconries enjoyed. The degree to which clergy were themselves proactive in improving their own remuneration varied from parson to parson and from parish to parish. There were undoubtedly incumbents whose inclination or circumstances saw them happier to remain on the sidelines, taking advantage of an improved tithe return as the productivity of the countryside around them advanced, or, for some, of the commutation of their tithes as their parish was enclosed. But there were others who actively sought to enhance the value of their livings. Impelled by need, desire or both, they were, as seen above, willing to

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[325] Including Great and Little Badminton, Seisincote and Longborough, Didmarton and Oldbury, in Gloucester, and Stoke Goldington and Gayhurst in Buckingham.

try new methods of farming, to co-operate with or even instigate the enclosure of their parish, and most importantly, to collect tithes more assiduously, if necessary, breaking worthless moduses or outdated compositions during the process.

Most perhaps adopted a pragmatic combination of both approaches, especially when it came to enclosure or collecting their tithes. Certainly the clergy needed to take such a *via media* if they were to steer their way through the divergent admonitions they received from their prelates and handbooks with regard to the property from which they derived their incomes. Fundamentally it was the duty of clergymen to safeguard their property from encroachments, for it was a sacred trust and it was incumbent upon them "to deliver [it] down to our Successors in as good order at ye least as we recd [sic] from our Predecessors."[326] More than that, it "is but common justice & w^{t} is by common law requir'd in all where there is only a tenure for life."[327] Clerical compliance with this caution is evinced during the period by the pursuit of dilapidations, or by the continuation of the old tradition of beating of the bounds, and production of a huge number of terriers which delineated a parson's rights and property. Yet if protecting their property meant not letting its value subside, clergy were also warned to not be too greedy or covetous in doing so,

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[326] BL, Add. MS 39313, Martin Benson's Sermons and Charges, 'Charge deliv'd to ye Clergy of ye Archdeaconry of Berks, at Abingdon, Newberry, & Reading, in June 1724', f. 89r.
[327] ibid.

because to do so could have an inimical effect upon their role as a pastor and moral leader of their congregation. Bishop Benson of Gloucester enjoined his clergy,

> Let not let our perpetual talk & enquiry be said to be concerning ye income of our benefice & the improvement of the temporal profits of it, But let you chiefly be about w^{t} is of ye chief importance, ye increase of vertue [sic] & relig^{n} in ye District under our care....[328]

Advice along both these lines - preservation yet moderation - was incessantly reiterated in the writings of the period; in practice, for the parson it required great skill to balance these principles, as well as changing social exceptions, as he sought to secure and enhance his property's worth.

Enclosure was one instigator of improvements to clerical incomes which required judicious action on the part of the parochial incumbent. Admittedly he was in a powerful position during enclosure negotiations, for upon his agreement rested the commutation of tithes, but ensuring that his own and his successors rights were not compromised was an important responsibility. Usually the provision made to compensate the cleric for his tithes and glebe was advantageous to the parson, though the degree to which this was so sometimes depended upon his skill at bargaining and the respect he was accorded at the negotiation table. But this advantage should not

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[328] BL, Add. MS 39313, 'Charge Deliv'd to the Clergy of the Diocese of Glocester. At the Second Triennial Visitation 1741', f. 130v

conceal the fact that there were clerics who were prepared to fight for what they perceived as their just dues, and that because of this disputes could arise over suitable compensation for ecclesiastical property. In Hartwell (Bucks), for instance, the rector Robert Smith and his patron and lord of the manor, Sir William Lee, upset a previously excellent relationship, as they engaged in a lengthy and sometimes acrimonious dispute over specific points of the enclosure of the parish in the 1770s. Smith was concerned to protect his own and his successors' rights, and it took much negotiation before the matter was settled to the satisfaction of both parties.[329] It may be, too that the parson's pragmatism and his position in the enclosure process could be applied not only to his own situation, but could be used to assist members of his congregation against an avaricious landed proprietor. Certainly there is evidence that clerics were not blind to the disadvantages of enclosure for others, especially the less prosperous. Cole, for instance, lamented the "baneful Practice of Inclosures" as an inhibitor of marriage amongst the young, because "small Farms [were] so difficult to be met with".[330]

More than enclosure, though, it was the thorny issue of tithe collection which required perhaps the most pragmatic approach from eighteenth-century clergymen, such as that described by Thomas Drake in 1754 with regard to the tithes of Amersham in Buckinghamshire.

> The Tythes [sic] are lett [sic] in general at 2^{s} p

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[329] BRO, D/Le/D12/16-53; D/Le/D14/57 Lee papers, esp. D/Le/D12/42.
[330] Cole, *Blecheley Diary*, p. 41.

> acre, which makes the bargains near the town very easy, where the Land is better considerably than at a greater distance; but to begin making alterations would unsettle the whole, and create a great deal of trouble. The Farms markt [sic] with the Figure (1) I know to have very good bargains of their Tythes, Those with the Figure (2) easy enough, and those with the Figure (3) I believe rather hard upon the Farmers.[331]

Drake was in the fortunate position of being the incumbent of a very wealthy benefice, but his comments clearly indicate why many parsons tried to take a judicious attitude when gathering tithes: changing the level of tithes demanded or the method by which they were taken, (sometimes to just the smallest degree), could provoke resentment amongst the affected parishioner or parishioners. Such ill will, could, if unresolved, escalate from irritation to hostility, from cross words to litigation. At worst it could alienate congregation and patron alike, jeopardising pastoral effectiveness, social relationships and even clerical career prospects. It could also prove costly and time consuming to bring to a resolution, and might damage future prospects of collecting tithes effectively.

Anecdotal examples, like those of Cumberland and Bosworth mentioned in Section I, demonstrate some of the problems that tithe disputes could cause. The disagreement involving the former did not go to court, but Cumberland's relationship with his patron was soured and he was forced to accept a compromise to settle the dispute which

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[331] BRO, PR4/3/9 Amersham, Drake's notebook.

was less than his full tithe entitlement. Bosworth, who had tried to settle amicably, suffered petty indignities, ranging from having "a chamber pot of urine" and "pig's dung" put into his tithe milk to having his milk hidden by the farmers in a hedge so that he could not find it, during his tithe dispute in the 1770s. He had to suffer the knowledge that Lord Ducie, the lord of the manor, supported these uncooperative tenants of his against Bosworth, as well as the accept the cost and inconvenience of defending his claim as far as the House of Lords.[332] The possibility that tithe gathering, and particularly changes to composition rates or customary collection routines, could descend to this sort of petty bickering or evolve into such a bloated court case was testament to the fact that each tithe collection potentially involved a collision of property rights. Protection of such property rights, however real or exaggerated they might be, was a fundamental hallmark of eighteenth-century English society's preoccupation with property.

It is, unfortunately, very difficult to count accurately the number of tithe disputes that arose in the parishes of Gloucester and Buckingham during the period, because of a lack of quantifiable evidence particularly in relation to disagreements that did not involve litigation. The number of disagreements that reached the litigious stage was quite small. The number of cases pursued through the Church courts amounted to just three cases in both archdeaconries

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[332] Rayner, vol. 2, p. 825.

reaching the Court of Arches during the same period, two of which actually involved tithe farmers, rather than clergymen.[333] John Rayner's summary of English civil tithe judgements up to 1783 suggests that between 1730 and 1780 there were only two cases in Buckinghamshire (Newton Longueville[334] in 1731 and Quainton[335] in 1745) and one in Gloucestershire (that of Dr Bosworth from Tortworth[336] between 1777 and 1779). This marked a noticeable decline in their number, twice as many such cases having occurred in the 1720s alone. Prosecutions for non-payment of tithes also seem to be relatively few in number during this period. Scrutiny of the available evidence did not uncover a large number of cases in either the secular or ecclesiastical courts of the archdeaconries, and those involving Quakers certainly waned during this period.[337]

In a highly litigious age, where the courts were looked to to defend all manner of property, the small number of legal actions relating to tithes is perhaps surprising. A number of factors contributed to this situation. In large part, it is probably indicative of the cost and inconvenience such cases incurred; the degree to which a

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[333] The parishes were Hanslope, 1752; Lower Guiting, 1743; and Tirley, 1779. The first and the last involved tithe farmers not clergy. Information derived from Jane Houston, ed., *Index of the Cases in the Record of the Court of Arches at Lambeth Palace Library 1660-1913*, (London, 1972).

[334] Rayner, vol. 2, pp 331-333.

[335] ibid., vol. 2, pp. 404-405.

[336] ibid., vol. 2, pp. 809-846; vol. 3, pp. 934-942.

[337] Records consulted include, IHR, B766, F.S. Hockaday, 'On the Consistory Court of Gloucester', p. 74. GRO, GDR B4/1 Consistory Court papers; D1340 Quaker Sufferings; Quarter Session papers. BRO, Q/SM/1 Quarter Session records, NQ1/61 Quaker Sufferings; D/A/V Visitation Presentments.

tithe dispute was pursued often had as much to do with tenacity and the means of the protagonists as it did about the demands involved. Poorer clergy were particularly disadvantaged in this situation, because they lacked the means to afford to litigate, but examples of the success of both lay and clerical tithe owners in such litigation may also been a disincentive for objecting tithe payers to seek legal remedy.[338] The Quaker problem, too, became less of an issue during the period too, both as their population declined during the period, and as those that remained were increasingly compliant in meeting tithe demands, influenced by the widespread contemporary conception of tithes as a ordinary property right rather than as a mark of religious affiliation.[339]

Further, there emerged during the eighteenth century a general acceptance of tithes as part of the "ordinary practice of agriculture and the intrinsic value of land", a view which probably created a mood of general acquiescence towards their payment, and served to mitigate use of the courts for redress.[340] Added to this, in many cases the enclosure of parishes saw tithes commuted to landed endowments, thereby entirely removing the conflict over tithes from a growing number of parishes during the eighteenth century.

Certainly disagreements over tithe collection and payment continued to arise during this period, but in both archdeaconries it is clear that they were resolved within the parish. This meant negotiation

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[338] Best, pp. 14-5.
[339] Virgin, p. 18; Langford, *Public Life*, pp. 15, 16.
[340] Langford, p. 16.

and accommodation, hard bargaining and good will on both sides. A preference by a parson, for example, to take tithes by composition rather than in kind at least banished the potential for flash points in the fields while tithes were being collected, shifting any tension to the negotiating table where it might, in theory at least, be dealt with more civilly. A cleric, unlike a lay impropriator, had to take account of the pastoral consequences of any dispute as much as the economic benefits it might bring, and this was an important consideration in any demands he might pursue. The outcome might, in many but not all cases, be more of a compromise than a complete victory for the clergyman, but if it provided a workable solution and avoided escalation, both he and his fellow disputant might well have been satisfied, albeit grudgingly. Whether impropriators were able to gain more than clergy during such disputes is difficult to assess, but a settlement that did not undermine pastoral relationships was obviously of great value to a parson's work, and could actually have a material benefit, if it meant that other parishioners paid their tithes quiescently.

At this point, it is important to emphasise that though tithe disputes were a serious matter, they were the exception, rather than the norm of the tithe collection process. Irritating tithes may have been to all concerned, but it would be a mistake to see the eighteenth-century parish as a perpetual battleground over their collection. There are some instances of fierce disputes over tithes in these archdeaconries, but the majority do not appear to have been lengthy; nor was evidence

found in either region of an entire community in conflict with their priest over tithes. No doubt this could occur, but in Gloucester and Buckingham, disagreements were usually concentrated between the tithe owner, who might often be a layman not a cleric, against individuals, such as the lord of the manor, or small groups with a vested interest in particular land or customary rights. It must be reiterated too, that the part played by the character, circumstances and ambitions of the parson went a long way to determining the course of a dispute. To come full circle, the pragmatic approach displayed by Drake was perhaps the Hanoverian parson's best means of avoiding conflict with in his community, whilst obtaining the best income possible from his benefice.

To highlight acquiescence and pragmatism in the tithe collection process provides a counterpoint to historians' traditional emphasis upon the resentment and conflict that tithe undeniably caused in some instances.[341] It is only in recent times that historians have begun to challenge this stereotype of conflict over tithes.[342] That historians have highlighted the acrimony caused by tithes more than many other aspects of eighteenth-century ecclesiastical life, however, is in large measure reflective of the vast literature which tithes generated

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[341] For example, Evans, *Contentious Tithe*, esp. Chapter 3, or his article 'Some Reasons for the Growth of English Rural Anti-Clericalism c.1750-c.1830', *Past and Present,* 66 (1975), pp. 84-109; Alan Wharham, 'Tithes in Country Life', *History Today*, 22 (June 1972), pp. 426-433.

[342] Most especially Jeremy Gregory, see his introduction to Secker, Thomas, *The Speculum of Archbishop Secker*, ed. Jeremy Gregory, Church of England Record Society, II, (1995), pp. xix-xx and Gregory, Thesis, pp. 147, 155.

during the period. Contemporary commentators condemned, defended, suggested improvements and alternatives to tithes in hundreds of pamphlets, essays, cartoons, books and sermons during the period. These works, by lay and clerical authors, were an expression of a wider debate within eighteenth-century society about the remuneration and incomes of clergymen, about clerical property, its adequacy and distribution, and place in the propertied world.[343] This depiction and evaluation of clerical property in the archdeaconries of Gloucester and Buckingham shows how facets of this debate applied in practical terms to the clergyman in his parish. Evidently there were inequities within the distribution of clerical property in the parishes of these areas, as throughout England. Yet on a day to day level, the parochial clergyman could address only his own circumstances, managing them, however satisfactorily or unsatisfactorily, in the light of the needs and expectations of himself, his family and the community in which he lived and worked.

In this way, it is impossible to delineate a single portrait of the eighteenth-century parson and his property: the distinctive features of each parish and individual clergyman's personality combined to make every cleric's circumstances unique. It is possible, however, to discern broad trends with regard to clerical property from the evidence of Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire. It is clear, firstly, that benefice values, and thereby clerical incomes, were generally improving during

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[343] See Gregory, 'Just and Sufficient' for fuller discussion of this debate.

the period. The clergy as a body were thus increasingly prosperous, though inevitably there would always be the vast spectrum of incomes amongst them. It is apparent, too, that most clergy were prepared - or forced - to go to great lengths to maintain and to ameliorate their incomes. They were willing to look to a variety of sources, both ecclesiastical and secular, to supplement their parochial incomes; and further, they were not afraid to manage and even to exploit their property to achieve better returns from it. This is particularly evident with regard to the protection of their parochial rights and dues. In this way, property gave clergy a sense of their unique, even professional identity. Yet at the same time, clerical attitudes towards their property also differentiated them little from other propertied individuals in the period in this regard, and indeed, were as much prompted by secular ambitions as theological justifications. Such notions may well have been reinforced by lay owners of ecclesiastical property such as tithes, who similarly wished to defend and enhance the value of their possession. Property, therefore, engaged clergymen within eighteenth-century society, and more particularly within the communities to which they ministered and which provided their livelihood, especially in the case of resident parsons. Property was a crucial component in the way parsons conducted themselves, their family life and their interaction in various spheres with the rest of the community.

PART B

CHAPTER 2

Clergy and Family Life

> Bishops, priests, and deacons are not commanded by God's law, either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage; therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other christian men, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness.[1]

The notion of a married priesthood was well-established and generally accepted by the eighteenth century. The image of the Hanoverian parsonage, where a clergyman lived with his wife and children, has become stereotypical to modern observers too, thanks in particular to the novels of Jane Austen. The part played by matrimony in the life of the eighteenth-century parson was significant, on both a personal and professional level, for as Austen's novels show, the Anglican parson was conspicuous in his community, making his personal conduct and his household a focus of parish attention.

Yet for all this, close study of the marital and domestic situation of the eighteenth-century parson has rarely been undertaken by historians. Many have touched on some aspects of this issue in their studies of components of the Church, or in social histories[2]; such work provides

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[1] 32nd Article, quoted in Richard Burn, *Ecclesiastical Law*, 6th edition, London, 1797, vol. 2, p. 454.

[2] Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, (London, 1977), e.g. pp. 48, 61, 378, 419-2; Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*. (London, 1987); William Gibson, 'Patterns of Nepotism and Kinship in the Eighteenth-Century Church', *Studies in Church History*, 14, 1987, pp. 382-389; Gregory, 'Just and Sufficient', pp. 321-

useful information, but it fails to provide a complete picture of the personal circumstances of the eighteenth-century clergyman. The few in-depth studies of clergymen's domestic lives tend to focus more attention upon both the immediate post-Reformation period or the Victorian era, with the eighteenth century serving, to varying degrees, as a mere stepping-stone in between.[3] Some recent work has begun to redress the balance and to consider this period more closely, though there is much more that could be done, especially in building up stronger regional depictions of the families of clergy.[4]

In part, the very patchy nature of the primary information available to reconstruct family histories contributes much to this neglect of eighteenth-century clerical marriage. This was found to be the case in the instance of Buckingham and Gloucester. Such gaps made quantifiable analysis very difficult, whilst much, but not all, of the anecdotal evidence which is available for these two archdeaconries relates most often to the more gentle or prosperous incumbents beneficed there. Despite these difficulties, it is certainly possible to uncover some interesting trends or

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332; Nicholas Cox, Bridging the Gap: A History of the Corporation the Sons of the Clergy over 300 Years 1655-1978, (Oxford, 1978); G.F.A. Best, 'Popular Protestantism in Victorian Britain' in *Ideas and Institutions of Victorian Britain*, ed. Robert Robson, (London, 1967), pp. 115-142.

[3] Margaret H. Watt, *The History of the Parson's Wife*, (London, 1943); Ruth Hillyer, 'The Parson's Wife in History', M.Phil. dissertation, University of London, 1971. The latter does include a useful statistical survey of the clergy in Rutland and Northampton between 1560 and 1900.

[4] Pruett, pp. 36-7 includes some work of this nature. See also Irene Collins, *Jane Austen and the Clergy*, (London, 1994), chapter 8; Jeremy Gregory, 'Gender and the Clerical Profession in England 1660-1850', Unpublished Article. (Henceforth, Gregory, 'Gender'). I am very grateful to Dr Gregory for allowing me to read this paper.

patterns relating to the marital and domestic experience of the clerics of these two areas in the eighteenth century.

A married priesthood: celibacy and morality

If, by the eighteenth century, the controversy over whether the celibate or married state was more appropriate for a man of God had abated since the debate that had accompanied the Reformation and ecclesiastical vacillations of the Tudor dynasty, it had not dimmed entirely. Certainly most Anglican writers affirmed that celibacy on theological grounds was not essential for the priesthood, nor, indeed, by the eighteenth century, even desirable. Henry Wharton, asserted in 1738 that

> We dislike not the Virginity of the *Romish* Clergy, but slight the Pretence, and condemn the Imposition of it. Experience demonstrates the one to be false, Reason the other to be unlawful[5]

and John Hawkins maintained vehemently that

> a life of Celibacy, as enjoined to the Clergy and Religious in Roman Catholic Countries is neither countenanced nor even insinuated in the sacred scriptures; that it is not founded upon the known practice of the Apostles, or others, in the first and present ages of Christianity...that is has been usurped by a false idea of the excellence of Virginity, and a preposterous notion of the uncleanness of marriage.[6]

Since this was the case, such writers usually argued, as Hawkins did, that to assume

> that there is any indecency in the use of marriage, which renders it unfit for a Priest to proceed from the chaste

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[5] Henry Wharton, *A Treatise of the Celibacy of the Clergy, which its Rise and Progress are Historically Considered*, vol. 1, (London, 1738), p. 339.

[6] John Hawkins, An Essay on the Law of Celibacy imposed on the Clergy of the Roman Catholic Church...., (Worcester, n.d.), pp. 192-3.

> embraces of a wife, to the administration of holy things, in a *moral* sense, is, really, absurd.[7]

Instead, because "neither Virginity, nor marriage, is essentially preferable to each other with respect to all mankind", each individual ought to make up his own mind about the most appropriate state for his circumstances and inclination, whatever "is most likely to contribute to the tranquillity of the mind".[8] Marriage, though, rather than chastity, came increasingly to be regarded as the more morally (and socially) suitable state for both lay people and clergymen: "the married state now became the ethical norm for the virtuous Christian".[9] With traditional theological justifications for wedlock - the avoidance of fornication and siring of legitimate children - sixteenth-century English theologians, and even more so their seventeenth- and eighteenth-century successors, also advanced the notion of matrimony based on mutual respect, fondness and companionship.[10]

This is not to suggest that affectionate marriage allowed the partners of the union to circumvent suitable moral limits. Unquestionably husband and wife were expected to be happy in their marriage, and to enjoy appropriate conjugal relations. Indeed, instances where this was not

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[7] Hawkins, p. 14. See also the Methodist John Wesley, *Thoughts on a Single Life*, (London, 1765), p. 3: "Nor can it be doubted. but persons may be as holy in a married, as it is possible to be in a single, state." Although Wesley wrote this, in the same work he advocated bachelorhood for those who wished to devote their lives entirely, and without distraction, to their faith. This may have been urged as much on theological grounds as a practical awareness of the demands of matrimony, and a symptom, no doubt, of his own failed marriage.

[8] Hawkins, p. 13.

[9] Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, (London, 1977), p. 135.

[10] ibid., p. 136. See also Kathleen M. Davies, 'Continuity and Change in Literary advice on Marriage', in ed. R.B. Outhwaite, *Marriage in Society: Studies in the Social History of Marriage*, (London, 1989), p. 58.

the case often provoked considerable gossip, particularly in close-knit neighbourhoods, and especially where it concerned clergymen, as is evinced by the remarks of William Cole,

> Mr Eyles of Bradwell [vicar of Bradwell] came to dinner....He told me a Deal of Scandal of other People, & forgot how the world talks of him: he said...that Mrs G.[oodwin] told Frank [Payne, her manservant] that her husband lay in the same Bed with her for 3 weeks together & never touched her: that Mr Knapp [rector of Shenley] & his Wife lived very unhappily: that they neither spoke to one another nor bedded together, sometimes for 3 weeks together.[11]

But sexual moderation was felt to be appropriate within marriages, and sexual abstinence ought certainly to govern relations outside of marriages, especially those entered into by the clergy. Wharton, for instance, rather idealistically believed that it could be said of all members of the Anglican communion, in contrast to Roman Catholics, that

> ...while we impose Celibacy upon none, nor deny Marriage to any, we promote a Voluntary Continence in many, and secure a real Chastity in all of the Clergy.[12]

Obviously this was not the case for all clergymen of the period, and of course it is not difficult to cite examples of scandalous clerics, and of the censure of critics, such as William Paley, who, decrying clerical immorality at a general level, wrote

> the crying sin and calamity of this country at present, is licentiousness in the intercourse of the sexes....What then shall we say, when we who ought to cure the malady, propagate the contagion. Upon this subject bear away one observation, that when you suffer yourselves to be

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[11] Cole, *Blecheley Diary*, p. 278-9.
[12] Wharton, p. 339.

> engaged in any unchaste connexion, you not only corrupt an individual by your solicitations, but debauch a whole neighbourhood by the profligacy of your example.[13]

Not only did they debauch the neighbourhood, the outrageous behaviour of clerics who did overstep such moral boundaries also became, at best, the target of much community titillation, or at worst, condemnation. In some extreme cases such condemnation resulted in a cleric being cited to appear before the ecclesiastical courts to account for his immoral behaviour. These court appearances seem to have been rare, though this is difficult to say for certain as the court papers, especially in the case of the archdeaconry of Buckingham are not complete. The court records for the Diocese of Lincoln are very inadequate for this period, and amongst those that survive no examples sexual impropriety relating to the archdeaconry of Buckingham. In Gloucester, where the records are more comprehensive though also patchy, only one instance of sexual misconduct was discovered for the eighteenth century. In 1773 George Gwinnett, Vicar of Horsley, was cited for "Drunkenness, profane Cursing and Swearing, and Lewdness, and for Indecent behaviour in his parish Church of Horsley and Churchyard", for "neglecting his pastoral and ministerial duty", and also for "adultery and fornication".[14] No indication survives in any source regarding the veracity of any of these particular allegations nor if there any evidence to suggest whether or not he was punished for these

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[13] William Paley, *Advice addressed to the Young Clergy of the diocese of Carlisle, in a Sermon....*, (London, 1781), p. 13.
[14] GRO, GDR B4/1/1464.

misdemeanours. Subsequent events leave the matter open to speculation: he resigned his living in 1774 but when he did so he was paid a pension of £10 per annum for life by the parish, a most unusual occurrence in the eighteenth century.[15] He died in 1779.

Complaints such as these were sometimes prompted by difficult relationships between the parson and members of his parish, and may, in fact, have had little or no substance. But, conversely, it is very unlikely that the lack of any record of accusations about clerical sexual impropriety in either of the two archdeaconries over the period means that such misbehaviour did not occur. It may be that, similarly, it usually went unreported unless the bond between the parties concerned became strained.

One striking illustration of constant sexual intemperance which was never reported to the ecclesiastical authorities is evinced by Thomas Goodwin. His near farcical misadventures are recorded with bemused delight by William Cole throughout his diary, and provided a "staple conversational diet" for Cole and his neighbours.[16] Goodwin, who was rector of Loughton in Buckinghamshire, had, it seems, a particular and unrepentant penchant for his maid-servants. On at least two occasions during the short period that the *Blecheley Diary* covers, Goodwin's licentiousness is revealed. In January 1766, Cole noted in passing that the

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[15] GRO, GDR P181/ OV2/2; also cited in VCH Gloucester, vol. XI, p. 182.
[16] Cole, *Blecheley Diary*, p. 1.

rector's wife and mother-in-law, Mrs Holt, drank coffee with him and "they both cried & told me of Mr G'.s ill Humours, except with the Maid, who was going away with Child."[17] Eighteen months later Cole said that "Mr Knapp told me that Mr Goodwin was in great Affliction, on Account of their late Maid Servant who went away a Fortnight ago, & has reported that Mr G. offered her 5 Guineas to lie with her, which on her Refusal he offered to double to say nothing of it."[18] This information was confirmed the next day by

> Mrs Holt & Mrs Goodwin [who] came in the Morning to look over my Linnen & to see what wanted mending &c....they told me of Mr Goodwin's offering the Maid, soon after she came to them, in November last, to lie with her; that she at another Time gave him a slap in the Face & made it black for some Time....Mr Goodwin came by Dinner, but said not a word. Mrs Holt said that he had desired her to say, on being in Company, that [she] had heard of it, that Goodwin once being in Liquor, had put his hand under the Maid's Coats: but she said she would tell no Lyes about them.[19]

Cole also notes allegations about Mrs Goodwin's behaviour, about which rumours were also rife, and while he denounces neither party's behaviour, he does conclude shrewdly "I suppose they are both faulty."[20]

Instances of moral lapse such as these, whether within or outside wedlock, undermined some of the obvious benefits which matrimony provided pastorally to the early modern parson.

In theory, marriage ought to have protected a cleric from the

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[17] ibid., p. 9.
[18] ibid., p. 270.
[19] ibid., p. 272-3.
[20] ibid.

gossip and speculation which could naturally surround a man of such prominence in small communities. It ought, also to have been, and for most undoubtedly was, a means of tempering lascivious or incontinent behaviour, and of avoiding undermining a parson's moral credibility before his flock, distracting his parishioners from his ecclesiastical message and pastoral contribution. Writing in the early seventeenth century, George Herbert had recommended marriage to the country parson for both these reasons.

> But yet as the temper of his body may be, or as the temper of his parish may be, where he may have occasion to converse with women, and that among suspicious men, and *other like circumstances considered*, he is rather married, than unmarried.[21]

In this way a cleric might avoid conjecture about his morality, especially as he went about his ecclesiastical duties.

Herbert's work, which was still read in the eighteenth century,[22] also provided similar guidance for the unmarried parson:

> [he] finds opportunities of having his meat dress'd and other services done by men servants at home. If he be unmarried, and sojourn, he never talks to any woman alone, but in the audience of others, and that seldom, and then also in a serious manner, never jestingly or sportfully. *He is very circumspect in all companies, both of his behaviour, speech, and very looks, knowing himself to be both suspected, and envied.*[23]

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[21] George Herbert, *A Priest to the Temple. Or, the Countrey Parson, His Character and Rule of Holy Life*, (London, 1675), p. 31.

[22] In the 1790s William Cleaver, for example, recommended it amongst other "serviceable" books which would be useful to guide a young clergyman: *A List of Books recommended to the younger clergy, and other students of divinity within the diocese of Chester*, (Oxford, 1792).

[23] Herbert, pp. 31-2.

Such advice was echoed by many eighteenth century writers; examples include Paley above, and Stonhouse:

> [a cleric should] should keep a constant Guard on his own Temper and Conduct, remembering that great Consequences are often produced by little Things, that an Indiscretion in *Him* will be aggravated, and that the Folly and Imprudence of one Hour, or a Single Visit may ruin a fair Character, and be long an Obstacle (perhaps an insuperable one) to his Acceptance and Usefulness.[24]

The wisdom of such advice is evinced by the example of John Frewer of Medmenham in Buckinghamshire. His love affair with the teenage Elizabeth Duffield, daughter of his patron, ended so unhappily that he resigned the living soon afterwards.[25]

Clerical Marriage: Bachelorhood and the Age at Matrimony

Such advice for clergy to behave circumspectly might not have gone amiss in a more general sense in the eighteenth century, since, in spite of the sanctioning of matrimony as a worthy and virtuous state, the period witnessed a remarkable propensity for men, and clergy particularly, to remain life-long bachelors. Alternatively, if they did eventually marry, they did so very late in life. This tendency was obvious even to contemporaries:

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[24] Sir James Stonhouse, *Hints from a Minister to a Curate for the Management of his Parish*, (London, 1774), pp. 2-3. See other examples such as Divine of the Church of England, *Advice to a Young Clergyman: in a letter to him, concerning I. His Intention, II. Converse and Demeanour...VI. Administring [sic] the Sacrament, Lastly, Discipline*, (London, n.d. [?1730]), p. 11; George Bull, *A Companion for the candidates of holy orders. Or, the great importance and principal duties of the priestly office*, (London, 1714), pp. 24-5; William Berriman, *The Relative Duties of Clergy and People*, (London, 1722), p. 42.

[25] Plaisted, *Medmenham*, p. 215.

in 1773, for example, "*The Lady's Magazine* complained that nowadays 'the men marry with reluctance, sometimes very late, and a great many are never married at all'".[26] Clearly clerical bachelorhood was not enjoined on theological grounds, and, indeed, it was much criticised by contemporaries. Roman Catholic priests were constantly stigmatised for their celibacy, and by the nineteenth century it was argued that "the priest was falling short of the standards of manliness expected of a Christian gentleman" as opposed the example of the Anglican clergy who "face and tower triumphant over the lusts of the flesh....Protestant laymen liked their clergy to be morally superior versions of themselves, not a different sort of being altogether".[27] Bachelorhood was not only unmanly, though, it was also unnatural and, as such, insidious. John Dove wrote in 1769 that

> ...the design of matrimony the resolved bachelor would defeat; while he remains so, he may be fitly compared to a slave bounded on every side; a stagnant nasty pool, the nurse of serpentine embrio's [sic], which receives the salutary influences of the heavens, yet distributes none, but sinks them into mud, or annihilates them, whilst itself stinks. It diffuses a deadly damp, a destructive cold, which nips the sprouting buds of the spring, and renders the country barren....[28]

More than that, it was regarded as distinctly abnormal for men not to produce off-spring:

> A fountain not to flow, would be unnatural and a contradiction; a mundane creature not to propagate, is unnatural and contumactious [sic]; the former would be a miracle in nature, the latter is an exploit against it. The

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[26] Cited in Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, p. 377.

[27] Best, pp. 124-5.

[28] John Dove, *Miscellaneous Dissertations on Marriage, Celibacy, Covetousness, Virtues, the Modern System of Education &c*, (London, 1769), p. 16.

> horrors arising from the abuse of this passion are innumerable; those arising from the vain attempt to smother or suppress it are tenfold more; while those that must attend the extirpation of it, would turn the earth while it lasted into hell.[29]

Comments such as these also had a context wider than simply the behaviour of the Christian gentleman, as they emerged at a time when there was a deep-seated concern about the British population. It was feared that the population of the country was in decline, or at least not growing fast enough, and that this drop would produce the deterioration and downfall of the economy, and even ultimately, the nation. It was the duty, therefore, of every Englishman to procreate for the good of his country; men resolved upon a single life were in a very real sense betraying their country.

While a number of those clergymen who chose to remain single were motivated simply by personal inclination, temperament, or by circumstances and events in their lives, a significant number of them were the product of this wider social phenomenon. Lawrence Stone has shown that in this period there was striking number of aged bachelors, especially, though not exclusively, amongst the ranks of the nobility and gentry. The proportion of men still unmarried at the age of fifty ranged from one in six to one in four between the late-seventeenth century and 1800. Amongst these bachelors, younger sons formed quite the largest part.[30] The reasons

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[29] ibid., p. 17.
[30] Lawrence Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, p. 377; see also p. 380.

for this were socio-economic. In the first place, generally men of this social and familial status perceived that if they married too young they might be forced to marry brides of lesser rank or wealth to their own, simply because they themselves were not established with ample independent means. Added to this was a recognition of the financial obligations that a wife and family would occasion: many simply could not afford to support such dependants. Prudence dictated that if they wanted to preserve their social status, or to ensure a comfortable life-style, and unless they could marry to advantage, that they should temper any urges to wed until they had secured themselves some sort of steady income from an office, occupation or profession. In the long run, however, this might result in their foregoing matrimony entirely. And if such men did eventually marry it was more likely to be later in life than other sectors of society: Stone found that during the eighteenth century "the *median* age of marriage among the children of the upper and professional classes was rising, reaching 28 in 1800...so even those who did eventually marry remained bachelors for some 12 or 13 years after the time of sexual maturity"; in fact, many upper and middle class men tended to wait until well into their thirties before they were married.[31]

Since the Church of England recruited men of both these social ranks and this position within their families to the ministry in ever-increasing numbers during the eighteenth century, it is no surprise that the

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[31] ibid., pp. 377, 48; italics added.

clergy shared in this tendency towards bachelorhood or late marriage. It is difficult to determine exactly what proportion of clergymen in the archdeaconries of Buckingham and Gloucester during the eighteenth century were bachelors all their lives, simply because of the difficulty in discovering the marital status of all the incumbents during this period. Around 5 percent of the clergy in both regions can be identified as certainly or highly probably never having married. But, given the proportions that Stone suggests, and the large number of incumbents in these two archdeaconries during the period, it is certain that there were many others.

Moreover, peculiarities of the profession undoubtedly served to exacerbate the rate of life-long bachelorhood, and at very least to escalate the incidence of clerics who suffered (or enjoyed) a prolonged single life before matrimony later in life. Sometimes the deeds of presentation or the desire of particular patrons specified that all incumbents should be unmarried. This was the case in Fenny Stratford in the archdeaconry of Buckingham: Browne Willis' benefaction stated that all curates were to be resident, Oxford or Cambridge graduates, natives of southern Britain and unmarried. Samuel Clarke, for example, who was curate between 1731 and 1735, had to marry his wife (the sister of Mr Jackson, the curate of Simpson) secretly because of this stipulation.[32] (The difficulty of enforcing this strictly, however, is evinced by the fact that later clerics who were appointed to the curacy do not seem to have heeded Willis'

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[32] BL, Add. MS 5821 f. 190.

wishes, especially after his death. Ralph Leycester, who was curate between 1761 and 1774 married the daughter of Mrs Hanmer of Simpson just before he was presented.)

More commonly though, it was the vestiges of pre-Reformation statutes which contributed to the age at which clergy married. Many clergymen were fellows at their Oxford or Cambridge colleges. Fellows were prohibited from marrying, though if they wished to wed there was no legal stipulation precluding their leaving their colleges:

> we are not bound to the same foundation by any monkish vows or irreversible decrees; it is a matter of free choice, and we are at liberty to quit it whenever we think proper. If the prospect at College seems tedious, and we want to settle in the world, the world lies open before us; and we may if we please, and as is commonly the case, consign ourselves to a school, a wife, and a curacy.[33]

Such a decision could not, however, be made as simply or lightly as Richard Radcliffe intimated, as he himself subsequently discovered. First of all, he could be in for a long wait, perhaps as much as ten to fifteen years at the start of the century, and up to twenty years by its end.[34] Further, if an ordained fellow wished to marry he had not only to give up all the "noble Advantages & Endowments" which he enjoyed, but also either to wait his turn to be presented to one of the college's livings, or to find an alternative patron.[35] In any case, the distinctive way in which the

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[33] Richard Radcliffe and John James, *Letters of Richard Radcliffe and John James of Queen's College, Oxford 1755-83*, ed. Margaret Evans, (Oxford, 1888), p. 3, Richard Radcliffe to John James Snr., 3 February, 1773. (Henceforth 'Radcliffe, *Letters*'.)

[34] Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, p. 48.

[35] BL, Add. MS 5824 f. 190b.

parochial clergyman received his remuneration meant that it was more difficult for him to secure and manage his income than men in other professions. All in all, it was sensible for any cleric, be he fellow or not, to wait until he was established in a benefice, ensured of a regular, if modest, income and a parsonage-house in which to live. (In hindsight, it is evident that the steady senescence of the eighteenth-century clerical body meant that there was no rush for them to marry, though obviously no prospective bridegroom could predict the length of his own life when making such decisions. Table 18.) Richard Cumberland, for instance, did not begin to think of marriage until he had a benefice and was settled in it. In 1778, two years after his presentation, his brother George wrote to him "expressing an opinion that his brother should now marry, and had proposed to look him out a suitable lady", to which Richard replied

> You have undertaken a difficult Task, I must confess, as these Matters generally go, to find a good Woman - one that you can recommend as a Wife to your Friend - and I esteem it the best Proof you can give of Your Friendship, but before you can be in earnest in the Search, You must be convinced that I am too, which is I can assure you the Case....[36]

Similarly, Jeffrey Ekins (rector of Quainton) and Claudius Martyn (rector of Ludgershall) had held their livings four years before they were wed, Martin Stafford Smith (curate of Maisemore; vicar of Cirencester), five, and James Hotchkis (vicar of Kingsey) nine years, putting them all well into their thirties, older than many other members of society at age of

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[36] Cumberland, *Letters*, pp. 179-80, Richard to George Cumberland, n.d [1778].

marriage, but in secure hold of their benefices.

There are, of course, instances in both archdeaconries of clerics who were married in their twenties. But most of these had either been beneficed immediately following their ordination, or were men of independent means who had less pressing need of the economic security of a living upon which to base their marriage, or were perhaps marrying to advantage. John Barton is a case in point. In 1708, at the age of twenty-five, he married the co-heiress of John Duncombe, head of a prominent Buckinghamshire family, who owned the advowson and manors of Great Brickhill and Sherington. Barton came from a well-established clerical family: his father Samuel was the rector of Great Brickhill, and had significant property in the surrounding neighbourhood. The marriage of John Barton into the Duncombe family served to consolidate firmly his family's position in the county, and to ensure prosperous careers for all of his sons. Yet at the time he did not have a benefice: he succeeded to Great Brickhill in 1715, having already been appointed to Sherington in 1711, (a living which he in turn relinquished in favour of his son Philip upon the young man's marriage in 1743).[37] The first situation is well illustrated by John Pettat. He married his first wife, Sophia Woodward, the niece of his predecessor Sampson Harris, in 1763, the same year that he was presented to Stonehouse. He was twenty-five years old. John Drake, whose family owned the advowson of Amersham, was the same age when he was

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[37] BL, Add. MS 5836 f. 160; BRO, D/DU/5/63. 2/16-17 etc.

married and appointed to the living in 1777. William Reid was three years older when he was married in 1760, but he had held his rectory of Bishop's Cleeve for nearly four years when this occurred.

Waiting for a suitable benefice could create real anxiety for those eager to wed, as in the case of the unbeneficed Thomas Wilson, who "Told Dear Molly of my great inclination to have her and I have reason to believe she will consent when I have preferment", (though four months later she "promised to have me supposing I had no preferment at Xmas [sic]" and they were eventually married before he found a living).[38] It was not only the young clergy, like Wilson, who might be keen to marry. Radcliffe rather mournfully wrote that

> with much trouble and expense I have got a few necessities together. Whether a female companion is one of these wants, or whether I am to live and die in single blessedness are points that time must determine; though perhaps you may think that time, alias 51 years, ought to have determined them already.[39]

Yet marriage at such an age was not at all impossible. Late marriage by clerics was often mentioned by contemporaries, and there are innumerable examples from the period especially of "*Fellows of Colledges* [sic]" who

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[38] Thomas Wilson, *Diary*, pp. 97, 103. They were married on 4 February 1733/4, though he was not beneficed until December 1737, having been made one of His Majesty's Chaplains in Ordinary in June 1737. pp. 114, 205, 219-20. It also led to what Cole described as a "highly disgraceful" and "ridiculous" proceeding in 1766 of some of the fellows of Cambridge, "Young and Old [who had] formed a Resolution of Marrying: the First desirous of loosing [sic] no time: the others, of making the speediest Amends possible of what was already lost....For this Purpose, the university is to petition the Parliament, to release the Fellows of the several Colleges from the Observances of our Founders, as to oblige them to Celibacy....", BL, Add. MS 5824 f. 189b Edward Bentham to William Cole, 31 January 1766.

[39] Radcliffe, *Letters*, p. 62, Richard Radcliffe to John James and Mrs James, 23 January, 1779.

were "ancient before they marry".[40] John Long, who had been fellow of Corpus Christi College in Oxford, was finally appointed to Meysey Hampton in 1725, and he married two years afterwards, at the age of 51. Others such as Benjamin Skinner (Waddesdon), Howell Powell, (Turville), and Luke Heslop (Adstock) married in their forties, the first two having received their first benefices only shortly before doing so, the latter continuing his university career, despite holding several benefices and prebendaries. Some elderly fellows were so keen to marry, that they entered into over-hasty, even ill-conceived, marriages, such as the example Cole provides of

> Dr. Mason [who] quitted his Fellowship and Woodwardian Professorship about 4 years ago, at the Age of 63 Years, to marry a Lady of about 30. The Doctor was in such an Hurry, that he would not stay, tho' it was pretty certain that Dr. Hooper could not live 6 Months to an End, when he would have had the good Rectory of Fakenham to have carried his Wife to, in stead of Orwell, which is not half its Value. But the Doctor had lost too much time already, & was too deeply smitten in his old Age, to think of patiently waiting for Dr. Hooper's Death: which happened accordingly a few Months after the Nuptials. However, he made very warm and pressing Remonstrances to Dr. Hooper, in order to persuade him to an Exchange of Livings, with full & sufficient Security that he should be no Looser by it: but all to no Purpose: so that my Friend generously threw up his Fellowship of Trinity College & his Professorship, both incompatible with Matrimony, & together worth about 200£ p An, to enjoy the Comfort of the married State on an Income short of that Value.[41]

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[40] Thomas Fuller, *The History of the Worthies of England*, (2 vols., London, 1811), vol. 1, p. 55.

[41] BL, Add. MS 5824 ff. 190b-191b.

A Suitable Bride?

Having then, waited patiently for preferment whilst earning a livelihood serving as chaplain to some great family, or as a curate, or more likely as a college fellow, and "spending *Half* the Age of Man, as is common...in Study and Celibacy" the early modern cleric, "labours under that particular Grievance...*viz* the want of a Female Companion fit for a Clergyman...."[42] What sort of woman was regarded as an appropriate bride for the eighteenth-century clergyman? From the earliest days of the legitimisation and acceptance of the wives for clergymen, advice was offered to parsons about choosing a suitable companion. Certainly it seems that the character of prospective spouse, rather than any other criterion was, in theory at least and perhaps rather idealistically, held to be the foremost consideration for a parson. George Herbert wrote, if a cleric "be married, the choice of his wife was made rather by his ear, than by his eye; his judgement, not his affection found out a fit wife for him, whose humble, and liberal disposition he preferred before beautie, riches or honour."[43] Gilpin, writing in the late eighteenth century, commented that a woman of an entirely passive disposition was the most suitable sort to be a parson's wife:

> when a clergymen thinks it prudent to change his condition, let him look for a wife in some domestic family; and endeavour to chose one whom he hears sober people

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[42] George Legh, *The Clergyman's Wife, Delineated in a Letter to Dr C in England wherein are several Important Queries*, (London, 1738), p. 1.
[43] Herbert, p. 35.

> commend for her private virtues. And if she happen to be known in any polite circle, and dignified by the name of a *lifeless, inanimate thing*, he has still the better chance for happiness.[44]

Richard Dennison Cumberland also thought that character ought to be a key consideration when choosing a wife, and he was undoubtedly not atypical amongst Gloucestershire and, indeed, Buckinghamshire clerics in believing this. Cumberland reasoned that "neatness and good Nature [are] everything in a wife, with these she cannot be ugly, and without them she must be disagreeable" and, he went on, that since "...I am Proof against mere external Figure and Accomplishments unless accompanied with a good Disposition [I] am in more Danger of being captivated with the Beauties of the Mind than either Face or Fortune."[45] Religious piety was surely of some importance, though it is mentioned rarely by these clergymen. One who did so was William Jones, who wrote of a prospective bride that she "seems to be an utter stranger to God; & yet I fondly think that I could be happy with her". Reflecting on the matter, however, he added

> were I to marry her, what distress might it not occasion? The more I loved her, the more it would pierce my soul to think that I was embracing in my bosom one, who, perhaps, must be after this life everlastingly separated from me....If I ever have a female partner of life, God grant that she may be a sincere Christian, not a vain, flaunting, giddy creature, such as has seemed, for a moment, ravish my foolish heart....Let me not, in this very material concern, mar my happiness! Choose out one of Thy children who

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[44] William Gilpin, *Three Dialogues on the Amusements of Clergymen*, (London, 1796), p. 137.

[45] Cumberland, *Letters,* Richard to George Cumberland, n.d., [1778] & 18 November, 1778, pp. 180 & 217-8.

> will indeed be a help meet for me![46]

Needless to say, he did not marry this "beautiful & charming lady".[47] But George Legh produced probably the most realistic list of the concerns clergymen had when choosing a bride. He raised questions about all aspects of a woman's personality and temperament, and also about her appearance, religious and political inclinations, family, connections and wealth. But, ultimately, "tho' his Queries are MANY, his DEMANDS ARE FEW".[48] Essentially what was required, though not always found, was the mixture of pleasing personal qualities and potential for agreeable, and possibly long-lasting, companionship which typified the affectionate marriage of the period. Such companionship might be a welcome relief to the socially isolated parson, and for most, isolated or not, would provide a happy home in which to live and work. The comments of George Woodward, an Oxfordshire parson, and his wife typify such a relationship:

> My wife and I have now been acquainted for somewhat more that twenty five years; and I think she appears more lovely in my eyes now, than she did this day nine years ago: for she is like some sort of flowers, which are pleasing at first sight but are of that modest nature, as not to discover the richness of their colours, till they are viewed with some attention; and then their beauties rise to the sight upon examination....[49]

It was not simply personal characteristics, religious and emotional

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[46] Jones, *Diary,* pp. 78-79, 87.
[47] ibid., p. 78.
[48] Legh, p. 1.
[49] George Woodward, *A Parson in the Vale of the White Horse: George Woodward's Letters from East Hendred, 1753-1761*, ed. Donald Gibson, (Gloucester, 1982), pp. 99-100.

bonds that were appraised when nuptials were planned. In an age when the marriage market was fiercely competitive and there was much at stake materially in any match, especially amongst the upper or middle classes, laity and clergy alike, considerations of the wealth and status of prospective partners were always an critical ingredient in potential unions. A marriage settlement was a crucial part of matrimony for the propertied classes: at least, it might ensure a comfortable married life for the couple and make provision for the widow and offspring in the event of the death of the husband; at best, it could be a means of gaining considerable wealth and status. Hence negotiations surrounding the dowry and jointure could often be protracted and complicated. They could involve many exacting demands by one or other of the parties as was the case in the initial negotiations of the marriage of John Drake of Amersham and Mary Wickham.[50] They could even cause considerable dissension subsequently between the parties and their families, such as occurred from 1753 to 1755 between John Eaton, rector of Amersham, and his brother-in-law, William Wickham of Oxfordshire.[51] Richard Cumberland recognised the necessity of marriage settlements, although he played down their importance to himself personally.

> The first *good* Girl I meet with..., with just enough to pay Fees and preliminary [ ] or on the other Hand, one of the common run with [ ] enough to make amends for trifling Deficiencies and of an amiable Temper - supposing a probability of our making each other as happy as the

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[50] BRO, D/DR/7/1; see also 7/4, 7/88.

[51] BRO, D/DR/7/64/2-5, 11- 14, 18, 20, 22, Letters, deeds, legal opinions re marriage of John Eaton to daughter of Mrs M. Wickham,.

> generality of married people, either of these will [ ]. But as I am almost in Despair of meeting the former, from experience I have had of them, at least consistent with my Notion of a good Woman, I must e'en do the best I can for myself in the other Way. To tell you the Truth, I think esteem a more promising Ingredient than Love, in the State we are Speaking of.[52]

But for some, such as the young Cumberland cleric John Thomlinson, gaining wealth through marriage became an overriding concern in his search for a spouse. His diary is full of descriptions of women and of their financial worth, the following being a not atypical example,

> Have paid my respects to N. and desire your [his father's] approbation....She's a lady of as much piety, prudence, beauty and good-temper as is possible to meet with in one person. She has 1,000*l.* in hand, and half 400*l.* per annum, or near it, at father's death, and he is old. Tho [sic] she's of a very good family, yet frugal and the most laborious. I am satisfied I shall never meet with such another, and therefore if I be disappointed here, I shall despair of ever having any success in these affairs....Now you have seen what she is and what may be expected etc., I desire to know what you'll do for me. I hope you design I should have the estate, if I live longer than you, and that Carrow should descend to me if uncle has no issue. Now in the ladie's [sic] settlement there is a particular account of closes and acres in each close, and I desire you to take the same method - and what land is worth an acre. I beg you'd do these as speedily as, etc., for there is some danger of losing her.... [which is indeed what occurred][53]

Some Buckinghamshire clerics managed to achieve far larger marriage settlements than this; Thomas Willis, rector of Blecheley and grandson of Browne, married the niece of Mr Williamson of Millbrook, with a fortune

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[52] Cumberland, *Letters*, Richard to George Cumberland, n.d. [1778], p. 186.
[53] John Thomlinson, 'The Diary of John Thomlinson', *North Country Diaries*, Surtees Society, CXVII (1910), pp. 164-5.

of £4000.[54] Martin Stafford Smith (vicar of Cirencester and curate of Maisemore) married the widow of Bishop Warburton in 1781, a wealthy woman in her own right, and more so after the bishop had left her £2000, all his books and prints, as well as the entire residue of his estate when he died in 1779. David James, rector of Woughton, appears to have done spectacularly well out of matrimony. Only a little is known of his background. Of Welsh origin, he was enrolled at the University of Oxford's St Mary's Hall as a *pauperes pauperi*, but there is no indication of his father's occupation. Neither is there any sign he held any other livings besides Woughton. He did, however, marry the heiress of a London scrivener, and eventually died worth £100,000. Moreover, within a week of his death in 1745 aged about 63, he was to have been married to 'Old Mrs Hamner of Simpson', which would have been another socially and materially significant match.[55]

More than the wealth or property could be gained from matrimony. Clergymen could and did wed to the advantage of their career, specifically by marrying into families with either direct patronage or connections which might produce advancement for the cleric: "for matching there is no way for preferment like marrying into some family of interest, either a bishop or an archbishop or some courtier".[56] Whether or

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[54] BL, Add. MS 5825 f. 118, Pulter Forrester to William Cole, 17 October 1773.
[55] Cole cited in Bradbrook, Fenny Stratford, p. 20.
[56] Lewis Atterbury to Francis Atterbury, from *The Miscellaneous Works of Bishop Atterbury*, ed. J. Nicols, (London, 1789), vol. 1, p. 89, cited in Gibson, p. 384. See also Pruett, p. 62 on this theme.

not theirs were calculated matches, the clerics of Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire were no exception. James Webster married the niece of Bishop Warburton in the 1760s, and enjoyed considerable episcopal patronage: besides livings in Brecon and Herefordshire, he also held Northleach (1761-65), Dursley, and Stonehouse (1774-1804) in Gloucestershire, was made archdeacon in 1774(-1804), and received a substantial legacy from Warburton's estate. Anthony Nourse Sanderson, rector of Newton Longueville, married the daughter of his patron, Sir Christopher Hales.[57] Edward Dicey's wife was the granddaughter of Lady Scawen, who had presented him to Horton in 1759. James Benson, who already enjoyed the privilege (and consequent patronage) of being the nephew of the bishop of Gloucester, gained further advantage when in 1752 he married Leonora, the daughter of Lord Bathurst, a man with considerable connections and the advowson of Saperton, to which Benson was presented in 1775. No other example in either of the archdeaconries is as unusual, however, as the reversed situation to be found in the living of Wavendon in the late 1760s. The patron, Mr Selby, had made it a condition of presentation that a prospective incumbent marry his daughter. Susanna Barton wrote to Cole in August 1768 with the news that

> Mr [Thomas] Sawell has resigned his Living of Wavendon, as he found that he could not like the Lady 'tached to it: so he will have another half year to look out for a husband for her; which it seems is the condition of the Presentation. It is said that Mr [Daniel] Shipton of Willen, whose Wife died at Easter, has offered himself, & is likely to be

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[57] BL, Add. MS 5825 f. 118.

> accepted. What will these Things end in? I fear a total disregard to Religion.[58]

Cole himself was surprised. He replied in October of the same year that he thought

> the Wavendon news from one End to the other is singular. I knew Mr Selby very little: but had no conception of his ever submitting to...the mean Traffic of his living. I met the Lady once at Mr Harvey's: & as she is not every one's money, I much applaud Mr Sawell for his Honour, in not accepting two such incompatible Benefices, as a Wife he would not like, at the Expence [sic] of a Living which would very well have accommodated him.[59]

Other family members' marriage connections could be similarly productive for the career of clergymen. For example, the marriage of the Earl of Salisbury in 1745 to the sister of Matthew Keate resulted in the presentation of that cleric by the Earl to Newton Blossomville nine years later.[60]

Through careful choice of a marriage partner it was possible, too, that a man could provide himself with a network of social and political connections which, though they might not directly furnish him with a benefice, might reinforce or enhance his social standing: "I find it is the best way for a man that has not much merit of his own, to marry into a family that has".[61] Several clerics in the archdeaconries married the kin of those who had risen to the top of their profession or career: Benjamin Skinner of Waddesdon married a sister of Dean Moore, who became the

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[58] BL, Add. MS 5825 f. 104b, Susanna Barton to William Cole, 19 August 1768.
[59] BL, Add. MS 5825 f. 105b, William Cole to Susanna Barton, 12 October 1768.
[60] BL, Add. MS 5836 f. 129.
[61] Thomlinson, p. 125.

archbishop of Canterbury; James Pitts (rector of Great Brickhill in Buckingham), the daughter of Bishop of Ossory; Joseph Laurentius Littlehales, the daughter of Sir Crisp Gascoyne, the Lord Mayor of London in 1753; Philip Duval (rector of Old Sodbury) the daughter of Dr William George, Provost of King's in Cambridge, and William Goodenough's (vicar of Barrington Parva) wife was the daughter of Dr Anthony Addington, the royal physician. Others married into noble families: amongst them Henry de Salis (vicar of Wing), himself of aristocratic origin, married the daughter of Viscount Fane; George Talbot of Guiting Temple, married the Hon. Anne Bouverie, daughter of Viscount Folkestone; Thomas Andrews who was vicar of Ebrington married the granddaughter of the Earl of Westmoreland; and Pulter Forrester (rector of Gayhurst, of Stoke Goldington, Chancellor of Lincoln, Prebend of St Paul's and Salisbury) married the daughter of the Earl of Drogheda. And still others married into the county gentry, such as Thomas Remington, of Stoke Goldington, who wed the daughter of Sir Anthony Chester, or into the lesser gentle families of the either of the county, examples of which include John Barton, Samuel Lysons (of Rodmarton) who married Mary Peach or Matthew Knapp who married the daughter of Humphrey Primatt. Clearly these clerics had no qualms about what Macaulay described as aspiring "to the hand of one of the young ladies at the manor house."[62]

There is no evidence to suggest that these successful matches were

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[62] Macaulay, p. 68.

counterbalanced by clergy marrying below their station, or, indeed, that there were any wives of lowly or menial status. Such marriages may certainly have occurred in the period, but there are so many gaps in the sources which make it difficult to trace the wives of clerics, let alone their social origins, and marriages between partners of lesser rank may simply have gone unnoticed. Certainly, in none of the evidence relating to Buckinghamshire or Gloucestershire is there any specific indication that a cleric from these regions married below his own social standing. In fact, only one contemporary instance of doubt as to the social status of the spouse of a parson is to be found in the archdeaconries, and that was as much the result of a dispute over servants as it was a challenge to the origins and marital state of Anne Ollyffe, wife of the rector of Hedgerley.

A case appeared in the Aylesbury Quarter Sessions in 1711 "a dispute arose between John Ollyffe and

> Elizabeth Dell and Sarah Preston were accused of enticing Elizabeth Turner away from the Ollyffe household where she was a servant, asking her 'how she came to live in such a sorry place as the Rectory where they had had several maids and none would stay with them, she being such a proud woman servants must call her Madam at every word'. Elizabeth Dell said to Elizabeth Turner 'Your Mistress; what is she a miss out of a nanny house in London for anything I know, for all one knows what she is, from whence she came or whether your Master and she is married.'

Sarah Preston backed those words by saying that Mr Ollyffe was 'such a sorte of body' and added that she might be a 'tinkers trull for anything she knew'. The defenders were acquitted but ordered to keep the peace

toward the Revd Mr Ollyffe and his wife Anne."[63]

Macaulay's oft-quoted derisory comments about the status of the wives of early Hanoverian clerics, women he depicted as being of menial origins and their life together as once of unpretentious squalor, clearly did not apply to the majority of clerical marriages in these archdeaconries later in the Hanoverian era.[64] He was, however, undoubtedly right in his estimation that "the nature of the matrimonial connections which the clergymen of that age were in the habit of forming is the most certain indication of the place which the order held in the social system."[65] The rising social stature of the clergy in the local community was an indication that the profession was viewed by contemporaries as a worthy one; the social origins of the clergy themselves improved, a fact which could only enhance the sorts of matrimonial matches into which they were able to enter.

Besides the tendencies of some to marry for status, wealth, career, or all three, there are two obvious trends visible in the pattern of the marriages of the clerics of Buckingham and Gloucester archdeaconries. Firstly, there was a propensity towards local marriages, and, secondly, towards endogamous marriage. The first is explained easily enough. It was common for eighteenth century clergy to be beneficed in their native county, and hence it is not surprising that the women they married were

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[63] Cited in Rice ed., *Hedgerley*, vol. 1, p. 15.
[64] Macaulay, pp. 64-5, 68.
[65] Macaulay, p. 64.

also locally-born. For many clergymen, too, especially those who had been college fellows, removal to a benefice undoubtedly provided opportunities for proper social interaction with women. Such interaction could now be motivated by the possibility and intent of meeting a bride at occasions perhaps hitherto lacking to a clergyman without prospects and without a benefice. Moreover, if a cleric had made any sort of investment in the parsonage or glebe, he would be less willing to move from that parish and may look around him for a suitable spouse. Once he had a wife he would be reluctant to uproot her and his offspring any great distance, unless he was ensured of a substantial improvement in his circumstances, and, it was not improbable that as he became known to patrons in the area, he might accrue benefices in one archdeaconry. Because many women brought property to the marriage in their marriage portion, if he married a local woman a clergyman might then own assets in the neighbourhood, a further incentive to remain in the locality. The corollary of any marriage, but particularly a local one, was usually to make the cleric a resident and indeed long-settled, stable presence in the community. Such entrenchment could in turn often bring the cleric additional responsibilities, familial, socio-economic and administrative, which would further ensure that he stayed in or near his parish. This is evinced in the letter of an aged Gloucestershire rector, Jonathan Rawlins, of Haselton who was in his seventies when he wrote that

> there are many prudential Reasons which confine me to this Neighbourhood - My Wife is advanc'd in years as well

> as my self. My Son is situated near me, as being Vicar of Pershore, as well as Fellow of Merton College, in Oxford; my Daughters are married and live at no great Distance -I may farther add, that I act here in the Commission of the Peace, have many valuable Connexions, my chief Property is round me, and I am at present engag'd in a very expensive Enclosure, which requires a constant Attendance: These, my Lord, may be called Secular views, but it would certainly be an Act of Folly in a Man, that has a Family, totally to overlook them: My Duty, as a Clergymen, my domestick as well as publick Concerns, my Health and Happiness, for the few Years I have to live, all call upon me, to continue in my present Situation, if agreeable to your Lordship.[66]

The most common background from which the wives of the clergy of Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire originated was the parsonage. The majority of the women married to these clergy whose origins can be identified were themselves the daughters or sisters of clergymen - more than any other occupational group. It may be that clerical intermarriage is easier to identify than clerics marrying into other families, and thus the origins of the wives in this sample means that the rate of endogamy is exaggerated. But Hillyer found that around fifteen percent (and, what is more, the single most common characteristic) of the spouses of clergymen in Northamptonshire during the eighteenth century whose lineage she ascertained were the *daughters* of clerics.[67] Again, the explanation for this propensity is one of association. A friendship or connections made at college could bear fruit in the form of matrimony with a female relation of a colleague once a parson was settled in a benefice. Clergy, too, naturally

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[66] GRO, GDR, C3/31-34, Visitation Papers, Jonathan Rawlins to Bishop James Yorke, 10 October 1780.

[67] Hillyer, p. 247; see also pp. 305, 335.

gravitated towards each other socially and professionally, especially in rural areas, and it is not surprising that their families should become intertwined by marriage.

Indeed, the manifestation of these tendencies towards local and endogamous matrimony in the period is heightened by the extent to which many of the clergy of these archdeaconries married the kin of other local clergymen. In Buckingham, for example, between the late seventeenth century and the end of the eighteenth, seven clergymen and four clerical families (the Remingtons of Stoke Goldington, Shanns of Chicherley, Great Linford and Little Wolston, Smiths of Tyringham, Great Linford and Emberton, and the Johnsons of Olney) were linked by marriage, as well as to local gentry, the Grenville and Chester families. Many other less complicated examples exist in the county, too, as they do in Gloucestershire.

The effects of such localised endogamy were manifold. Where a patron was complaisant, it allowed clerical dynasties of an indirect nature to develop, such as in the case of John Pettat of Stonehouse, (who married his predecessor's daughter), or the brothers-in-law Lawson Shann and Edward Smith, who were successively rectors of Great Linford. Endogamy was also a tangible way in which the bonds of professional fraternity amongst the clergy were strengthened, at a time when clergymen's organisations were only just beginning to develop. In social terms it helped to bind together the middle classes of the community into a

polite and educated circle, such as Cole describes in his diary. This was encouraged further by the clergy's tendency, endogamy aside, to marry the kin of local professionals, such as attorneys[68], and government officials[69], as well as into local propertied families. These marriages helped to contribute to the creation of a social network with strong vested interests in the administration of local government, civic projects and charity in each county, in which the Anglican clergy played an ever-more demanding and wide-ranging part as the eighteenth century progressed.

The Clergyman's Wife

Part of the attraction of women who had been brought up in a parsonage to bachelor clerics was that there was a greater chance that they had received a better education (probably at home with their fathers) than many of their female contemporaries. Even if she was not well schooled, a young lady who had spent her life with a clerical father or brother would certainly have acquired at least a tolerable notion of the demands upon and duties of a clergyman's spouse, both in the household and in the parish.[70] As early as the sixteenth century George Herbert established a role for the parson's wife in both private and public spheres, albeit rather limited in the

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[68] For example, Thomas Hyde Rector of Wavendon, "married a daughter of Mr Gooday of Bradwell, an Attorney, who made him a very good wife, tho' he was always ill-tempered...."; Cole, *Blecheley Diary*, p. 269. Trye married the daughter of John Longford, who was also the niece of Brendon Trye, an attorney.

[69] James Mackerness, rector of Haversham, married the sister of James Rigby, rector of Ickford, and Charles Rigby, a Commissioner of Taxes; the wife of Martin Barry (perpetual curate of St Nicholas in Gloucester), was the sister of James Rooke, MP for Gloucester.

[70] See Collins, pp. 129, 132.

latter sphere:

> As He is just in all things, so is he to his Wife also....Therefore he gives her respect both afore her servants, and others, and half at least of the government of the house, reserving so much of the affairs, as serve for a diversion for him....In stead of the qualities of the world, he requires only *three* of her; *First*, a training up of her children and maids in the fear of God, with prayers and catechising, and all religious duties. *Secondly*, a curing and healing of all wounds and sores with her own hands, which skill either she brought with her, or he takes her where she shall learn it of some religious neighbour. *Thirdly*, a providing for her family in such sort, as that neither they want a competent sustentation, not her husband brought in debt.[71]

By the nineteenth century it was well accepted, particularly by evangelicals, that the clergyman's wife had to fulfil not only these sorts of duties, but also a wider range of tasks and responsibilities, simply by virtue of the fact of her marriage. As one anonymous writer put it, "...the greatness of our calling, and the corresponding claims which it makes on us....there is no other profession where so much, in the same lines, is expected from the wife, without her having the outward help of the office or the inward strength of the call, as her husband has."[72] Indeed, she was given her own specific parish responsibilities, distinct from those of her spouse, for which the "distinguishing characteristics of the female...tenderness and compassion" were suited.[73] Depending upon the economic means of the wife, these included not only visiting the sick, but

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[71] Herbert, pp. 36, 37-8.
[72] anon., *Difficulties and dangers of the Life of a Clergyman's Wife*, London, [n.d. 19th c], pp. 3-4.
[73] anon. *Hints to a Clergyman's Wife; Or, Female Parochial Duties Practically Illustrated*, (London, 1832), p. 1.

also cottage readings and private instruction for the young women of the parish, teaching the girls at Sunday school, counselling of parishioners, visiting the school, parochial library, and giving relief and even employment to the poor.[74]

In the intervening century the idea of what was expected of the spouse of the parson tended rather more towards Herbert's outline than the evangelical nineteenth-century role, though this very much depended upon the circumstances and the characteristics of the cleric and his wife.[75] There is no reason to suppose that there were not clergymen's spouses in the eighteenth century who, for instance, tended to sick people in the parish and who assisted their husbands in the provision of charity to the needy. But in the main, expectations of the duties of the clergyman's wife were largely domestic, and in this respect they generally mirrored those of wives of laymen. Thus William Cole commended the wife of John Lord as "a very Fine Woman who managed her large family in very straightened circumstances"; in his eyes she was "a proper Parson's wife, visiting no where & taking care of her Family concerns".[76] He made no mention of any specific parochial role. Similarly, William Jones praised his wife for her devotion to her domestic obligations,

> I with pleasure acknowledge that my wife, tho' wanting in mildness & gentleness in her general behaviour to me, is in every other respect an excellent wife, frugal & attentive to all her domestic concerns, & a pattern of a Mother.[77]

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[74] ibid., passim.
[75] See Gregory, 'Gender', pp. 21-4.
[76] Cole, *Blecheley Diary*, pp. 43-4.
[77] Jones, p. 103.

Some of these obligations, however, had a natural extension into the life of the parish; the provision of hospitality, especially to the poor or on special occasions, such as the annual tithe feast, may often have fallen to the parson's wife.[78] Cumberland, for example, described the part his mother played in this customary practice:

> Yesterday...I gave a Dinner to all the poor Families, Men, Women and children, they had plenty of Beef Roast or Boild and as much Ale as they chose - and on Thursday next My Mother is to entertain the Farmers Wives and Daughters.[79]

Had he been married at the time, however, it would have been his wife who would have been responsible for this event.

Perhaps the most important role of the eighteenth-century cleric's wife and one that distinguished her from other women, was the task she shared with her husband, ensuring good behaviour and piety of their household, since it stood as an example to the whole parish: "The Parson is very exact in the governing of his House, making it a copie and model for his Parish....as in the house of those that are skill'd in Musick, all are Musicians; so in the house of a Preacher, all are Preachers."[80] This went beyond the sexual propriety already mentioned, but included all aspects of the private life of the parsonage. Though the clergyman no longer necessarily stood out from the community in which he lived and worked by virtue of his enforced celibacy, the conduct of domestic life in the

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[78] See Heal, p. 298ff.
[79] Cumberland, *Letters*, Richard to George Cumberland, n.d., [1778], p.185.
[80] Herbert, pp. 37, 41.

parsonage did not escape the attention of the parish, since it now became a model by which the laity might judge and measure their own domestic situation. Eighteenth-century guidebooks for clergymen, therefore, all warned their readers of the strong duty they had in respect of household management:

> A Minister is set to be the spiritual Lamp or Light of his whole Parish: Therefore his LIGHT of Piety should be every way so illustrious, as to direct them to every Christian Grace and Virtue. Of Consequence it behoves him to take great Care of his own Conduct, and to be prudent in the Government of those that live with him.[81]

Of particular importance was the piety of the parson's household. One of the many bishops to address this issue was Martin Benson of Gloucester who exhorted his clergy to take care to the "government & regulation of his Family."[82] In particular

> His House is to be a Household fearing G[od.] And to shew yt it is so, there ought to be Family Devotion in it. There ought indeed to be no Family without it. Much less the Family of any Clergyman....And I am sorry it shd be at all necessary to insist upon this, wch I shd have thought to have been quite unnecessary, had not notice been taken, yt there are Clergymen in whose Families there is not Devotion.[83]

He urged the clerics of Gloucester to "ensure that all his Family attend both the public offices of the Church & private devotion, &, when of age,

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[81] See also Brian Hunt, *Parochial Pasturage: or, the Church of England clergyman's thoughts and resolutions respecting his pastoral duty*, (London, 1722), p. 17; John Russell, *The Duty and Reward of the Clergy. A Sermon Preached...on...the 20th of September 1719: at the Primary Ordination of...the Lord Bishop*, (London, 1719) p. 7; Berriman, p. 42; Bull, pp. 24-5.

[82] BL, Add. MS 39313, 'Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of Glocester. At the Second Triennial Visitation 1741', f. 129r.

[83] ibid.

should regularly receive the Sacram[t]." This was of great importance since the desired outcome of such behaviour was that if a parson

> has taken care to regulate hims. & his Family in ye manner in wch he ought, he may then wth hopes of success proceed to ye attempting ye reform[n] of others & ye execution of his Pastoral duty is ye care of ye Souls of those committed to his charge.[84]

Certainly to lead by his own example did much to reinforce within the congregation the words the parson preached in the pulpit. To be a married man lent weight to his example, for his parishioners might more readily identify with his domestic situation. If, within that household, he had a pious wife and off-spring, he would be most fortunate, for the credibility of his pastoral task within the community would very much enhanced.

Clergymen's children

Clearly the good conduct of a parson's children was a great importance to himself and his wife. While parsons might hope to achieve the latter by good discipline and parenting, children produced other problems for a clergyman. All clerics would have quickly realised the

> the expenses of a family, and a train of young children,...upon my word, will soon suck up the milk of a cow or two, and grind in pieces a few sheathes of corn.[85]

While most eighteenth-century clergymen managed to support their families well, for some it was no easy task, because of paltry value of their

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[84] ibid., f. 130r.

[85] John Eachard, *The Grounds and Occasions of the Contempt of the Clergy* in *The Works of Dr John Eachard*, (3 vols., London. 1774), vol. 1, p. 92.

benefices, the size of their families, as well as other financial commitments, as has been shown in the instances of Buckingham and Gloucester. It is likely that the many attempts of clergy to augment their benefice's value and to supplement their earnings (through tithe increases, for example) was prompted not a little by the arrival of a wife or children in the parsonage. Even basic needs, such as either finding somewhere suitable to bring up a growing family could be difficult. It might force a move away from the parsonage house (making him non-resident): the example of Charles Coxwell of Barnsley in Gloucester, who had twelve children, cited in Chapter 1 illustrates this problem well. Conversely, the need to house his family might see him attempt to make the parsonage habitable for a married man and children when it had been designed to accommodate only a celibate priest, or it was run-down, which could be crippling financially. A clergymen like John Lord of Drayton Parslow, who had demands such as these placed upon him found his circumstances severely strained. As seen previously, he had

> 12 Children grown up, & hanging upon him, with a small Living (where he overbuilt himself a too good House...), with an encumbered Estate, & his Sons not doing the Best for themselves

so that he was forced to eke out his income of his benefice by practising "physic".[86] Clearly, then, the marriage of a parson could have an effect upon his relationship with his parish, for practical decisions about how he

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[86] Cole, *Blecheley Diary*, p. 43.

would adequately support his family often had direct repercussions for the community, and these had to be weighed carefully. Parenthood brought with it, too, other emotional and material obligations: the education, marriage and career of each of his offspring ought ideally to be as carefully managed as his own. Undeniably, all these demands and more importantly the financial stresses caused considerable personal pressure and anxiety to the clergyman himself: thus William Jones wrote in his diary

> ...when I reflect on my present numerous family, and the large addition to it which I may in all probability expect, & think of the uncertainly of my employment, or the uncertainly of my own life, should I be ever so successful in my school, I seem oppressed with an insupportable load of cares and anxieties.[87]

Clergymen's Children: Sons

Like any parent in the early modern period, a clergyman had to consider carefully the prospects of his son or sons. He might have less control over his son's marriage than he did his daughter's, particularly if he was a man of independent means, but undoubtedly he hoped that his son would make as carefully considered a match as he had himself. In order to facilitate this, and secure his son's prospects generally, the parson had to ensure that his son was given the best opportunity to make his way in the world. Most importantly in such a status-conscious society, he had to settle upon an occupation that was appropriate to his station. This was

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[87] Jones, Diary, 24 October 1789 p. 97.

doubly the case for the son of a cleric, as the boy's conduct could reflect upon his father's reputation in the community. In weighing the options for his son, the parson also had to take into account a number of practical considerations. In the first place, there was the boy's inclination and intelligence to consider, and his father's own ambitions might also play a part. Contemporary commentators often

> ridicul'd the foolish humour of some parents, who think they see something peculiar in their children's faces, & from that Observation hastily... form their designs of making them what they'll never be fit for.[88]

Such designs were, however, often best determined at an early age, because they would influence a boy's education;

> Nothing, however, in my humble opinion, is more absurd and ridiculous, than to keep a boy six or seven years at a Grammar School, and then condemn him to the sea or the counter....A lad that is intended for business might certainly employ his time better, in reading useful English books, and in gaining a knowledge of such things, as might afterwards be serviceable and entertaining to him.[89]

When making choices such as these, a cleric had to consider his economic circumstances, his income and the number of off-spring for which he had to provide. University education could be expensive, depending upon the status under which a scholar matriculated. The value of education and training was measured by considering the best opportunities for his son. This would not only include the chance the boy would take in the market-place, but also, thirdly, the possibilities for

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[88] Richmond P. Bond, *New Letters to the Tatler and Spectator*, (Austin, 1959), p. 145.
[89] Radcliffe, *Letters*, Richard Radcliffe to John James, 8 April 1772, p. 29.

advancement that the clergyman himself might be able to provide. He might be able to use connections such as friends, or relatives, hence the son of John Lowth of Middleton Keynes in Buckinghamshire was "first brought up in Trade with his Uncle Charles".[90] A parson might also own property which he could bestow upon his son, even to the extent of some prosperous clergy, establishing him as landed gentlemen. Other financial support might provide the means of a son being able to set himself up in a trade or to purchase a military commission. William Taswell of Wotton-under-Edge (Glos) bequeathed to two of his four sons, the one in India, the other in Portsmouth, smaller legacies than those given to their clerical brothers, "as a memorial" for the former pair had already received from him in varying degrees their share "towards...[their] future and estate".[91]

In this respect the parson differed little from his lay counterpart of equal means. Further, just as a layman might have scope to advance his sons within his own vocation, the clergyman might sometimes have such opportunities to promote his son's career within the Church. Certainly a parson could provide the 'tools of the trade' to his son -

> So many books, such a Library bought into my House with this view that the Trouble & Cost should be sav'd to my Son[92] -

and several Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire parsons specifically bequeathed their books and papers to their clerical sons, or to sons (or

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[90] BL, Add. MS 5836 f. 118b.
[91] GRO, D65/IV/76, Will of William Taswell, 1770.
[92] Bond, p. 146.

nephews) whom they hoped would enter the Church when they were old enough.[93]

If a parson was fortunate he may have advanced sufficiently in the Church to assist his son's career himself, or if he had remained a parochial incumbent he might have had access to a patron who was as willing or able to advance the career of the son as he had the father. George Hayward, incumbent of Frocester, Nibley and Nympsfield, for instance, had been assured by his patron Lord Ducie that his son would "be my successor in the living of Frocester". In the interim he hoped to give up Nympsfield in his son's favour so that his young man might marry with a greater security than merely the curacy of Beverstone he already held. Hayward "humbly and earnestly request[ed his]...Lordship's friendly assistance" to use his influence with the Lord Chancellor to have his son presented if he resigned. He also added, that in return, if Lord Ducie "should you proceed in your inclosing plan, you may depend upon his acting as I should do."[94]

A father might more readily advance his son's career if he possessed an advowson (or even the next turn of presentation) of a living. The incidence of clerical possession of advowsons increased during the period, as can be seen from Table 19, which shows ownership of the advowsons of the two archdeaconries. Many clergy of both regions were possessed advowsons within their own archdeaconry, and also in other

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[93] For instance, GRO, 1746 187 Thomas Clement (Badgeworth); 1740 147 Obidiah Done (Cranham). BRO, D/A/We/45/158 Richard Penn, (Princes Risborough, Aston Sandford); D/A/We/89/2, Benjamin Reynolds (Hoggeston).
[94] GRO, D340a C/32 43, George Hayward to Lord Ducie, 13 October 1796.

parts of the country. Some were livings long-held by the incumbent's family, especially gentry families; others were purchased by members of an increasingly prosperous clerical body. Such purchases allowed the cleric to treat the benefice as his own property, not merely for his lifetime, but as something he could bequeath it to his heirs. This made investments in the parsonage or in improving value of the living, and also his son's education and ordination worthwhile.

These reasons contributed to the tendency for many sons of the clergy to enter the Church themselves. It is difficult to say exactly how many sons of Buckingham and Gloucester incumbents were also clerics. Certainly they made up the majority of those sons whose occupations could be discovered, though admittedly their occupation is often more readily detected than those of other sons, especially if they succeeded their father in a benefice. However, the growing number of men who followed their sons into the Church may be shown another way, by considering the parental occupation of the incumbents of Buckingham and Gloucester, shown in Table 24a-b. In the archdeaconry of Gloucester such clergy amounted to about 17 percent of all occupations in 1730 and 20 percent in 1780. In Buckinghamshire, the number of incumbents who were the off-spring of clerics rose from 20 percent to 28 percent during this period. Whilst there are flaws in these statistics, which will be discussed more fully in Chapter 4, it is evident that the proportion of incumbents with clerical fathers was significant, and was increasing during the period.

In this way clerical dynasties began to emerge within the Church. (These might include direct father-son dynasties, and also dynasties created by less direct ties between clergymen, such as kinship or marriage.) Some clerical fathers had succeeded to livings which their own fathers and even grandfathers had held before them, and in some cases into which one of their own sons or another family member would follow them, such as the Gegg family of Corse in Gloucester or the Knapps of Shenley in Buckingham. Many sons found parishes in the same archdeaconry as their fathers, especially if it was their family's county of origin. One such example is the Jenner family of Gloucestershire: Stephen Jenner senior, the son of a gentleman of Slimridge, was vicar of Berkeley from 1729 to 1755. His two sons followed him into the Church. Stephen junior become curate of Stone and rector of Rockhampton, on his own petition. Henry held a living in Wiltshire, was rector of Dursley, and was presented to Rockhampton by his brother, Stephen, in 1773. The Bartons of Buckinghamshire are an instance of a long-standing clerical dynasty: John Barton succeeded to his father's living of Great Brickhill in 1715, which he himself retained until his own death in 1760. He was also rector of Sherrington, which, as seen, he resigned in favour of his son Philip. Philip also held the rectory of Broughton, whilst his elder brother, John, who died in 1755, was rector of Great Linford and Emberton.

One distinctive pattern which is evident amongst the clergy of Buckinghamshire is that it was very often the first son or elder sons who

followed their father in a clerical career, such as the two eldest sons of William Taswell. Exceptions to this primogeniture most often occurred if the parson was of gentry background, or he felt had acquired sufficient property to deem himself among the landed elite, when the stereotypical 'younger son' made his way in the Church, leaving his older brother to the family inheritance. This was the case, for instance, in the Penn family of Princes Risborough (Bucks). Eldest son William inherited land in the parish from his father Thomas, while second son Richard followed his father into the Church. But even in the families of very wealthy incumbents like Charles Coxwell, it was the eldest son who entered the Church and in this case who also inherited of the Coxwell estate at Ablington, the others having careers in the navy, army, in India and a second (the fourth-born boy) son in the Church[95] .

The effect of such clerical dynasties were manifold. For the parson and his son, it provided a means of protecting his property and of securing a piece of ecclesiastical property as family inheritance. It also created a sense of vocational awareness in the son, who knew well the profession into which he was entering, and, if he was able to serve the same living as his father, a deeply intimate knowledge of the community to which he ministered. Such a continuity within the parsonage could forge a strong bond between cleric and parishioners, the latter having witnessed the rites of passage of their families tended to for several generations by the same

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[95] GRO, D 627 45 (v), Will of Charles Coxwell.

clerical family.

Clearly, therefore, for all the vagaries of clerical life, the profession was not unattractive to many boys bred in the parsonage. But it was obviously not for all. Some boys were simply not interested in the Church, no matter how much their fathers wanted them ordained:

> the young man I'm going to Speak of, had never a great inclination to Letters,...[and was himself] so humble as to own his own his unfitness for the Altar & [desired] to endeavour a more suitable employment. [But his father] is very angry with his Son for turning out of Kind as we phrase it here. What, says he, your Grandfather a Priest, & your Father a Priest! & will you break one Line? you my only son, my only Hopes frustrate all?[96]

This is evident even within families, where one boy might be more suited to the Church than another. Such was the case for the long-suffering John Lord of Drayton Parslow of Buckingham. He had wished his eldest son to follow him into the Church and had sent him

> to New College Schole & entered him of a College, but he had an Aversion for the Church & his Father's Living of Drayton, to which he might have succeeded; but taking to sporting & the occupation of a Poacher, he lived idly with his Father and Mother....[Fortunately] another of his sons, Wm [sic], is of Magdalen College in Oxford...and is likely to do very well.[97]

Others who did imitate their fathers were not necessarily entirely suited to it. Cole explained, for instance, that the above-mentioned son of John Lowth, who had gone into trade

> was afterwards admitted of Emmanuel College & being preferred by my Lord Winchelsea,....[but] he is a young

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[96] ibid., pp. 145-6.
[97] Cole, *Blecheley Diary*, pp. 43-44.

> thoughtful man & had better continued in Trade than to have run his Head against a Pulpit.[98]

Few parsons' sons seem to have taken up the "poor and contemptible employment" so decried by Eachard, but this may be a reflection of the fact that more information came to light regarding the occupation of the sons of more socially elite clergy than other less prosperous parsons.[99] Amongst those whose occupations were discovered were men who made their career in the navy and armed services, in India (including Warren Hastings[100]), in the civil service, and as colonial settlers, merchants, grocers, surgeons and propertied gentlemen. In all likelihood the occupation of the son, at least the one upon which he began his career path, reflected the means and status of his clerical father. Undoubtedly his father's hopes were that he made a successful and prosperous life for himself, and, perhaps even that he might be in a position to care for his mother and his sister in the event of his father's death whilst they were still dependent.

Clergymen's Children: Daughters

It is difficult to make much more than generalisations about the lot of the daughters of clergy, simply because of lack of information. Unquestionably their fathers would have wished them to make good marriages both for their daughters' personal happiness and to see them

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[98] BL, Add. MS 5836 f. 118b.
[99] Eachard, vol. 1, p. 95.
[100] Son of Penniston of Bledington, though he relinquished the living and went to Barbados when Warren was a small boy.

prosper, and some went to some lengths to ensure a prosperous match. (This was not merely for their daughters' benefit, but also because it reflected favourably upon the clergyman himself). Not surprisingly, the vast majority of the marriages of the daughters of clerics, at least those about which something is known, were to clergymen, usually to local parsons, perpetuating the endogamy of the clerical caste. The next most common status of their husbands was esquire or gentleman, men of substance who had no specified occupation; other daughters married men engaged in a variety of trades including an attorney, surgeon, apothecary, grocer, merchant and cloth manufacturer. Sometimes a daughter of a clergyman remained at her father's side in his widowhood, acting as his housekeeper, such as Penelope Jenkinson did for her father Thomas, (rector of Datchett in Buckingham)[101] or even his nursemaid if he was ill or infirm:

> A few days ago when I was in some Company in Ciceter [sic] [wrote Richard Cumberland], where the Conversation turning on a Clergyman in the Neighbourhood, who lies dangerously Ill, a Lady took occasion to mention the tenderness and Affectionate Care and Sollicitude of his Only Daughter, about 20, in a manner that made me half in Love with her - and induced me when I came home to ask a Servant of ours who has lived in the Family, how many Children Dr Sandford[102] had - she replied only one Daughter, and added, She was the best tempered Young Lady in the World....[103]

Sometimes, too, unmarried women were left stricken, with inadequate

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[101] BRO, DA/We/78/96.
[102] Rector of Hatherop and vicar of Ampney Crucis.
[103] Cumberland, *Letters*, Richard to George Cumberland, p. 218, 18 November, 1778.

means of support, by the death of the fathers upon whom they were dependent. In extreme cases, they may not have been provided for by their fathers in their wills, and if they had no other relations to whom they could turn, they were at the mercy of the charitable good will of others; thus, a couple of the maiden daughters of clerics in these counties were given pensions by the Corporation of the Sons of the clergy: Jane Stephens, daughter of Henry, vicar of Preston in Gloucester and Catherine Browne, daughter of Moses Browne of Olney in Buckingham.[104] Anne, the daughter of Thomas Smith of Downe Ampney in Gloucester, was apprenticed to two milliners by the Corporation, providing her with a practical means of gaining a livelihood after her father's death.[105]

The situation could also be very difficult for young children who were left fatherless by the death of a cleric. This was quite common, because the late age of clerical marriage which meant that "their children then are all *Benjamins*; I mean, 'the Children of their old age'".[106] Such "children after their Father's death are left, in their minority, to the...care of Friends and Executors", who might be "very good" guardians, as Edmund Smyth of Filgrave was for Barbara Johnson, (daughter of Wolsey of Olney) and her brothers.[107] But equally it was possible that these guardians would "discharge not *their* true trust in their education, whence

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[104] GLRO, A/CSC/7D.
[105] ibid.
[106] Thomas Fuller, *The History of the Worthies of England*, (2 vols., London, 1811), vol. 1, p. 55.
[107] Letter 14 April 1814, cited in ed. Natalie Rothstein, *Barbara Johnson's Album of Fashions and Fabrics*, (London, 1987), p. 10.

it is such Orphans too often embrace wild courses to their own destructions".[108]

Clergymen's widows

One corollary of the late marriage of clergy not yet considered was that there tended to be a significant age-gap between the groom and his bride: the older the groom the fewer the numbers of suitable, desirable women there were available for marriage. Perhaps the most notorious example of such an age difference is the two decades between the Goodwins, which probably contributed not a little to the difficulties in their marriage highlighted above. When Thomas Willis wrote to Cole in 1780 from Blecheley with news of "this Country", he remarked that "Goodwin [grows] younger and younger, his wife being brought to Bed of her 3^{d} Child, on Tuesday last, a fine Boy. Sanderson says Goodwin is like a Copyholder, who puts in a life once in 7 Years".[109] Cole's perceptive response was that

> If my friend Goodwin...takes the Privilege of a Copyholder, I, as a reprobate Old Bachelor cannot help thinking him the happier for it: and if he had put in for no life, perhaps he had been as wise. Critical ladies soon discover the disadvantageous Disparity of 20 to 40.[110]

Such an age-gap was by no means the most substantial in the period. The difference between Kinnard Baghott (rector of King's Stanley) and his

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[108] Fuller, vol. 1, p. 55.
[109] BL, Add. MS 5825 f. 120b, Thomas Willis to William Cole, 29 June 1780.
[110] ibid., William Cole to Thomas Willis, 2 July 1780.

wife was twenty-eight years, and between rector of Turweston, John Riseley, and his was some forty-two years. It is possible to identify ten other marriages in Buckinghamshire and eleven in Gloucestershire where the cleric was ten years or more older than his spouse.[111] The average age difference in the former county was about nine years and in the latter, seven, although these figures are far from reliable owing to scanty evidence. They do, however, correlate with Hillyer's finding that the average age difference of Northamptonshire clergy was between five and nine years, with ten to nineteen not being uncommon.[112] Even allowing for the longevity of the eighteenth-century clergymen, with age differences such as these, it is hardly surprising that widowhood was a common state for the last years of the life of the parson's wife. Hillyer reckoned that there was more than a fifty per cent chance of clerical wives becoming widows, since besides the age difference, the women themselves also lived longer than was normal for the period.[113] The average length of widowhood for the sixteen Buckinghamshire clerics' wives information is available was about fourteen years: the longest was forty-five years in the case of Martha Milward Key who died in 1805 at the age of 82. Her husband Thomas, vicar of Upton, had died in 1760, aged only 32. In

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[111] It was not always the case that the clergyman was the elder partner. But often where the wife was substantially older, it was one or other of the couple's second marriage, as in the case of Francis Costyn, whose second wife was ten years older than he was, or it was one with much material profit invested in it, especially to a wealthy heiress or widow. This is evident in the union of Anne Duncombe, joint heiress of her father, who was twenty years older than her young husband, John Barton.

[112] Hillyer, 270.

[113] Hillyer, p. 329.

Gloucestershire widowhood averaged about 10 years from twenty-six examples: Ellinor Daubeney died in 1843 when she was 82; her spouse, James, vicar of Preston and rector of Stratton predeceased her by twenty-six years, dying in 1817 at the age of 65. There were eight other instances of women living for more than fifteen years longer than their husband. In fact these figures are rather meaningless in terms of proving any firm statistical conclusion since the samples are so small, but they do give some notion of the long interval that would often occurred between the deaths of clerical husband and wife.

Most clergymen's wives were satisfactorily provided for by their husbands in their wills, despite the fact that the parson could not bequeath any ecclesiastical property except an advowson to her. Some widows could look to their sons for assistance, or to their daughter's husbands. Still others would eventually be supported by a second husband. But for some, widowhood could result in great financial difficulties, even destitution; all the more so if her children were dependent, or she had none to support her. It meant loss of income from benefice, as well as of a home in which to live, if the couple had been resident in the parsonage. Jones depicted such a turn of events in the case of the his rector's widow, who with her

> three unestablished daughters, (the youngest of them not very young), are, I fear, left in distressed circumstances. How must their hearts droop at exchanging their present large, convenient, beautiful house for a cottage! A rectory, or a vicarage house, is certainly by a caravanseray; for it

frequently exchanges its inmates.[114]

In addition, dilapidations to this house were incurred by the estate of the deceased cleric, further diminishing the income of his widow. There were also widows who were placed in an unfortunate position, like Mary Trott, by their husbands' spending during their lifetimes. Edmund Trott ruined himself rebuilding the vicarage house at West Wycombe. He died in 1765 and in the same year Mary was made a pensioner of the Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy, but she subsequently died destitute.[115] Other suffered simply by the careless failure or inability of their husband to make adequate provision for them, which might sometimes occur in the case of late marriages, or if there had been an inadequate marriage settlement, which amongst the propertied classes usually included provision for widowhood, when they were wed. There were no Church pensions for the widows of clergymen. In 1728 it was estimated that probably one in twenty widows of clergymen was in need, which translates to as many as one hundred clerical brides in each the two archdeaconries.[116]

From the late seventeenth century there was an awareness of the need to provide for these unfortunate women, who were thrust into poverty through no real fault of their own, often with a family to maintain. Sometimes they could rely on the charity of others. William Deacle of Tattenhoe in Buckinghamshire, for instance, informed the Queen Anne's

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[114] Jones, p. 106.
[115] Parker, *Wycombe*, p. 106.
[116] Ernest Harold Pearce, *The Sons of Clergy: Some Records of Two-hundred and Seventy-five Years*, 2nd ed., (London, 1928), p. 126.

Bounty that he would not have accepted the

> scanty pittance arising from such a preferment as Totnall [sic], if it did not enable him the better to fulfil his Labour of Love in providing for the Widow and four Children of a deceased Clergyman who were left destitute, & entirely depend upon his [Deacle's] Attention & Bounty for Subsistence.[117]

The most systematic attempt to respond to the problem was made by the Corporation of the Sons of Clergy, which ventured, at various times and with varying degrees of success to provide support for dependants of deceased clergymen. The minutes of the Court of Assistants of the Corporation show that at least fourteen Buckinghamshire and eighteen Gloucestershire women received pensions during the period from the Corporation.[118] There were definitely others, since only from 1742 onwards do the minutes record the abode of the widow and the name of the benefice of her former husband, making it difficult to trace women from the two archdeaconries in the earlier lists. Without doubt, too, there were women whose petitions failed to win them a pension, often because of the lack of funds in the coffers of the Corporation at the time of their application, and they would have to find other ways to make ends meet.

In many cases this meant undertaking some sort of work to sustain themselves and their families. In one respect, clerical widows might be more fortunate than other widows in the period, since they had probably received a far better education than most, and may even have been left

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[117] CERC, F4696 Tattenhoe, William Deacle to Christopher Hodgson, 6 March 1794.
[118] GLRO, A/CSC/7B, 7C, 7D.

with books in their husband's estate, which might allow them to undertake teaching as a way of earning money, probably a less arduous and demeaning job for them than those taken up by others, such as sempstressing. Even Corporation pensioners, such as the widow of Henry Owen, Minister of Naunton in Gloucestershire, often had to look for additional income by working themselves. Owen left

> his Widdow with Seven Children all now living [and she] is became through the narrow circumstances she was left in the object of the wonted goodness of the charitable Society of the Sonns of the Clergy. She had by her care and Industry for these 5 Years since her husbands death endeavoured to support her numerous family and is now engaging her selfe in the business of a school to Instruct young Children. She is exemplary, virtuous and well affected to the Church of England. She was left in a very low condition through the great expenses her husband was at in rebuilding the Parsonage house.[119]

It is difficult to say how such poor women were regarded within eighteenth-century community as little evidence in this regard survives for historians, but it is certain that contemporaries were not inured to their plight albeit that it was not easily remedied.

Conclusion

Matrimony and parenthood were important events in the life of any eighteenth-century individual. Many of the deliberations it provoked were common to layman and parson. For the parson in particular, it was a step that many could not or, indeed did not, take lightly for it had considerable

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[119] Cited in Pearce, p. 144.

consequences for his personal circumstances, his economic situation and his professional career, and also for his relationship with the local community. The personal implications are largely self-evident, for the companionship and responsibilities of a wife and children were a far-cry from the demands of bachelorhood. Professionally and economically, a marriage could enhance his circumstances, but equally it brought greater demands, to make provision for his family on a day-to-day basis and after his decease. Such demands could impinge upon the parish, and thus upon his pastoral effectiveness. The latter could also be affected by the moral example of the parson, and the effect of this might be all the greater and more relevant to the congregation of his household consisted of a moral and pious family. The parson's place within the community might be entrenched by marriage, especially if his own and his children's marriages were to spouses born locally, and if he was able to engineer for his son (or his kin) to inherit his benefice. Endogamy reinforced such dynasties. Its prevalence amongst clergy in this period helped, too, to create a sense of vocational community amongst them, which stood along side the social and economic ties a settled parson had in his local community.

CHAPTER 3

Clergy and Political Life

> I find you accuse me of Toryism. I scarce ever had a clear idea what *Whig & Tory* mean. I have always wished those barbarous words were laid aside. I know that I mean well; that I wish, anxiously wish, well to my country....[1]

In the eighteenth century Anglican clergymen formed the single most identifiable body of voters in the electorate. It is not difficult to identify clerical political preferences amongst those of the rest of the unreformed electorate in the surviving poll books of the period. Recent research by historians into this pre-1832 political system has done much to uncover its intricacies and to provide scholars with a fairly detailed understanding of its functioning, both in general terms and in the case of specific elections, issues or localities.[2] Within this investigation the political participation of parochial clergymen of the Established Church has not been ignored. Their part in the various political debates of the century has been noted in many works at least in passing, generally alongside that of the country gentlemen and other

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[1] Twining, vol. 1, p. 431, Twining to Samuel Parr, 15 February 1795.

[2] For example, W.A. Speck, *Tory and Whig: The Struggle for the Constitution 1701-1715*, (Cambridge, 1982); Frank O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties: The Unreformed Electorate of Hanoverian England 1734-1832*, (Oxford, 1989); Paul Langford, *The Excise Crisis: Society and Politics in the Age of Walpole*, (Oxford, 1975); Aubrey Newman, 'Elections in Kent and its Parliamentary Representation 1715-1754', Unpublished Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1957; R.J. Robson, *The Oxfordshire Election of 1754: A Study of the Interplay of City, County, and University Politics*, (Oxford, 1949); Eric G. Forrester, *Northamptonshire County Elections and Electioneering 1695-1832*, (Oxford, 1941).

professional men, all of whom historians regard as constituting the "first sector" of early modern society.[3] Often, however, parish clergymen have been depicted in these studies as lacking political independence, of being mere political ciphers of patrons who could use their parson's vote and influence as they wanted. Typically, too, historians have portrayed parish clergymen as having Tory predilections, and as such, maintain that Anglican parsons became a politically marginalised body under the entrenched Whig regime, especially after Convocation was suppressed in 1717.

There has, however, been research that has paid specific attention to the political behaviour of eighteenth-century clergy, treating them as a distinctive group within the political nation. Such close examinations have gone some way towards explaining the complexities of clerical political motivations and allegiances, especially in distinct areas of England: M^{c}Clatchey for Oxfordshire, Pruett for late-Stuart Leicestershire, Warne and Smith for Devonshire, and Baskerville for Cheshire, Chamberlain for Sussex and Gregory for Kent.[4] Paul Langford has investigated clerical responses to a

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[3] O'Gorman, p. 208; Langford, *Excise Crisis*, pp. 153ff; John A. Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour in Unreformed England: Plumpers, Splitters and Straights*, (Princeton, 1982), pp. 195-8.

[4] M.G. Smith, 'The Cathedral Chapter of Exeter and the Election of 1705: A Reconsideration', *Reports and Transactions of the Devonshire Association for the Advancement of Science*, 116 (1984), pp. 109-126; A. Warne, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century Devon*, (Newton Abbot, 1969); S.W. Baskerville, 'The Political Behaviour of the Cheshire Clergy, 1705-1752', *Northern History*, 23 (1987), pp. 74-97; Jeffrey S. Chamberlain, '"The Changes and Chances of this Mortal Life": the Vissitudes of High Churchmanship and Politics among the Clergy

particular political crisis (the American Revolution), and also with regard to Convocation.[5] Such research both confirms and refutes (or at least modifies) aspects of the conclusions of the more general studies. This chapter will make a contribution to this research by considering the political participation of the clergy of the parishes of Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire during the eighteenth century, an important aspect of their place within the eighteenth century community.

The arguments of this chapter rest heavily upon the evidence to be found in poll books, for there are few other contemporary indicators of clerical involvement in politics in the two archdeaconries. These poll books are largely those for the elections for the Knights of the Shire for Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire and indicate the votes cast by electors in these two counties. In Buckinghamshire there were four contested county elections between 1716 and 1784: in 1722, 1727, 1734 and 1784. There survive in print only the poll books for the 1722 and the 1784 elections.[6] In Gloucestershire five county elections and by-elections were contested in the same period: 1717, 1722, 1734, 1776 and 1784. Only the fiercely-contested 1776 poll was

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of Sussex 1700-1745', University of Chicago Ph.D. thesis, 1992; Gregory, 'Thesis', Chapter 2.

[5] Paul Langford, 'The English Clergy and the American Revolution', in *The Transformation of Political Culture*, ed. E. Hellmuth, (Oxford, 1990), pp. 275-307; and 'Convocation and the Tory Clergy, 1717-61', in *The Jacobite Challenge*, eds. E. Cruickshanks & J. Black, (Edinburgh, 1988), pp. 107-122.

[6] Bodleian Library, MS Gough.Bucks 1b; MS Gough.Add Bucks 8°.

published.[7] In addition to these printed poll books a handful of manuscript polls survive. In the Buckinghamshire Record Office two manuscript copies of the 1734 poll[8]; in the Gloucester Record Office there are fragments of the 1734 poll and canvass tallies for the 1763, 1768 and 1789 uncontested elections, as well as a full record of the clergy's votes cast in the 1722 election of the archdeaconry's proctors for Convocation.[9] In light of the relative paucity of such documentation those which survive are all the more valuable, but even they are not without their problems for the historian. The potential for inaccuracies both by the clerks who recorded the electors' preferences and the printer who published the poll books means that, scholars have to "make an act of faith in assuming the[ir] reliability".[10] The 1734 Buckinghamshire manuscripts are a case in point. Written in several different hands, there are minor discrepancies between the two versions of this poll, and there is also a slight disparity between the official final totals of the three candidates and the totals in the manuscripts, though not in the outcome of the election.[11] In spite of such difficulties and for want of any other reliable source to make a psephological study

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[7] GRO, D5130/60 1776.
[8] BRO, Poll Book 1734.
[9] BRO, D 674a X3; Q Rep 1-4.
[10] O'Gorman, p. 177.
[11] The totals in the pollbook appear to be marginally lower for Lee than his final result, and there is a deviation in the manuscript and official totals figures for Stanhope, suggesting that some votes were missed in the manuscript record. This must be born in mind when drawing conclusions about this election. All figures mentioned to in this chapter refer to MS 1.

such as this, in the final analysis such sources have simply to be taken, albeit cautiously, at face value. It is upon these four poll books that much of the discussion about clerical involvement in political life in the two archdeaconries must rest.

The parish clergy of Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire, eligible to vote by virtue of their benefices, found themselves members of communities which had strong traditions of aristocratic domination of their electoral representation. In eighteenth-century Buckinghamshire there were several great noble families who were also outstandingly pre-eminent in national politics: the Grenville family of Stowe, the Shelburnes of Wycombe and the Portlands from Bulstrode. Added to these were other aristocrats like the dukes of Bedford and Buckingham, the Verney family, and a number of very wealthy landed families, all of whom were determined to lay claim to the county parliamentary representation such as the Stanhope, Hampden, Clayton, Lowndes, Drake and Lee families.[12] While several of these families achieved their aim in the period before George III's accession, in the second half of the century until after the 1784 election, politics shifted to revolve sharply around "Grenville pretensions to county leadership" counterbalanced by the Verneys of Claydon, who wanted the same recognition.[13] Both families were challenged by the rest of the gentry

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[12] L.B. Namier & John Brooke, *The House of Commons, 1754-1790*, (London, 1964), vol. 1, p. 214.
[13] Davis, p. 17.

of the county who were distrustful of such an attempted "agglomeration of aristocratic power".[14] This conflict is epitomised, for example, by the struggle for the two shire seats in 1784, when, with national issues magnifying and intensifying local divisions, the Foxite Verney was narrowly defeated by Aubery, an independent Buckinghamshire gentleman, and by Grenville, both of whom favoured William Pitt.

Gloucestershire politics were even more sharply polarised than this. Underlying all political incidents during the eighteenth century was the rivalry between the interests of the Beaufort and Berkeley families. Throughout the period, and especially from mid-century, the ranks of the lesser elites lined up behind one or other of these two families: the Chesters, Southwells, Bathursts, and Masters alongside Beaufort, and the Traceys, Codringtons, Guises, Selwyns, Stephens, Delaberes and Moretons with the Berkeleys. This divisions of interests broadly paralleled party alignments in eighteenth-century Gloucestershire. The Beauforts represented the Tory party and from the accession of George III they upheld the government's interest; the Berkeleys led the Whig interest in the county. Such a division meant that generally throughout the Hanoverian period, except for the middle decades of the century, the Knights of the Shire for Gloucestershire

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[14] ibid., p. 31.

were usually one Whig and one Tory.

Despite the power and pre-eminence of the elite families in the politics of Buckingham and Gloucestershire, it is important to notice that there existed, amongst the rest of the thousands of franchised freeholders (clergy included) a strong independent political opinion in both counties. This is revealed, for example, in the strength of the Association movement in both regions in 1780; the demonstration of public support for William Pitt in Buckinghamshire before and during the 1784 general election; the anger in 1776 at the Berkeleys' attempt to capture the second Gloucestershire seat in the by-election of that year.[15]

Buckinghamshire elections

In terms of clerical participation in the Buckinghamshire election of 1722, one is struck by the overwhelming uniformity of their preference. Just as in the previous general election, in 1722 Whig and Tory interests co-operated, each proposing a candidate to stand jointly at the election. Montague Garrard Drake, the Tory choice, was from a well-established Amersham family. He was a close friend of the county's leading Tories, Lords Fermanagh and Cheyne, and had sat for

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[15] John Cannon, *The Fox-North Coalition: Crisis of the Constitution, 1782-4*, (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 186-7; Esther A.L. Moir. 'The Gloucestershire Association for Parliamentary Reform, 1780', *TBGAS*, 75 (1956), pp. 171-191; Davis, p. 17; O'Gorman, p. 271; John Cannon, 'Gloucestershire Politics, 1750-1800', *TBGAS*, 79, (1960), p. 295.

the pocket borough of Amersham since 1713. Alongside him stood Sir Thomas Lee, also from an entrenched county family, whose seat was at Hartwell, near Aylesbury. A Whig, who had the support of Sunderland and the Ministry during this campaign, Lee had been MP for Chipping Wycombe since 1710 but had actually voted consistently against the Government after 1715, except during the repeal of the Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts in 1719. [16] So "mightily well inclined" were Buckinghamshire freeholders for these joint candidates that Lord Fermanagh wrote in February 1722 that to oppose them would be "in vain".[17] Fermanagh's prediction was correct: Fleetwood Dormer, a lawyer from Quainton and former Member for Chipping Wycombe stood as an independent Whig but was defeated by a vast majority. The clergy were no different from the rest of the electorate in displaying a strong preference for the joint candidates. Only 10 of the 89 parsons who chose to vote in the election did not vote for them. Indeed, their commitment to these candidates is distinctively more marked than the constituency's as a whole (Table 11). Such unanimity within the electorate meant that the 1722 election in Buckinghamshire was a relatively peaceful and cordial affair.

Both the 1734 and the 1784 general elections were, in marked

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[16] Romney Sedgwick, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1715-1754*, 2 vols., (London, 1970), vol. 1, p. 206.
[17] Lady Margaret Verney ed., *Verney Letters of the Eighteenth Century from the MSS at Claydon House*, London, 1930, vol. 2, p. 94.

contrast, the most extreme examples of just how turbulent and heated eighteenth-century politics could be, since in both elections national political issues enveloped and heightened local antagonisms. In 1734 the election was conducted in the shadow of unprecedented country disgruntlement with the government and its behaviour. In particular, the poll allowed the electorate a means of expressing its hostility to the Excise scheme that the Walpole Ministry had introduced to the House of Commons during the previous year.

In Buckinghamshire there survives little information about the issues which dominated the electoral campaign. One assumes that the county was no different from the rest of the nation, where the Excise was the key issue of debate, intensifying and exacerbating local conflicts and friction. The final result of the Buckinghamshire election, however, is unquestionable. The Ministry chose not to contest for the Shire seats. The Hon. Sir William Stanhope and Sir Thomas Lee were comfortably returned as Members for the county. Lee, having been elected in 1722, had not stood at the 1727 poll, but was returned to the House at the death of John Hampden in 1729. Stanhope was the younger brother of the Earl of Chesterfield and had first been elected for the county in 1727. Both Lee and Stanhope were Opposition Whigs: the former had not voted with the government since 1715, while the latter, following the lead of his brother Lord Chesterfield, had abandoned Walpole in 1733 during the Excise Crisis. Neither had,

therefore, voted for the Excise Bill, and as sitting MPs, their places were not much threatened by the hostility towards the Excise.[18] Even the Tory candidate, Richard Lowndes of Winslow, whom local Tories insisted challenge the Whigs for the seats was ultimately not a threat, mustering 1314 votes, to Stanhope's 2414 and Lee's 1763 (Table 12).

Clerical participation in the 1734 election, or rather the lack of it, was extraordinary. Only 49 Buckinghamshire clergymen of the 171 eligible to vote actually did so. Amongst these clerical voters there was a distinctive trend - if a pattern amongst so small a number may be so called - to chose the candidates who were unquestionably in opposition to Walpole's ministry. Probably this is not surprising since, of those most hostile to the Ministry in 1734, parochial clergymen have been identified as amongst the most "rabidly anti-government".[19] Whilst only a small number of clergy voted in this county, compared to the electorate as a whole in Buckinghamshire these clergymen expressed a stronger preference for Lee (a long-standing Opposition Whig) and Lowndes (a Tory), and, noticeably, to reject Stanhope. Whereas almost half of the votes cast by the whole county franchise were for Stanhope, amongst clergy, only a quarter of their votes went to him. In contrast to other voters, Lee and Lowndes received a significant proportion of plumpers[20] from clerics, and moreover, where

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[18] *The Gentleman's Magazine*, November 1733.
[19] Langford, *Excise Crisis*, p. 153.
[20] i.e. a single vote for one candidate, the elector's second vote remaining unused.

they split their choice, clerics voted equally as strongly for Lee and Lowndes as they did for Lee and Stanhope.

In 1784 both sitting Knights of the Shire for Buckinghamshire were unseated in another general election which saw, throughout Britain, national issues play as prominent a part on the local stage as purely provincial concerns. 1784 witnessed the struggle between Charles James Fox and William Pitt for control of the Commons, a struggle which resulted in a parallel polarisation of the political nation. The overall result of the election was an astonishing triumph for Pitt and a humiliating defeat for Fox and the Whigs, as Pitt won 48 of the 80 county seats, gaining about 85 seats in all. In short, "in English counties and large boroughs 'Fox's Martyrs' were mown down".[21]

Ralph Earl Verney, MP for Buckinghamshire, was one of these 'martyrs', cast from his seat by the electorate because of his association with the Fox-North Coalition. Verney strongly denied any links with Fox, especially as it became apparent that such a connection would be a burden when facing the electorate. Instead he tried to stress his independence - that no office or place had corrupted his political judgement - but it was obvious to Buckinghamshire freeholders that he had voted for Fox's East India Bill, and that he was blatantly opposed to William Pitt.[22]

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[21] Hill, *1742-1832*, p. 154.

[22] Davis, pp. 35-6. See also, Oxfordshire Record Office, Thame MS II/ii/1 & 2, Lord Abingdon to Lord Wenman, 3 April, 1784; Lord Abingdon to J. Bullock, 16

In fact, the temper of many Buckinghamshire voters was unmistakable for the outset of electioneering. At the county meeting in Aylesbury in March 1784, the 2000 or so present ignored and shouted down everybody who spoke in favour of Fox and the Coalition, while they warmly supported John Aubery who spoke for Pitt, unanimously carrying an address in the Minister's favour.[23] The poll opened a month later in Aylesbury; standing against Verney were Aubery and William Wyndham Grenville.[24] The latter obviously represented the Grenville interest in the county. He had replaced his brother Thomas, the sitting member, who, alone of his family, was still attached to Fox. Aubery, from Boarstall, was a newcomer to county politics. It was he, of the three, who most firmly attached himself to the "great Constitutional Questions which have justly excited the Anxiety of the Nation."[25]

Though there was an evident polarity of the electorate between Fox and Pitt, the result in Buckinghamshire could not have been more closely cut. Grenville easily topped the poll but only 24 votes

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April, 1784.

[23] *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 24 April 1784.

[24] Grenville and Aubery did not run as joint candidates, though there is evidence to suggest that Aubery at least was campaigning as if they were:

> "Sir, Your vote is earnestly requested for John Aubery and William Grenville Esq. joint candidates for the county of Buckingham....I am, for MR A...John Nash. Agent."

Scrawled below in another had, probably by Grenville, was a note that he had "never given authority to Mr Nash or any other person to canvass for Mr A and himself as joint candidates." BRO, D/Le/D 10/77, John Nash to Mr Silver, n.d., [1784].

[25] *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 27 March 1784.

separated Aubery and Verney, a not unremarkable showing for the latter given the hurdles he faced during this campaign (Table 13).[26]

Just as they had done in 1722, in 1784 the political choices of the clerics who voted mirrored almost identically the way in which the rest of the freeholders of the county chose to vote. Even the manner in which they cast their votes paralleled the rest of the electorate: for example, over half of Verney's total votes came from plumpers; amongst his clerical votes, nearly half the earl's votes were plumpers. It is interesting to note, too, that in this election, compared to the previous Buckinghamshire elections considered here, the parsons who voted did not as a group lean heavily to one particular candidate or candidates, any more than the electorate did. Buckinghamshire clerics were obviously as struck by the division of political debate personified in Fox and Pitt as was the whole county electorate in 1784.

Gloucestershire election

The 1776 Gloucestershire by-election, the only eighteenth century

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[26] Verney's life of extravagance, bad investments and over-generosity had seen his fortune squandered and a personal financial crisis culminate (admittedly not a little encouraged by his political opponents) in the same months as the political crisis. Absent, fleeing his creditors, for the entire campaign, Verney owed his success to the financial and political efforts of his friends and supporters and his defeat to ill-luck on the last day of polling and to the massive tide of political opinion in the nation against Fox. Verney could only take consolation that his had been a narrow defeat, not a massive rout.

election for which a poll book survives, was far more turbulent than the 1784 Buckinghamshire poll. This "celebrated contest", the first in the county for forty years, resulted from the resignation of one of the sitting members.[27] A lengthy, intense and expensive campaign between the rival Berkeley and Beaufort interests for the seat ensued, as the Berkeleys tried to claim both of the seats, breaking the long-held understanding that the county representation should be shared.[28] The political turmoil was heightened by the fact that the election was played out before the backdrop of the American war, and that the Government and the Opposition each supported one of the candidates, William Bromley Chester and the Hon. George Cranfield Berkeley, respectively. Both men were new-comers to politics: Berkeley, the brother of Lord Berkeley, was a young naval officer, while Chester had not lived in the county long. Seven months of campaigning and eleven days of polling later and the result could not have been much closer: the county franchise was literally split in half, with only 46 votes separating the candidates (Table 14). William Bromley Chester's narrowly-won victory was confirmed after an unprecedentedly long parliamentary petition, much to the chagrin of Berkeley.

The 1776 election in Gloucestershire is a particularly useful one for this discussion of clerical political commitment. Not only was there

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[27] Cannon, 'Gloucestershire Politics', p. 295.
[28] ibid.

a very considerable level of participation by parochial incumbents, with three-quarters of them registering a vote, but with only two candidates to choose between, it is much easier to determine where their political loyalties lay. Very clearly, the majority of them voted for William Bromley Chester, a commitment doubly confirmed by evidence that a number of clergymen (some of whom had not voted at all) contributed financially to the cost of Chester's opposition to the parliamentary petition against him.[29] There were, doubtless, many reasons for such a strong clerical support for Chester. No doubt Beaufort patronage and interest played a part, but such support for a Government-backed candidate was also consistent with the strong ecclesiastical commitment to the Government at this time when it was at war with the American colonies - a time, when for clergy, their "duty to the Church and their duty to the government of George III were inseparable".[30] In Gloucestershire during the election of 1776, one of the areas in which Chester received most support, from clergy and laity alike, was in the south around Bristol, a Tory and Beaufort stronghold, and, significantly, the area where in the year preceding, twenty-nine parochial clerics had presented an address to the government encouraging its war with America.[31]

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[29] Oxford Record Office, DIL xxiv 17a, 31 August, 1776.
[30] Langford, 'English Clergy and the American Revolution', p. 279.
[31] *London Gazette,* 7 October 1775, cited in ibid., p. 275.

Party allegiances?

Already some suggestions have been made about the way eighteenth-century clergymen cast their votes in the particular elections under scrutiny here. Certainly their participation in political affairs was influenced and motivated by a number of interlocking factors. One of the key issues that has preoccupied many historians is the extent to which party played a part in determining the way parochial incumbents cast their votes at election time. What remains constant in most of their arguments is the generalisation that, at least until the dissolution of old party loyalties under George III, the bulk of Hanoverian parochial clerics tended to be of Tory allegiance. Speck, speaking for the early eighteenth century, wrote that

> contemporaries claimed that the vast majority of the clergy voted Tory in this period....Poll books bear out these claims....Apart from a few militant Whig bishops and a minority of sympathetic clergymen the Whigs could rely on little support from the Established Church.[32]

Linda Colley pushed this Tory-Anglican nexus well into the century, claiming that both before and after the Hanoverian Succession, parsons formed the backbone of provincial Toryism.[33] Whereas those seeking further advance within the ecclesiastical, or even secular hierarchy, or indeed, those already amongst the clerical elite, tended to be Whigs,

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[32] Speck, p. 24-5.
[33] Colley, p. 107.

typically Tory clerics were men who had little prospect or ambition of promotion within the Whig-dominated Establishment of the period.

Other historians who have undertaken local studies of the Church have been able to show that such generalisations apply to clergy in specific areas of the country, and to identify a strong residual Tory loyalty amongst, for instance, the clerical bodies of Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Cheshire until well into the eighteenth century.[34] By contrast, it has been shown that in Kent there was a gradual shift in the party allegiance of parochial clergy: at the start of the eighteenth century clerical support for the Tories was prevalent, but by about the 1730s this had transferred to the Whigs.[35] Similarly, amongst the incumbents of Yorkshire by mid-century "only 26.5 per cent [of parsons] supported the Tory candidate" meaning that in this region "the Tories could no longer claim, as they had done in Anne's reign, that they were the 'Church party' in the sense of having the solid backing of the Anglican clergy."[36]

While there is no way of knowing for certain the individual party loyalties of all of the parish incumbents of Buckinghamshire and Gloucester in this period, there are certainly a number of circumstances

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[34] See Robson, p. 83; Forrester, p. 151; and Baskerville, p. 78.
[35] Gregory, 'Thesis', p. 91.
[36] P. Adman, W.A. Speck & B. White, 'Yorkshire Election Results 1734 and 1742: A Computer Analysis', *Northern History*, 21, (1985), p. 173. (Appendix to J.F. Quinn, 'Yorkshiremen Go to the Polls: County Contests in the Early Eighteenth Century', ibid., pp. 137-174.)

that would point to a reasonable amount of clerical Tory support in both archdeaconries. In Gloucestershire it seems that support for Tory ideals, represented by the Beaufort family, prevailed well into the reign of George III. From 1734, when two Tory candidates were chosen as MPs, there began a Tory stranglehold on the Commons representation of the county which mirrored the political representation of many counties in the middle decades of the eighteenth century, and which went undisturbed in Gloucestershire until 1763. Obviously support for the Whigs existed in the county, most especially in western areas where Berkeley influence was strongest, such as the Berkeley hundred and the Forest of Dean, where the family were wardens, but the Tories retained support in areas of Beaufort dominance: the east, the south and the city of Gloucester. This bipartisan split within the county was heightened after 1763 when local issues resulted in a Berkeley Whig being returned to Parliament, and the two competing interests henceforth shared the representation of the shire. That such fierce political partisanship in the county continued into the second half of the eighteenth century, at a time when traditional party distinctions were fading, owned much to the great residual strength of Toryism within the area, albeit under the aegis of the county's intense and traditional elite rivalry. [37]

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[37] O'Gorman, p. 334.

The clergy of Gloucestershire were obviously not oblivious to this division of political support, nor indeed, to the strength of Tory consciousness, within the shire. Certainly more of their parishes were to be found in areas where Beaufort influence was strongest, the Forest of Dean lying outside the archdeaconry. There were also many men with Tory sympathies amongst the lay patrons of the archdeaconry, in a county where "dissent was electorally entrenched...[(i.e. about a fifth of voters), and where] innate freeholder toryism was often rooted in Anglican prejudice."[38] Similarly, several colleges from that Tory bastion of Oxford held a number of the advowsons in the archdeaconry. The backgrounds of the clergy themselves served to reinforce such Tory leanings, as the majority of the incumbents beneficed in Gloucestershire in the eighteenth century, and almost all of the parish clergy who voted in 1776, had received their education at Oxford. The clergy in Gloucestershire certainly had a tradition of giving support to Tory candidates. In 1722, an even split emerged in the votes cast by parish clergymen for Whig and Tory candidates in the election for proctors to Convocation, with the Tory candidate elected only after the disqualification of some of the Whig votes. But in 1734 the clergy elected two Tory proctors.[39] In 1754 the parish clergy had the example of their Chancellor to look to, as James Benson

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[38] ibid., p. 130.
[39] Langford, 'Convocation', pp. 109, 114.

campaigned in the Cirencester election for his brother-in-law, Henry Bathurst, whose family had long been Tories.[40] The existence of such clerical Toryism may also be confirmed by the fact that in Bristol, in the south of the county where Chester received much support in 1776, the 1774 election saw 50% (21% of them plumpers) of the clerical votes in the borough go to Matthew Brickdale, the Tory candidate.[41]

The pollbook for 1776 evidence reinforces these generalisations, both of the county and about clerical party loyalty. In a simple two-horse race, there is nothing equivocal about the result of the 1776 election amongst clergymen. While the rest of the electorate was, as shown above, split equally between the two candidates, nearly two-thirds of clerics voting in this by-election chose the Beaufort and Government-backed choice, William Bromley Chester. It is difficult to say, however, if such a figure provides a fair representation of the extent of clerical toryism, because of the influence that the American War had upon the campaign in Gloucestershire.[42] Certainly North's government had taken up much traditional Tory support, clergymen included, and this is undoubtedly reflected in the 1776 election result.[43] But such support was probably heightened by the government's war

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[40] R.W. Jennings, 'The Cirencester Contest and its Aftermath', *TBGAS*, 92 (1973), p. 161.
[41] Institute of Historical Research, Bristol Poll Book, 1774; A few, e.g., James Daubeney, Daniel Debat, Joseph Chapman, went on to vote for Chester in the 1776 Gloucestershire election.
[42] O'Gorman, p. 294.
[43] ibid., p. 356.

against the colonies, action for which clergy throughout the political spectrum had evinced a remarkable degree of support and loyalty.[44] This can be seen in the fact that it was not merely the parochial clergy who supported Chester in this election, but a number of the Chapter and several diocesan officials also voted for him.[45] America aside, however, it would be fair to assume that Chester would not have received the degree of support among the clergy of the archdeaconry that he did, had it not rested on the solid base of traditional commitment the Beaufort interest, and thus to a Tory ideal. Conversely, too, if conventional party loyalty can be argued to have played a part in the campaign and poll of 1776, then Toryism had retained one of its most traditional facets of support in Gloucestershire, the Anglican parson.

In Buckinghamshire the link between clergy and party is not so easily established, not least because in each of the three elections for which poll book evidence is extant, there was never such a unambiguous choice between two candidates with distinctive and opposing loyalties. Very often party allegiance was enmeshed by other concerns important to eighteenth-century voters or was disguised by tactical party voting. Despite this, there were in Buckinghamshire, despite the presence of prominent elite Whig families, and a

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[44] See Langford, 'English Clergy and the American Revolution'.
[45] Neither of the two senior churchmen, (the dean and one prebend) who have identifiable Whig sympathies voted in this election.

particularly strong pocket of Whig gentlemen in the Vale of Aylesbury, a sufficiently substantial number of Tory gentlemen to be found in the county (headed by the peers Lords Cheyne and Fermanagh), to warrant Colley's inclusion of the county in the "Tory Midlands".[46] Their patronage (in all its forms), and the county's proximity to Oxford, whose colleges owned an increasing number of advowsons there, and where almost two-thirds of the archdeaconry's clergy were educated during the eighteenth-century, can only have served to ensure an inherent Tory loyalty amongst many Buckinghamshire clerics. Finally, of those clergymen who voted in the elections of 1722 and 1734, only a handful made any significant progress in the Church, suggesting that amongst other impediments they may have had, most Buckinghamshire clergymen did not have the necessary (that is, Whig) connections for advancement.

Turning to the evidence of the poll books, it is difficult to determine the actual extent of party support one way or the other. In 1722, there is little evidence of out and out declarations of electoral party loyalty: at the poll, one parson, James Gardiner of Iver, plumped for the Tory candidate, Drake; another vicar, Francis Costyn of Haddenham, split his votes between the two Whig candidates. But the rest of the clerical voters, as described above, voted in favour of the

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[46] Colley, p. 119.

compromise agreement between the Whig and Tory interests in the county. There was no particular manifestation of support amongst the clergy for Drake, a Tory, though his probable Jacobitism may have counted against him as the Atterbury plot unravelled.[47] On the surface it appears that in the 1722 general election Buckinghamshire clerics were not inclined to make a blatant declaration of any party allegiance they may have harboured.

The 1734 poll book hints slightly more evidently at a party bias in the way Buckinghamshire parsons voted. Certainly the Tory candidate, Lowndes, received a relatively 'large' number of plumpers and the share of support that he won from the small number of clergymen who voted was proportionally greater than that which the constituency as a whole afforded him. Such clerical support for a Tory candidate was hardly surprising. Even less so, in 1734, was an expression by clergymen of opposition to Walpole and the Whigs, irritated as they were by the continued negative attitude of successive Whig governments to the Established Church. During the 1734 campaign Walpole's ministry used to good effect the promise of continued support to the rivals of the Anglican Church (by repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts) hoping to woo back to the Whig-fold dissenters disgruntled by the Excise scheme.[48] This action, and the

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[47] See Hill, *1689-1742*, pp. 185-6, 192-3; Colley, p. 199.
[48] Langford, *Excise Crisis*, pp. 116-7.

Ministry's general attitude towards non-Whig Anglican clergy throughout the early eighteenth century, can only have served to further alienate parsons, who had already joined their fellow countrymen in opposition to the Whigs' excise proposal.

Although in Buckinghamshire the Tory candidate did receive a solid number of clerical votes, a far greater number of the clerics 'crossed party lines' to split their votes between Lowndes and the Whig candidates, voting particularly for Lee, rather than for Stanhope. In doing so, it is likely that this is evidence of a traditional personal loyalty to Lee, who, as a long-standing dissident Whig, manifested an 'independence' that mirrored the political independence of which country gentlemen so prided themselves in the eighteenth century.[49]

Indeed, it is clear that throughout England both Whig and Tory opponents of Walpole's government and the Excise used these Country notions (opposition to placemen, electoral bribery, long Parliaments, and "an insistence that since land was indispensable to political independence, landed men should monopolise central and local office"[50]), and the tradition of a Court-Country political polarisation to unite opposition Walpole and the Excise.[51] There is probably some justification for concluding that such a division of votes between candidates of two parties, (invoking parallels with the 1722 poll), is

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[49] ibid., pp. 27-8.
[50] Colley, p. 90.
[51] Langford, *Excise Crisis*, pp. 105-7.

evidence that these Buckinghamshire clerics and other shire voters placed local, 'Country' interests before, or at least incorporated them with, party allegiance.

But it may well be that the support which the clergy of Buckinghamshire ostensibly gave to this crossing of party lines in 1734, and indeed, to the 1722 election compromise between the Whigs and the Tories, in fact, masked their party, especially Tory, loyalty. In eighteenth-century politics, it was often to the advantage of a party for voters to select an opposition candidate, or at least to not plump solely for one party. The reason for this was that very often electoral managers worked out arrangements with the opposition so that neither party would destroy or challenge the other's interest in a particular area. In Buckinghamshire in 1734, for example, Richard Lowndes the Tory was reluctant to contest the shire election, because one of the county's leading Whigs, Edmund Waller, had lent his electoral interests for the borough election at Amersham to the tory Drake family, losing Whig support for himself there and at Chesham. "In return for this self-abnegation he expected the tories to agree to...Sir William Stanhope and Sir Thomas Lee, being returned for the county."[52] Whilst obviously many Tories, a small number of clerics among them, did defy this arrangement and voted for Lowndes, (more than a quarter

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[52] Colley, p. 217.

plumping for him), there were other voters with Tory sympathies who must have chosen to yield to the better interests of their party and vote for the two opposition Whigs. Similarly, in 1722, in order to ensure election, Drake was obliged to canvass for the poll with a Whig, the Tories having formed an agreement with the Whigs to divide the county representation between the two political parties. Certainly there must have been many Tory clerics amongst those who voted for the joint candidates, who, having voted for Drake, saw no harm in giving their second vote to Lee, the Whig candidate and thereby honourably fulfilling the compromise agreed between the Whig and Tory elites of the county. In this way, both in 1722 and in 1734, it is highly likely that the results of these elections hide more Tory support amongst parish incumbents than is evident at first glance.

By 1784 the terms Whig and Tory had lost much of their meaning, and so it is no longer useful to analyse the clerical electorate of Buckinghamshire strictly in those terms. But this is not to suggest that the election was not fought upon something resembling party lines. It is evident that there existed a polarity of opinion between the camps of Pitt and Fox in county constituencies like Buckinghamshire, just as in the Commons, and that the county's clerics were caught up in this rift no less than other voters. Though this division did not have the same meaning it might have had earlier in the century, it is interesting to note that Buckinghamshire clergy expressed clearly a preference for

the candidates supporting Pitt, (by 111 to 47), against a 'Whig', Verney. There is, however, some evidence that during the electioneering, appeals were made, not to a Whig-Tory allegiance but to notions of independence and even to preserving the sanctity of government and the constitution from corruption, that is, the same 'Country' ideals that had appealed to the predecessors of these Buckinghamshire clerics fifty years before.[53]

From this extrapolation of poll book evidence, it is apparent that party did affect the electoral behaviour of parochial Anglican clergymen, just as it did other voters. This may be more evident in the 1776 contest in Gloucestershire than in any of the Buckinghamshire contests, where stark party loyalty may have been hidden by wider party concerns or the issue of party itself became entangled in other matters. Perhaps it is more useful to see clerical political allegiances in individual rather than corporate terms, and to appreciate that a wide range of political viewpoints were to be found within the clergy of both archdeaconries. Certainly it is difficult to make more specific conclusions than these about the general political inclination of the clergy of either archdeaconry because of a lack of evidence; all that remains to the historian of these areas are a limited number of poll books and scattered references to party politics in a few other sources.

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[53] Davis, p. 34-36.

In many respects, however, it is too simplistic to analyse and describe the way eighteenth-century Anglican clergy voted merely in party terms. As the eighteenth century progressed party politics and alignments changed: a sense of moderation slowly prevailed in religious politics which coincided with the "slow abatement of the political party conflicts with which the tensions in the Church had possessed symbiotic relationship."[54] What emerged in its place was a more moderate bipartisanship, which allowed for differing party allegiance but also for co-operation within all political and social spheres.[55] By the end of the 1740s too, with the exception of some Jacobites, there was widespread loyalty to the Hanoverian dynasty amongst Whig and Tory alike.[56] This is evident in Gloucestershire where Benson praised his clergy, a great many of them Tories, for their "fidelity and zeal manifested" during the 1745 rebellion saying

> You have by this done honour to Yourselves & our Church & eminent service both to our Church & our Countrey [sic]. And for this You have merited ye esteem & thanks of all who are well wishers to either.[57]

Benson then went on to urge the clergy to "prevent as much as we can

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[54] Walsh et.al., pp. 53-4; David Hempton, 'Religion in British Society 1740-1790' in Jeremy Black, ed., *British Politics and Society from Walpole to Pitt 1742-1789*, (London, 1990), p. 202; in the same volume, Ian. R. Christie, 'The Changing Nature of Parliamentary Politics, 1742-1789', pp. 101-122, provides a useful summary of political developments in the period.

[55] Walsh et.al., p. 54; Langford, 'Public Life', pp. 121-131.

[56] Christie, p. 106.

[57] BL, Add. MS 39313, 'Charge deliver'd to the Clergy Ch W[s] &c of the Diocese of Glocester At the Fourth Triennial Visitation 1747', f. 160v.

ye revival of y^{t} party rage & dissens^{n} now so seasonably moderated & quieted among us".[58] In short, he urged them to foster political order and stability within their parishes.

This notion of preserving peace and stability within the community was an regarded by eighteenth-century clergy as an important, albeit temporal, duty to fulfil.[59] Indeed, it is likely to have stood alongside, or even overridden any party allegiances that clergy may have had. In the Buckinghamshire election of 1722, for example, it may be that the clergy's support for the alliance of Whig and Tory candidate was driven by this impulse to minimise disruption to the political and social fabric of the county with a costly and turbulent election. In Gloucestershire in 1776 another issue that was played out during the election was the issue of whether the Berkeleys should be allowed to capture both shire seats, disrupting the shared representation of the county. Clerical support for Chester, already heightened by issues of party and the American war, may also have been augmented by a desire to see the peace of the county retained by ensuring that both interests continued to be represented in Parliament, especially as Beaufort representation had long gone unchallenged.

Maintenance of stability within the community was not the sole preserve of the parish incumbent during the eighteenth century. It was

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[58] ibid., f. 161r.
[59] S.J.C. Taylor, 'Church and State in England in the mid-eighteenth century: The Newcastle Years 1742-1762', University of Cambridge Ph.D. thesis, 1987, p. 124.

a task he shared - quite literally, as the number of clerical justices rose during the century - with the propertied middle class of country society.[60] That parsons should be increasingly associated and share such ideals with the local gentry in this paternalistic role is unsurprising. As clergy became increasingly better off, and as many of them enjoyed greater landed property, their outlook and lifestyles came to mirror their gentry counterparts. The improved social origins of many clergy and acceptance of their professional status, as well as growing social and marital ties between clergy and local gentry families served to reinforce this collaboration. Ideologically, they shared a assumption of the "existence of hierarchy, the maintenance of social norms, [and] obedience to authority".[61] Such principles logically assumed protection of the property and the status of this local elite within the community, and translated to a paternalistic desire to preserve the social and political fabric of the communities in which they lived and, indeed, the authority of the Establishment in general.

Given these shared values and attitudes of the provincial landed elite and the parochial clergy, it is not surprising to find a degree of correlation between the way the two groups voted in both Gloucestershire and Buckinghamshire elections in the eighteenth century. To establish this, the electoral preferences of those who

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[60] See Langford, *Public Life*, pp. 411ff.
[61] O'Gorman, p. 208. Langford, 'English Clergy and the American Revolution', pp. 300, 304-6, and *Public Life*, esp. pp. 410-436.

described themselves in the poll books as 'esquires', (generally better-off landowners), and as 'gentlemen' (usually smaller gentry and professional men),[62] were taken as evidence of the way the gentry voted. The term 'gentleman' appears to have been used more sparingly by freeholders voting in Gloucestershire in 1776, but their preferences have been noted alongside those of the esquires and clergy. The results of this comparison for both counties can be see in Tables 15a-d.

It is clear from Tables 15a-d, that in Buckinghamshire the political preferences of the gentry and were broadly similar, and that together their voting contrasted with the Buckinghamshire electorate as a whole. The result of the 1722 election shows all three groups were more strongly committed to the Drake-Lee pairing than the rest of the freeholders who voted. In 1734, both the clergy and the gentry voted strongly against Stanhope, heavily favouring Lee and Lowndes, especially compared to the rest of the electorate. It is interesting to note, too, that the low turnout of the clergy was paralleled by a smaller gentry involvement in this election, suggesting perhaps that these groups did not feel their vote was necessary in an election where the result was likely to be clear-cut. In 1784 the landed interest was marginally more in favour of the Pittite candidates, Grenville and

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[62] It is not easy to pin specific definitions to the terms 'esquire' and 'gentleman', although Paul Langford suggests the broad definitions and distinction between the two groups used here. Langford, *Excise Crisis*, p. 154.

Aubery, than the clergy, who in this election were divided much more closely along the same lines as the whole county. That said, the general and distinctive correlation between the electoral choices of Buckinghamshire's propertied classes, lay and clerical, must surely indicate a shared political outlook and, in general, a relatively harmonious political relationship between the parson and the social elite of the shire.

In 1776 the electoral behaviour of the clergy of Gloucestershire appears to bear rather less resemblance to that of the propertied classes, or, indeed, to the electorate as a whole. The principal landowners were more evenly divided by their allegiance to a candidate on one or other side of the Beaufort-Tory, Berkeley-Whig schism, than the clergy, whose support was very definitely behind the former. In numerical terms, however, there is only a small difference between the way the clergy and the 'esquires' cast their votes, (and it is difficult to make much comparison with the 'gentlemen' as they were so few in number). It is evident that the clergy were similarly divided in a bipartisan fashion, and it may be that the loyalty of the Established Church to the Government cause in the American war accentuated their desire to show support to Chester more obviously than the gentry were inclined to do.

Parallels between the political proclivities of clergy and gentry in both Gloucestershire and Buckinghamshire raise the question of

extent to which, if at all, the clergy's political choice was influenced by these landed gentlemen in each county. Obviously social and family ties might reinforce political viewpoints on both sides, particularly as these groups were amongst the most educated people in rural communities. Yet it may be that the electoral choices of the clergy in both archdeaconries were also sustained or even formed through the leadership of such laymen, especially through the influence of those higher in the social hierarchy, and in particular, those to whom clergy owned their livings, their patrons. In essence, it raises the issue of the degree to which deference played a part in the way clergymen of the eighteenth century voted.

Deference was an intrinsic part of the paternalistic ideology to which both clergy and gentry adhered, and sought to protect. It stood alongside yet subtly differed from dependence, a relationship evinced, for example, in the "mindless respect that a common servant displayed towards his social superiors".[63] Instead, deference was a more subtle and balanced relationship. It allowed for independence for the inferior, but it also meant that both parties involved were "usually willing to moderate and restrain their partially conflicting interests for the sake of local stability and social and political equilibrium".[64] Clearly, it was an important factor in the alliance between clergy and laity to preserve

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[63] O'Gorman, p. 230.
[64] loc cit.

stability within their local communities.

Thus, while the parochial clergy had power and authority over their inferiors, (people from whom *they* expected respect and deference), as well as a enormous degree of independence, they were themselves located in the middle of the social hierarchy. As such they were not exempt from obligations to others; indeed, few individuals in eighteenth-century English society were.[65] But it was not merely order and stability which could encourage deference within English society; self-interest had a part to play too, for a man's livelihood could depend upon it. Eighteenth-century clergy were no exception to this. They were obviously in a deferential relationship with their patrons, to whom they owed their livings and, in many cases, their chance of future preferment. This placed clergymen in a curious position. On the one hand, the fact that their benefices were freehold property which they would generally relinquish only through death or voluntary resignation, gave clerics a political independence many other enfranchised freeholders did not enjoy. Yet, a cleric's expectation of advancement would be less likely to be fulfilled if he failed to pay deference to those who had the means to promote. Even at a more day-to-day level, deference to one's patron which might pay off, if it meant that he or she was willing to assuage uneasy relationships

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[65] Langford, *Public Life*, p. 485.

between incumbent and parishioners, such as by assisting him to increase his tithes, or by resolving tithe disputes in his favour. In return, a parson ought to show gratitude and respect for his patron. And for the eighteenth-century parish clergymen, one of the most obvious expressions of deference and loyalty he could make was to cast at least one, if not both, votes either in the same way as his patron, or in a way that his patron would have considered appropriate.

Deference is not an easy thing to measure, especially in politics. There can be no doubt that such a relationship did exist between patrons and priests in the eighteenth century. William Cole wrote that he had "never sollicited [sic] Whig or Tory to get preferment"[66], but both he and his contemporaries were conscious that there were others who were not so circumspect, and who were prepared to use deference in political spheres to get ahead in the Church:

> Jack [Fleming[67]] has a good Church Preferment, if any drops, don't doubt but he will get <u>that</u> by it; or by disposition of his Interest the next Election, he may possibly arrive at the dignity of a Dean: for even Church Preferments sometimes may be obtained by such means.[68]

For the same reason Bishop Secker warned his parochial charges in the diocese of Oxford in 1747 of the danger of succumbing to the resignation bonds which gave lay patrons such a powerful hold over

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[66] BL, Add. MS 5824, f. 12b, William Cole to Horace Walpole, 7 June 1777.
[67] Son of Mrs Willis and heir to Browne Willis at Waterhall in Bucks.
[68] BL, Add. MS 5825, John Robinson to William Cole, 11 June 1767.

their appointees, especially when it came to matters political:

> benefices ought to neither be given nor accepted with any other condition or promise, than that of doing our duty in relation to them....[Resignation bonds] enslave the incumbent to the Will and Pleasure of his Patron, Whatever it shall happen at any Time to be...if he is not subservient to the Schemes, political whatever they are, which he is required to promote...the Terror of the Resignation, or the Penalty of the Bond, may immediately be shaken over his Head."[69]

Other bishops and, indeed, patrons in general, were not so reluctant to proffer political advice to the parish incumbents over whom they held sway. Smith cites the case of Bishop Trelawny of Exeter, who "recommended" to his clergy his choices for election as Proctors for Convocation in 1705;[70] while Mather highlights a similar instance at the other end of the century of the Bishop of St. David's, Samuel Horsley, conspicuously instructing his charges to cast their votes in favour of a particular candidate in the 1789 election.[71] Even more extreme are examples such as the one of

> young Mr Littlejohn's patron, Sir Pynsent Chernock [who had been asked] to lay his commands on his clerk to vote for Mr Sandys, and Sir Pynsent and his lady both told him, that if he do not, he shall never come into their house again, and Sir Pynsent swears by the eternal God that he will undo him.[72]

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[69] Thomas Secker, *Eight Charges Delivered to the Clergy of the Dioceses of Oxford and Canterbury*, Third Charge, (London, 1761), pp. 93, 97-6. John Wells, *The Unlawfulness of Bonds of Resignation*, (London, 1684), p. 27 also makes this point as one of the grounds for the "mischief" of resignation bonds, as does the anonymous writer of *Thoughts on Bonds of Resignation*, (London, 1783), pp, 26-7.

[70] M.G. Smith, p. 112.

[71] F.C. Mather, *High Church Prophet: Bishop Samuel Horsley (1733-1806) and the Caroline Tradition in the later Georgian Church*, (Oxford, 1992), p. 71.

[72] History of Parliament Trust Transcript, Wake MSS, Christ Church, Oxford, f. 262, Thomas Frank to Archbishop Wake, 30 Oct. 1710.

Clergy from all levels of the hierarchy were not exempt from such political influence and deference. When Zachary Pearce was granted the deanery of Winchester by Walpole, his good friend and political ally and mentor, Sir William Pulteney, advised him that he owned the dignity entirely to Walpole and no one else. He went on,

> and therefore as I am now so engaged in opposition to him, it may happen that some who are of our party may, if there should be any opposition for members of parliament at Winchester, prevail upon me to desire you to act there in assistance of some friend of ours, and Sir Robert at the same time may ask your assistance in the election for a friend of his own against the one whom we recommend. I tell you therefore beforehand, that if you comply with my request rather than with Sir Robert's to whom you are so very much obliged, I shall have the worse opinion of you.[73]

But that the clergy themselves were prepared to acquiesce in this political influence over them can be evinced from an undated letter to the Marquis of Buckingham, from a Buckinghamshire incumbent, Charles Kipling, who promised his loyalty to the Marquis' interest if rewarded suitably:

> My Lord,
>
> As I have the honour of being mentioned to your Lordship by so respectable a number of Freeholders of the Town of Newport - I have only my own part to add, that if I should be so fortunate as to receive the Interest of your Lordship respecting the Vicarage I shall feel proud in evincing to your Lordship that I am not undeserving your favour....[74]

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[73] Twells, Dr et. al, *The Lives of Dr Edward Pocock...by Dr Twells, of Dr Zachary Pearce...and of Dr Thomas Newton...by themselves and of the Rev Philip Shelton by Mr Burdy*, 2 vols., (London 1810), vol. 1, p. 392.

[74] BRO, D/U/9/3/108, Charles Kipling to the Marquis of Buckingham, n.d.

Similarly, Clement Wakelin implicitly thanked Sir Thomas Lee for an unspecified favour granted, saying

> Pray be pleased to let the Counsellor know that I am grateful for his favour. You may assure yourself I will not be wanting in any part of my duty.[75]

That the duty to which he referred was as much political as ecclesiastical may be inferred from the content of the remainder of the letter, which refers to Wakelin's political work on Lee's behalf.

It is possible to give some statistical backing to this anecdotal evidence, by comparing the votes cast at elections by both clergy and their patrons. Unfortunately this comparison is limited to the lay patrons of incumbents. An analysis of the voting record of parsons appointed by the Crown, bishops and ecclesiastical and secular bodies proved inconclusive, simply because of the small number of clergy enjoying this patronage in both archdeaconries who voted in the elections for which poll books survive. Likewise, the electoral choices of patrons who lived outside either county or who did not vote cannot be taken into account statistically. That said, comparison can be made between the electoral behaviour of those clergy whose lay patrons voted in the Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire elections for which there are poll books extant. In both Buckinghamshire in 1722 and

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[75] BRO, D/Le/A2/3H, Clement Wakelin to Sir Thomas Lee, 5 January [?].

1784[76] and in Gloucestershire in 1776 it is possible to identify the votes of lay patrons for about a third of the clergy who voted. The comparison of both clergy and patrons' votes is shown in Table 16.

It is evident that there is a very striking parallel between the way parsons and their patrons voted in the elections in both archdeaconries. Such statistics also mirror a similar analysis undertaken by Pruett for Lancashire for the early eighteenth century, where he found in from a sample of 40 percent of the parish clergy of voting in a 1707 poll their votes matched their patron 80 percent of the time.[77] Robson also concluded that the influence of patrons was such upon the parochial clergy of Oxfordshire in 1754, that "disinterested politics...was a luxury altogether beyond the means of many parish clergy" in the Hanoverian age.[78] Yet, for several reasons, these examples and statistics may not be as ominous as they first appear. Deferential relationships were ones of mutual respect and acceptance of influence, not simply blind and passive acceptance of the authority or bullying of the patron. Within these relationships there was room for manoeuvre, for party allegiance and most of all, for self-interest.[79] The difficulty for the eighteenth-century parson was determining just

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[76] None of the votes of the patrons of clergy who voted in 1734 can be identified.
[77] Pruett identified the political sympathies of 40% of all the patrons of voting clergy in early eighteenth-century Leicestershire, and found that the "parsons agreed with their patrons over 80 percent of the time." Pruett, p. 166.
[78] Robson p. 85.
[79] Colley, p. 129.

what exactly was best for one's self interest, and this was not necessarily an easy choice. As Baskerville explains, this was because the "Hanoverian clergymen anxious to get on in his calling had to come to terms with public life as he found it...requiring a sensitivity to the ebb and flow of party fortunes as well as a shrewd assessment of one's patrons."[80] Such agonising deliberations that this could provoke are captured in a letter, worth quoting at length, written by Richard Cumberland, the Gloucestershire cleric. In December 1780 Cumberland writes anxiously of

> an affair that is likely to give me some uneasiness. Chester the successful Candidate in our last contested Election died yesterday which is likely to produce another Contest as Berkeley stands again. The other Candidate is M[r] Dutton, Brother to M[rs] Lambert. I...cannot [help] being strongly inclined to favor [sic] the latter as well on account of the Party by which he is supported, as from the personal Knowledge of his Family and Connections, which are by far the best in this Neighbourhood - so that when M[r] Lambert called on me the Morn[g] to beg me not to engage my Vote, I could very readily have given him the promise of it without reserve, but for the Recollection that M[r] Smith [Cumberland's patron] promised his Vote on the other side at the last Contest....
>
> I should be glad if possible to...dispose of my Vote as I think fit - [but] were M[r] S to be so far interested in Favour of the Opposite Party as to serve them with his own Vote I could by no means think of rendering it void by voting but should beg to stand Neuter.

Fortunately for him, his fears amounted to nothing, as he had

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[80] Baskerville, p. 76.

discovered from a neighbour, Mr Lovedon, that

> ...had M[r] S voted last time it would have been on his [Chester's] side and...[Mr Lovedon] proposed writing to secure his Vote and Interest for Dutton which is just what I wished, and I have great hopes from his Influence there, that my Conscience will be unfetter'd....[81]

Despite the serious reflection that went into electoral choice, however, it is likely that for many clergy when their vote mirrored that of their patrons the casting of it had caused the cleric concerned few real dilemmas. In most instances, it is probable that cleric and patron shared the same political persuasion: generally eighteenth-century clergy tried to find patrons of a similar political outlook, and, moreover, few patrons would reward with a living a cleric with whom they disagreed markedly over political issues.

It is clear that in the eighteenth century, as now, party loyalty was never the sole consideration for any voter at the polling station; politics is more complicated than that. Eighteenth-century clerics were no exception to this and, like contemporary laymen, they were motivated at election time by a blend of influences and concerns. These would of course include party allegiance, but would also encompass family and personal loyalties, national and peculiarly local issues, notions of their patriarchal responsibility to the community and

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[81] Cumberland, *Letters*, Richard to George Cumberland, [?] December, 1780, pp. 269-70.

of preserving the established order, and of course self interest. Indeed, many eighteenth century parsons were anxious to minimise party division, and to emphasis loyalty to their country and to the established order (including the Church), as Thomas Twining explained in the letter quoted in the epigraph to this chapter. Clergy shared many of these concerns and influences with other propertied laymen, in particular those with whom they shared the leadership of rural society.

Parsons' involvement in politics

The politics of a man appointed to a benefice became all the more important when the patron considered the potential influence of an incumbent within the local community. Especially in rural parishes like those to be found in eighteenth-century Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire, the role of the cleric was not merely ideologically, but also practically, very much a paternalistic one. Beyond his ecclesiastical duties, the parson usually performed a wider variety of services for his flock, which could include medical care, drafting and witnessing documents, distributing charity, counselling, and education of their children; in this way he had a great deal of authority within his community.[82] As time went on, too, many clerics had important secular responsibilities, such as serving as JP, on turnpike trusts, and

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[82] Colley, p. 154.

land tax commissions, which gave them more power in local communities. Clergy very often, too, had economic leverage over the community, since they could, and did, make judgements about the extent to which they pursued their tithe claims with their parishioners. More than that, a great many clerics were themselves landlords, with tenants who deferred to them as such. Sometimes clergy held the votes of other inferiors through personal connections, such as William Cole had in the case of his servant's brother, who gave his vote to Cole to dispose of in the Cambridgeshire election of 1780.[83] To this, moreover, must be added the authority that the clergyman's office, his education, and if he were fortunate, his income gave him. All these things could, at election time, be brought to bear in support of local political interests.

Contemporaries were certainly aware that the political influence of clergy could far outweigh their numbers. It was for this reason that Benson urged the clergy of Gloucester to foster order and stability in their parishes. Similarly, Secker, recognising this influence, in the same charge to the clergy of Oxfordshire mentioned above, bid his charges to "preserve as many of your parishioners as possible from the sins *that so easily beset them* at these seasons of epidemick unreasonableness and licentiousness."[84] Candidates at election-time often sought clerical

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[83] BL, Add. MS 5855.
[84] Secker, *Third Charge*, p. 199.

support, realising that both from the pulpit on a Sunday, and in their daily encounters with parishioners, clergy could have considerable influence over their parishioners.[85] Clerics themselves, it seems, had few qualms about using the church to legitimate a particular candidate or cause, and, would, like Parson Adams, at the approach of an election "throw a suitable Dash or two" into their sermons.[86] While neither for Gloucestershire nor for Buckinghamshire is there any extant evidence of such preaching, there is no reason to doubt its occurrence in either of these archdeaconries.

It is possible, though, to see examples of clerics using their influence on behalf of politicians to sway voters' political opinions and to ensure that freeholders of the 'right' political persuasion got to the poll. An observer of a Cirencester contest observed that during a demonstration in support of Bathurst "a Reverend Divine was seen in the midst of them; and it is well known that the Preference of a Gentleman will at all Times greatly encourage a Mob in their actions".[87] In two letters of 1784, Rev William Stockins wrote to Sir William Lee informing him of the "Long Crendon voters who are yet to come in; they all except 1 or 2 promised the Revd Mr Ellis to vote for Lord Verney" and explaining that the rector of Radnage, "Mr

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[85] Pruett, p. 164. See also McClatchey, p. 205.
[86] Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, (Oxford, 1967), p. 135.
[87] anon., *The Cirencester Contest containing all the Letters, Papers, Verses, Songs &c Relative to the ELECTION*, (Cirencester, n.d.), p. 24.

Tonyn had engaged to bring [to the poll] such Freeholders as required a carriage from Risborough or Bledlow next Monday with the remains of his Radnage" voters.[88]

It is difficult to measure accurately the extent and effect of the political influence the clerics of either county had over freeholders in their parishes, especially since during election time as many forces were brought to bear upon lesser franchise-holders as on their superiors. But breaking down the results of the 1776 poll in Gloucestershire and the 1722 and 1784 elections in Buckinghamshire, it is possible to discern a strong correlation between the voting preference of cleric and congregation (Table 17).

Although only a minority of parishes could be analysed in this way, the results clearly indicate a marked consistency between the way parish inhabitants and their incumbent voted: in only a very small number of parishes was there a complete difference between the votes of the parson and the most common voting pattern amongst the parishioners. Although this figure was considerably higher for the Gloucestershire election, in fact this is also a remarkably high correlation, given the strongly bipartisan nature of the politics in the county. All in all, such results suggest that there existed, within the parishes of Gloucestershire and Buckinghamshire and probably

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[88] BRO, D/LE/D 10/81, 82, William Stockins to Sir William Lee, n.d. [1784].

throughout England, at very least a strongly interrelationship and shared partisan outlook between parishioners and priest, if not clerical example and influence upon their parochial flocks at election time.

For some clergymen of the eighteenth century, participation in politics went further than simply voting or using what electoral influence they might possess amongst parochial freeholders. Some clergymen themselves became actively involved in political matters. In 1736, for instance, two petitions from Gloucestershire clergy were presented to Parliament amongst dozens of others from clerics in opposition to the Quaker Tithe Bill, in marked hostility to the machinations of the government, and in defence of the rights of the Church and of their own property in particular.[89] Other evidence for Gloucestershire shows that a number of clergymen were involved in the Reform Movement between 1780 and 1782, who regularly attended meetings of the Gloucestershire Association and who, along with other gentlemen in the county, were responsible for the distribution of petitions.[90] Gloucestershire parsons were also amongst the gentlemen who contributed financially to opposing Berkeley's petition against Chester in 1776, and helped to promote the subscription for funds in their local communities.[91]

There are instances, too, of a small number of clergymen in the

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[89] *Commons Journal*, 9 Geo. II, 29 March 1736; 6 April 1936.
[90] BRO, D1356.
[91] OA, DIL xxiv/ 17a & 17b.

period who acted on behalf of prominent country gentlemen and candidates as their local representatives or even as their electoral agents. No source indicates what financial remuneration, if any, clergymen might have received for this work, though no doubt advancement of the political cause to which they were both committed, and the possibility of preferment was reward enough. For Hanoverian politicians clergy of the Established Church could be extremely valuable electorally. Clergy had an intimate knowledge of the local community, they were educated and influential, usually respected and respectable, as well as having a leisured lifestyle with time to undertake political work if they wished. Indeed, "the resident political parson was in many ways the perfect election agent."[92]

Parsons, for instance, were often uniquely placed to provide assessments of the political temper of the electorate. In 1784, for example, Edward Stone, "well knowing" his "Patriotick sentiments" wrote a hasty and anxious letter to Sir William Lee, to inform him

> that the idea of an Address as announced by the sheriff's Advertisement to convene the Freeholders of the County of Bucks meets with much objection and Disapprobation on the part of many very respectable Gentlemen of the first property, in the Country *and who* are determined to make a constitutional stand in Opposition to so unprecedented a Measure, and in their Opinion, so disgraceful to the County....[93]

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[92] E.A. Smith, "The Election Agent in English Politics 1734-1832", *English Historical Review*, 84 (1969), pp. 13-4.
[93] BRO, D/Le/ 10/86, Edward Stone to Sir William Lee, 17 March 1784.

In 1768 Lilly Butler explained to Lee that he was sending a letter from

> Mr Grenville as it will explain better than I can do his sentiments with regard to the County Election. Mr Carter informs me he has sounded the opinion of the freeholders in his neighbourhood and finds them universally inclined to Mr Grenville. L[d] Verney was at Ludgershall last week but did not get one vote. His steward made enquiries at Brill but was told he need not suspect any votes there.[94]

The Lee family had long made use of clerical political information and analysis. In the 1740s, Thomas Chapman, then Rector of Hardmead in Buckinghamshire, provided Sir Thomas Lee with an analysis of the mood in the Newport Pagnell area:

> I find there is a great interest making agt you by all the Dissenters and some of your former friends...but I think nothing can hurt you....All the gentleman here are in your interest except Mr Andrews of Lathbury and Mr Ferrar of Gorafield; how Olney and Stoney Stratford will go, I cannot yet say....[95]

He then went on to offer advice to the baronet as to how to go about canvassing voters throughout the area:

> I hope you have sent to the Duke of Bedford, who I intend to wait on very soon. Mr Lowndes must not be neglected; who hath a great comand [sic] at North Crawley, wch since Mr Hackett's death hath been brought with considerable expense.[96]

The extent to which such political advice from clerics was acted upon by country gentlemen can be best seen though in the example of the

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[94] BRO, D/Le/D1/55, Lilly Butler to Sir William Lee, 22 January 1768.
[95] BRO, D/Le/A2/3E, Thomas Chapman to Sir Thomas Lee n.d. [1740s].
[96] ibid.

Drake family of Amersham in Buckinghamshire. In the 1730s Benjamin Robertshaw, the vicar of the parish encouraged them to buy up all the old property in the area that carried with it the right to vote. This meant that within a few years the family doubled their ownership of property carrying parliamentary franchise and allowed them to consider the once fractious borough safely in their pocket.[97]

Other formal electoral work Buckinghamshire clerics took on for their patrons included dealing with administrative details, such as Clement Wakelin did for Sir Thomas Lee in the late 1720s or early 1730s, ensuring that a suitably-phrased advertisement addressed to the county's freeholders was placed in the Northampton newspaper.[98] William Stockins was employed by Sir William Lee during the 1784 election to act as his representative at Aylesbury; Stockins was appointed to convey Lee's opinions and advice to Verney's electoral committee and the sheriff conducting the election. He also appears to have written at least once daily to Lee, informing him of the state of the poll, the mood of the election committees, projected voter turnout and, as seen, providing him with lists of freeholders yet to vote who Lee might have his other agents canvass.[99] In Gloucestershire, there are the instances of Josiah Tucker and Robert Penny who acted the

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[97] BRO, D/X 393, 'A History of Amersham', p. 158; D/Dr/3/7, Benjamin Robertshaw to William Drake, St. Paul's Day, 1740/1.
[98] BRO, D/Le/A2/3H, Clement Wakelin to Sir Thomas Lee, 5th January [?].
[99] BRO, D/Le/D10/77-85, Various letters, William Stockins to Sir William Lee.

political representatives of laymen. Tucker, later dean of Gloucester, was a significant agent in the election of Robert (later Earl) Nugent to the borough of Bristol in 1754,[100] while Penny, the chaplain to the Duke of Beaufort, as his patron's agent, gathering £2,700 in contributions in support of William Chester's defence of petitions against his election in 1776.[101] And as already mentioned, James Benson actively campaigned in Cirencester with Henry Bathurst in 1754.

These overtly partisan political and electioneering activities amongst a minority of Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire's clerics, finally, contrasted markedly with another more substantial minority of the counties' clerical body, who chose to avoid participation in the electoral process completely. In each of the elections studied, the total number of clerical votes registered was much lower than the number of incumbents within each archdeaconry. There was a relatively high turnout in Gloucestershire's election of 1776, when 76% of clergy turned out to vote. But in Buckinghamshire in 1722, 52% of parsons voted, in 1734, only 27%, and in 1784, 58% of clerics votes are recorded. Such fluctuations in the level of clerical participation in elections were not, it seems, unusual in the eighteenth-century. For the

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[100] *DNB*, vol. 57, p. 282.

[101] OA: DIL xxiv/17a & 17b, Minutes of meetings, 1776; Similar examples of clergymen acting on behalf of local candidates and prominent gentlemen are provided by Forrester p. 100.

first half of the century, Stephen Baskerville cites a maximum of 66% of Cheshire incumbents participating in the 1705 election, whereas only 47% voted in 1727.[102]

No single reason can account for the significant proportion of the eighteenth-century clergy who did not vote during elections. Undoubtedly there were clerics who were completely indifferent to politics, while some probably had no inclination to vote. Some may have been too infirm to involve themselves in politics. Still others might have been non-resident or may have decided that to vote required too much effort, especially since the place where the poll was conducted was fixed in one part of the county, Aylesbury and Gloucester, a significant journey there and back for some incumbents. For this reason, many, like Thomas Chapman, a Buckinghamshire parson, may have seen no need to participate unless their vote and interest were specifically called upon:

> I hope I need say nothing, [he wrote to Sir Thomas Lee] more to wish you joy of an easy election. I don't pretend to business preventing my attending you,...as I am an idle old fellow...but is an opposition should happen (wch I don't at all dreame [sic] of) you may depend upon my coming the second day wt [sic] all the posse I can raise upon so short notice.[103]

And there were still other parsons who were anxious to avoid being seen to commit themselves to one political party or another, for fear

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[102] Baskerville, p. 79.
[103] BRO, D/Le/A2/3f Thomas Chapman to Sir Thomas Lee, n.d.

that it might harm their career hopes. Cumberland's comments in 1777 are a good example of this concern, as he noted that in many Gloucestershire parishes there were

> Great rejoicings for Chester's victory....Fortunately Driffielde and Harnhill are unconcerned in this Bustle, so I keep myself quiet at home and being of no party in this affair hope to stand well with both.[104]

Finally, there were many eighteenth-century Anglican clergy who were cautious about obvious political activity, because they were aware of other electors' resentment of what they perceived as clerical interference which might threaten the independence of elections.[105] Many of these parsons were actually following the contemporary theory that it was both morally and practically undesirable for clergy to actively participate in political affairs - something that was for most an ideal notion to which they merely paid lip-service.[106]

> As to Party-Disputes, you shall not say I have attempted to by-pass you one way or another; the less you meddle with them, I think the better.[107]

O'Gorman found that amongst the propertied classes, including the clergy there was a far higher degree of abstention than in the electorate as a whole.[108] The reason for this is simple, especially for clergy.

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[104] Cumberland, *Letters*, Richard to George Cumberland, 1 May 1777, p. 124.
[105] O'Gorman, p. 263.
[106] McClatchey, p. 204; Langford, 'English Clergy and the American Revolution', p. 304; Taylor, 'Thesis', p. 169.
[107] Divine of the Church of England, *Advice to a Young Clergyman: in a letter to him, concerning I. His Intention, II. Converse and Demeanour...VI. Administring [sic] the Sacrament, Lastly, Discipline*, (London, n.d. [?1730]), p. 61.
[108] O'Gorman, p. 187.

They did not want to embroiled become in political controversy that would alienate sectors of their congregation (or their patrons), threatening their pastoral effectiveness and even the ease with which they collected their tithes. Most importantly, they had "no desire to agitate the community which might have endangered their social leadership."[109]

Conclusion

The communities in which the eighteenth-century clergyman lived and worked were of great importance to their political behaviour. The political decisions and actions of parochial parsons were shaped by personal, familial, ideological, party, and even national, loyalties and issues, but it seems that underpinning all of these was the clerics' perceptions of their local society, the parish and county community. Clergy and their parishioners were conscious of and involved in political affairs on a national scale, yet they also existed and functioned politically in communities which possessed self-absorbed, parochial patterns of politics. Clergymen seem to have been politically motivated by their evaluation of the socio-political matters of importance to such a community, the role they were both expected, and wanted to play politically within it, and, ultimately, a desire to preserve that position

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[109] ibid.

for themselves and other men like them. Thus the clergy shared this attitude with the propertied classes in their counties, a relationship evinced by the close parallels in their polling preferences and in the existence of the horizontally and vertically interlocking network of influence which allowed this elite, as a group, to remain secure in its leadership of eighteenth-century politics and society. This view of politics was not a formal ideology binding parochial clergy and gentry together as a corporate body, but rather it allowed plenty of room for individual clerics and gentlemen to participate in politics as they were so inclined or able to do. It allowed for the power and authority that the parson could bring to bear upon others in the community. Such autonomy also permitted many of the parish clergy of Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire to retain, and express, party loyalty, though the evidence which survives makes it difficult to show conclusively where this loyalty lay, especially in the former archdeaconry; it also accounts for the county-by-county variation of clerical party allegiance in the party as a whole. For most clergy, unless their interests were threatened, a sense of moderation and pragmatism seems to have governed their political involvement, be it active, passive or abstention, and above all a commitment to preserve the social and political order of the communities in which they lived.

CHAPTER 4

Clergy and Community Life

> [I write to find] how you do; *what* you do; how you like Claybrook & how Claybrook likes you; what sort of neighbours grow round you; how you like your flock & whether you find your new souls tolerably easy to cure, &c &c. What is the *cure* of *souls*? A vile phrase I have always thought it. It conveys to me the idea of salting them & hanging them up in a chimney to be smoked by way of *saving their bacon*.[1]

This chapter considers everyday life of the eighteenth-century incumbent in the community. In doing so, it draws together many ideas and threads suggested in the preceding chapters, as well as considering other facets of the lives and experiences of the parsons of eighteenth-century Buckingham and Gloucester. The chapter, therefore, has three main focuses. Firstly, it examines the type of men, their origins and backgrounds, who entered the communities of the two archdeaconries as their parsons. It then considers the integration of the parochial clergy within these communities, both in the two archdeaconries, and, for want of evidence specific to them, within eighteenth-century community life in general. Finally, by way of conclusion, attention is given to the extent to which the parsons of both archdeaconries fulfilled their pastoral duties, the cure of souls.

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[1] Twining, vol. 1, p. 72, Twining to Charles Jenner, 8 January 1770.

Geographic Origins

The profession of clergyman was, geographically, a highly-mobile one in early modern England, in the sense that clergy could be presented to livings far from their place of birth. Thus, the geographic origins of the clergy within the archdeaconries of Gloucester and Buckingham varied enormously in the eighteenth century. Men were appointed to livings in either who had originated from all over the British isles, and there were even a few foreign-born parsons in their midst, such as Thomas Moore of Frampton Cotterell in Gloucester who was from the American colonies, and Peter Galley of Wavendon in Buckingham, who was a Huguenot refugee. The degree to which there was diversity of geographic origins of clergymen within a county or an archdeaconry, however, varied greatly from region to region. Thus, the majority of clergy in eighteenth-century Norfolk were local men; in Leicestershire in 1750 about two-thirds of the clergy were from Leicestershire or adjoining counties, and 37 percent of clergy from the county itself.[2] Similarly, in Kent about 40 percent of incumbents originated from that county during the eighteenth century, the remainder of those known from London or from further afield.[3] Overall, the geographic origins of the clergy as a group within both Buckingham and Gloucester were very different again from these examples, and, notably, they also differed very strikingly from each

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[2] William Mungo Jacob, 'Clergy and Society in Norfolk 1707-1806', University of Exeter Ph.D. thesis 1982, p. 50; Pruett p. 34.
[3] Gregory, 'Thesis', p. 385.

other.

The most notable feature with regard geographical origins of the clerical body of Gloucester was the constant and ubiquitous presence of locally-born incumbents in the county's parsonages. (Table 23a) To compare the archdeaconry to those regions mentioned previously, in 1750 about half of the incumbents whose place of origin is know were from Gloucestershire. This characteristic of the archdeaconry remained relatively unchanged throughout the eighteenth century. There was a small overall decline in the number of Gloucestershire-born incumbents between 1730 and 1780, but this was matched by a broadening of their origins to include more men from contiguous counties (Somerset, Herefordshire Worcestershire, Oxfordshire, Wiltshire) and neighbouring Wales, rather than from farther afield. Together, clergy from this broad region consistently accounted for at least three-quarters of all clergymen holding livings in the archdeaconry in the period. There was a very slight increase in men from southern regions of England, including London, but the proportion of men from central and northern counties of England, as well as other parts of Britain and abroad was throughout static and very modest.

The situation in the archdeaconry of Buckingham differed markedly from Gloucester. (Table 23b) The proportion of indigenous clergy in the former county in 1730 was just 26 percent, half that of Gloucestershire. By 1780, even with the decline in Gloucestershire-

born men, the percentage of indigenous clergy in Buckingham was just a third of that to be found in Gloucestershire. There were three noticeable trends in the geographic origin of Buckinghamshire clergy over the eighteenth-century. The first was a decline in the number of indigenous, by about the same proportion as the equivalent trend in Gloucestershire. Unlike Gloucester, however, this reduction was not met by an increase in the number of parsons from counties bordering on Buckinghamshire, which remained static. Instead there was a corresponding rise in the number of men originating from the London area. And thirdly, while the there were slightly fewer clergymen from central and southern counties in Buckinghamshire during the period, there was a dramatic rise in the number originating from the far north, Wales, Ireland and overseas.

Two very closely connected factors, the means of admission to, and of advancement within the clerical profession, account for the differences between the two archdeaconries, for they most effectively shaped the differing regional make-up of the clerical bodies to be found within each archdeaconry of the English Church. The university-background of incumbents had a part to play in the regional complexion of the clergy serving both archdeaconries. In the first instance, clergymen who were university educated in the eighteenth century tended, like most students of the period, to choose the university closest to the place in which they resided. It is unsurprising to find, therefore, that most of the clergy in both Buckingham and

Gloucester who had attended university went to Oxford, in the adjacent county, rather than Cambridge, though this occurred to a far greater extent in Gloucester than in Buckingham (Tables 20a & b). Indeed, the fact that a greater proportion of Buckinghamshire's parsons were Cambridge graduates reflects the wider diversity of clerical regional origins within that archdeaconry.

But the regional connections between the clergy and educational institutions went deeper than that. Local loyalties were still very strong at that time. In spite of, or even because of, the highly mobile nature of society, an Englishman's first loyalty was still to his county, his "country", something which is clearly demonstrated by the way clergymen chose their university colleges.[4] Fashionable fads and fluctuating academic excellence aside, the strong regional biases of most colleges were an attraction to many students. The regional complexion of colleges was often rooted in foundation of the society, and was reinforced by tradition, centuries of men from one locality attending the same college, and by benefactions, scholarships and fellowships which brought men from that locality to study. Any one, or all, of these things would have shaped a scholar's choice of college. Undoubtedly they were strengthened by familial ties to a particular college, or the influence of the local squire, cleric, schoolmaster or patron. But certainly all of these resulted in a close affinity between particular geographic regions and university colleges. This is clearly

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[4] Pruett, p. 32 ff.

demonstrated by the strong regional orientation of the collegiate preferences of incumbents from both archdeaconries. (Tables 21a-d).

At Oxford University, for instance, the most popular college amongst Gloucestershire parsons between 1730 and 1780 was Pembroke, with Balliol and Christ Church consistently fighting for second and third place. All three of these colleges (as well as Trinity, Magdalen and Wadham, at which other large numbers of Gloucester clerics were educated), drew the largest portion of their undergraduates from the west midlands and west country. About twenty-five percent of all the students admitted to these colleges in the eighteenth century came from the south-west, as well as a similar percentage who originated from the west midlands.[5] Of the Oxford colleges, Buckinghamshire clergymen favoured Christ Church and New College, and smaller numbers of clerics had attended Lincoln, Merton, Magdalen, Queen's and Trinity. Many men from the west of England enrolled at Magdalen, Trinity, Christ Church; the latter also had significant numbers of undergraduates who had originated from London and the midland counties around Oxford, as did Merton and New Colleges.[6] Lincoln had strong connections with the east midlands, while Queen's drew many of its students from the north. These regional ties gave the archdeaconry of Buckingham a much broader mixture of geographic origins amongst its clergy, especially in

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[5] G.V. Bennett, 'University, Society and Church', in L.S. Sutherland & L.G. Mitchell, eds., *The History of the University of Oxford. Vol. V, The Eighteenth Century*, (Oxford, 1986), pp. 384-5; see also in the same volume, V.H.H. Green, 'The University and Social Life', pp. 314-5.

[6] Bennett, pp. 314-5.

comparison to Gloucestershire.

Regional concentrations at particular colleges of the universities were bolstered by financial incentives, which induced men to favour one college over another. The most wealthy colleges at Oxford and Cambridge, Christ Church and New College, King's and St John's, were certainly an attraction to clergymen from both archdeaconries, because of the many scholarships and exhibitions they offered to assist young men with the expenses of university. Yet many colleges had endowments which were tenable only by men from specific areas of the country, or even at particular schools. One such example is the exhibition at Northleach School which sent a number of promising Gloucestershire boys to study at Pembroke College, several of whom later returned to the county as clerics. This also contributed to the popularity that college enjoyed above all others amongst Gloucestershire clerics.[7]

In the longer term, the prospect of gaining a fellowship and ultimately presentation to a living owned by a College provided an additional link between a region and specific colleges. Since colleges always presented members of their own fellowship to collegiate livings, an aspiring cleric might gauge the chances of gaining one as favourable. Such an assessment was always a risk: it might never bear fruit in the form of a benefice or even a fellowship.

Colleges who owned advowsons in either of the archdeaconries

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[7] e.g. Charles Coxwell

had been consistently well-attended by Gloucestershire and Buckinghamshire incumbents.[8] This would come as no surprise if the number of clerics who had done so merely tallied with the number of livings held by particular colleges. But these attendance figures were generally greater than the quantity of such benefices, and, what is more, in the cases of colleges such as Oriel and Christ Church in Gloucestershire, actually rising. The prospects of financial rewards and career advancement, despite their attendant uncertainty, coupled with the more general "advertisement" derived from the mere presence of a collegiate patron or the advice, influence and example of an entrenched clergymen in an area, may account for such statistics. This notion is underlined by the fact that many of the clergy who had attended these colleges, especially those in the archdeaconry of Gloucester, had returned to their county of origin. Indeed, the latter point serves to highlight just how far geographic affinities might shape a clerics's career. Quite simply, in the eighteenth century there was a "remarkable correlation between a man's geographic origin, the university and college he attended and the area in which he was later to exercise his ministry."[9]

From the evidence of collegiate patronage alone, it is clear that the geographical complexion of the clerical body serving each

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[8] Colleges owning advowsons in archdeaconry of Buckingham 1730-80: Oxford: New (7), Dean and Chapter Christ Church (6), Lincoln (3), All Souls (1), Jesus (1); Cambridge: Trinity (1). Colleges owning advowsons in archdeaconry of Gloucester 1730-80: Oxford: Dean and Chapter Christ Church (12), Oriel (3), Corpus Christi (3), Jesus, (1), New (1), Wadham (1), Queen's (1), Magdalen (1), All Souls (1); Cambridge: Jesus (1).

[9] Bennett, p. 385.

archdeaconry owed a great deal to the patrons of the livings there. But the university colleges held only a small portion of all the advowsons in both archdeaconries, and thus the connection between clerical geographical origins and other sources of patronage must be considered. No progress could be made within the Church unless a cleric were to find a suitable patron. And since patronage depended upon patron's personal knowledge of a client, (and to an extent, vice versa), patrons presented to benefices men they knew, usually in person, sometimes by repute or recommendation. Thus patrons would very often present clergymen who lived in or near the same location in which patrons themselves originated or resided, though the benefice could be in another place entirely. Pruett, for example, found this to be the case in Leicestershire; about one-third of the men who owned the livings of Leicestershire lived outside the county, and these men usually chose parsons from outside the county, whereas most of the patrons who lived in Leicestershire tended to choose local men to fill benefices.[10] In this way, too, it is possible to account for the very different compositions of geographic origins of the clergy in the archdeaconries of Buckingham and Gloucester.

An analysis of lay (as opposed to institutional) patrons who held not only advowsons, but were also lords of the manor, in each archdeaconry demonstrates this well.[11] Significantly, in

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[10] Pruett, pp. 33-4.

[11] GRO, GDR 393 (1750); VCH Buckinghamshire; anon., *The Clergyman's Intelligencer: Or, A Compleat Alphabetical List of all the Patrons in England and Wales, with the Dignities, Livings, and Benefices in their Gift. To which is Added an Alphabetical Index of all the Benefices, and the page in which they are to be*

Buckinghamshire there were almost as many private patrons who did not have a seat in the county as those that did, the split being about 35 percent local to around 29 percent outsiders. In virtually every case, those lay sponsors who were not from Buckinghamshire tended to present clergy who were also from outside of the archdeaconry. Added to this, it seems that during the period the outsiders presented to livings by Buckinghamshire patrons outnumbered native clergy in that county by about two to one. This suggests that patrons in Buckinghamshire, like the clergy they presented, had connections in other areas and were more cosmopolitan than those to be found in other counties, such as Gloucester. The higher rate of external, as opposed to internal, pluralism by clergy in the archdeaconry of Buckingham may also have served to reinforce these circumstances.

This situation contrasts noticeably in every respect with Gloucestershire. Firstly, there a high correlation between the ownership of the manor and advowson in the county (42 percent of all patrons), to such an extent that lay patrons who were not natives were a tiny minority by comparison (15 percent of all patrons). Secondly, as in Leicestershire, patrons tended more often than not (by about three to two) to appoint clergymen who came from the same part of the country as they themselves did. Thirdly, the proportion of Gloucestershire-born parsons always exceeded the proportion of local private patrons, suggesting that other patrons were willing to appoint

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found, (London, 1745).

Gloucestershire clerics to livings in the archdeaconry. This is illustrated by the handful of patrons who were not from the archdeaconry, yet who presented local clergymen to benefices there, something which rarely happened in the archdeaconry of Buckingham.

Besides collegiate patronage, which has already been considered, other institutional patrons also played their part in shaping the differing regional complexions of the two archdeaconries. In the presentations of the various cathedral chapters which had rights over benefices in either archdeaconry, there were also distinctive differences between Buckingham and Gloucester. In the latter archdeaconry, the overall tally of capitular preferments in the period favoured indigenous clergymen, (contributed to not a little by the presentations of the dean and chapter of Gloucester)[12]. But in the former archdeaconry, which had no canonical presence, cathedral chapters made only a handful of presentations, and only two of these were to Buckinghamshire-born clerics. The origins of clergy collated by bishops were also fairly similar to this. The bishops of Gloucester, whose diocese was virtually coterminous with the archdeaconry, between them chose Gloucestershire clerics for more than half of the presentations they made from 1730-80. Appointments made by other bishops in Gloucestershire were similarly weighted in favour of that county's clergy and clerics from the west of England, reflecting the fact that most of the bishops with rights of presentation were based in dioceses

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[12] And in spite of the fact that only a sixth of Christ Church's thirty presentations during the period were to Gloucestershire-born incumbents.

in the west of the country. Yet again, the place of birth of clergymen presented to Buckinghamshire benefices by the episcopacy were diverse. The bishops of Lincoln, in whose diocese Buckingham lay, appointed no Buckinghamshire clerics to livings, and indeed, during the period, only the archbishop of Canterbury collated a native cleric to a benefice here. In the instances of both the bishop and the dean and chapter of Lincoln, however, many of those men they presented to Buckinghamshire benefices were "local" in a different sense, in that they came from other parts of the sprawling diocese, they were just not indigenous to Buckingham. Finally, and without wishing to labour the point, Crown presentations to benefices were very different in each area: briefly, in Buckinghamshire there were only five locally-born men out of twenty-five appointed by the Crown to its livings; the equivalent breakdown in Gloucestershire saw twenty-five native clerics preferred out of a total of forty-three presentations between 1730 and 1780.

This simple analysis takes account of neither the longevity of incumbents nor the fact that many "foreign" clergymen were subsequently presented to further livings in the same archdeaconry, both of which might render them "naturalised" to their adopted county. It ignores, too, the significant proportion of incumbents for whom it was impossible to identify a place of origin, particularly in the archdeaconry of Gloucester. It may actually be that Gloucester's clerical indigenousness was actually stronger than the figures in Table 23a suggest, since that table takes into account only those parsons

whose origins are known. The *Alumni* of the universities were used to provide most of the information about parsons' geographical backgrounds; yet it was impossible to discover any university matriculation for a far greater proportion of clergy in Gloucester than was the case for Buckingham. (Table 20a) This fact strongly suggests that the larger 'unknown' group there meant that there was a greater portion of Gloucestershire parsons who were not university educated, though of course such clergymen remained a small proportion of the whole. But since many of these parsons were incumbents of the smaller, poorer benefices, particularly the perpetual curacies of the archdeaconry, it is highly likely that they were local men, given the high degree of native patronage in Gloucester in the eighteenth century, appointed by local patrons to serve these less favourable livings.[13]

But such analysis does highlight the significant regional variation which existed within the eighteenth-century Church of England by demonstrating the great differences between the origins of the clergy of these two archdeaconries, and the extent to which patronage undoubtedly played a part in this. The root cause of these differences may ultimately lie in the geographical location of the two, and the consequent influences brought to bear upon the patrons of either region. Whereas Gloucestershire, rather insular with its predominantly native-born clergy and lay patrons, was to an extent

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[13] Taylor, 'Thesis', p. 14 discusses the link between poverty of livings and the absence of graduate clergy, especially in Wales and the north-west of England.

isolated in the west country, Buckinghamshire was caught geographically in the midst of the rough triangle formed by two great universities as well as the capital, all three inhabited by the social and political elite of the nation, and by ever-transient populations.

In her study of the Anglican clergy in London during the eighteenth century, Viviane Barrie-Curien noted the surplus of clergy in the metropolis, pointing out that "most London parishes enjoyed the presence of several clergymen, with only a very small number served by just one."[14] She also found that as the eighteenth century progressed, more and more London incumbents began to move from their parishes in the capital to dioceses not contiguous to London, "where, no doubt, they held other livings."[15] This movement out of London to country parishes would certainly account for the rising number of London-born clerics who found their way into the archdeaconry of Buckingham during the period. Some of these clergy were pluralists, and others were men who wanted to shun the competition for employment that existed in the city, and gain the security of their own parish. Both were attracted to the lifestyle of a country parson, and the chance to escape the hustle of urban life. Such movement from London may also help to explain the number of Buckinghamshire parsons who originated from far-flung parts of the kingdom, who, having made their way to one or other of the

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[14] Viviane Barrie-Curien, 'The Clergy in the Diocese of London in the Eighteenth Century', in Walsh, et. al., p. 92-3.
[15] ibid., p. 93.

universities and drifted between them and London in search of patronage and livings, had eventually settled in Buckinghamshire.

These then are the contrasting geographic origins of the clergy who served the parishes of Buckingham and Gloucester between 1730 and 1780, and some of the reasons why such differences existed between the two areas. Altogether, such varied backgrounds serve to create rather different portraits of the clerical bodies ministering in the two regions. Buckingham contained a far greater assimilation of clergy from many parts of Britain, and as such was probably more cosmopolitan that Gloucester, which was rather more insular, served by men native to the county or who came from not too far afield. These characteristics were reinforced on both sides by other factors, such as the differing nature of pluralism in each archdeaconry. As described in Chapter 1, Gloucester's parsons who were pluralists tended more often than not to hold both their livings within that archdeaconry; by contrast, many more of Buckingham's pluralists had livings outside that county. The greater number of poorer livings in Gloucester may have been an additional factor in creating a more inward-looking clerical group, since these livings were more often served by incumbents for whom no academic records could be discovered, suggesting that many of them were not university educated, and may have been native men who had never lived outside the county's bounds. Before considering the effect that such regional backgrounds may have had upon the relationship the parsons of

Buckingham and Gloucester had with the communities in which they lived and worked, attention will be given to another aspect of their background which will also be considered in this way, their social origins.

Social Origins

The social origins of eighteenth century clergy are rather more difficult to establish than their geographic origins. There is a significant proportion of clergy in both archdeaconries the social status of whose families it is impossible to determine. (Tables 24a & b) Many of these clergymen came from obscure, even humble backgrounds, thus potentially skewing any statistics towards creating a more genteel image of the archdeaconries than may have been the case. Even where the occupation of a clergymen's father can be established, in this case by using the *Alumni* of the two universities, it must be noted that these sources contain many inaccuracies, and of these, Foster's *Alumni Oxonienses*, is most notably unreliable, which is unfortunate since it was the university most commonly attended by incumbents in these archdeaconries,.[16] It means, too, that the small and diminishing number of clergymen with no university education, 'literates', to be found serving the Church early in the period, who were usually of modest social origins, are discriminated against. There also remains the fact that in the main these sources contain only broad and vague

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[16] Virgin, pp. 269, 281.

descriptions of rank and occupation. When a student matriculated he had to state whether he was the son of a peer, baronet, knight, esquire, gentleman, doctor, clerk in holy orders, plebeian or would enrol as a *pauperes pueri*. Such categories could cover a wide range of circumstances of individual wealth and social standing. A son of a cleric, for instance, could be the child of a bishop, of a wealthy country parson or of an impoverished curate; 'plebeian' fathers could range from local tradesmen to prosperous London merchants. This means that analysis based upon these categories must be treated with some caution. But, as has been explained, such categories do actually remain valuable as because they provide an indication of a man's estimate of his status in society. And "in a community which was intensely conscious of rank he would wish to place himself in the highest group to which he might aspire without incurring ridicule, yet he might well hesitate before choosing the higher fees and grander lifestyle which the superior category involved."[17]

Stereotypically the Hanoverian Church has been portrayed as an institution progressively dominated by the sons of men of such higher ranks and by nepotistic dynasties of clergymen.[18] Whilst this may be an exaggeration it is now generally accepted that the eighteenth century witnessed an improvement in the social origins of the parochial clergy as a whole, or at very least, a contraction or narrowing of the

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[17] Bennett, p. 362.

[18] e.g., Porter, pp. 61-2; G.E. Mingay, *The Gentry*, (London, 1976), p. 138; G.M. Trevalyan, *English Social History*, (London, 1944), pp. 359-60.

social classes from which parsons most often originated. This was matched by a heavier concentration of incumbents who emerged from the ranks of the country gentry and the professions, especially in the second half of the century. This was found to be the case in a number of local studies, and neither Buckingham nor Gloucester, to varying extents, are exception to this.[19]

Certainly there was a curtailment in the numbers of those enrolling themselves as *pauperes pueri*. After 1770 in Gloucestershire and 1760 in Buckinghamshire there were no incumbents describing themselves thus at matriculation, and even at the start of the period they had been a tiny minority. The reasons for such a small and declining proportion of poorer men entering the Church are not hard to find. The economic difficulties of gaining sufficient education for ordination mounted by the decade. Many poor boys could not even gain the necessary scholastic prerequisites for entry to university, with the decay of many grammar schools and the free and subsidised places such institutions offered.[20] Moreover, the rising cost of a university education was matched by a fall in the number of places for servitors and battelers at Oxford and Cambridge colleges, and also in the real value of scholarships and exhibitions. Besides the expenses of learning, eighteenth-century students found themselves part of institutions where it was increasingly necessary to disburse sufficient money to purchase

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[19] Jacob, p. 90; Gregory, 'Thesis', p. 385; Langford, 'English Clergy and the American Revolution', p. 304; Walsh et.al., 'Introduction', p. 7; Pruett, p. 39.
[20] See Langford, *Polite and Commercial*, pp. 79ff.

the trappings of social standing appropriate to a man deserving of a place at university.[21] University was, therefore, an expensive risk for a humble man, all the more so if he wanted to enter the priesthood and, as was likely, he had neither pre-established connections nor patronage to ensure preferment once ordained.

These same economic considerations might also account for the decline in the number of plebeians with benefices in Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire during the Georgian era. As "sons of shopkeepers, traders, freeholders, husbandmen, yeoman, and small farmers", young men of plebeian origin may have spied less risky investments for their talents and more opportunities open to them than those the Church provided.[22] Pursuit of material security and social status might be better achieved by receipt of an education in any of the many flourishing commercial schools and apprenticeship into one of burgeoning trades, or even entry into a profession less restrictive than the Church, with its rigid system of patronage and many impoverished benefices. These factors may account for the slight decline in the number of men of this social rank amongst the clergymen of both archdeaconries, from 21 percent to 14 percent in Buckinghamshire and from 18 percent to 16 percent in Gloucestershire. Such drops parallel that measured by Barrie-Curien in the diocese of London over the same period (from 23 percent in 1720-40 to 12.3 percent from 1781-1800), and are also matched by Pruett in Leicestershire (30 percent in

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[21] Green, p. 314.
[22] Barrie-Curien, p. 87.

1714 to 22.5 percent in 1750).[23] Kent differs slightly, for there was actually a very small increase in their number between 1720-50 and 1750-80.[24]

But the very mid-century economic prosperity of Britain, which led to many men from this rank to eschew the clerical profession in favour of more lucrative careers, may account for the fall in 'plebeian' numbers within in the Church in another way. Indeed, the decline may to a certain extent be more apparent than real: as their material well-being grew more secure, many a successful tradesman or small farmer might feel inclined to measure the extent of their social advance by adopting the term 'gentleman', where formerly they would have chosen 'plebeian'. The fact remains, however, that these statistics measure how clergymen's fathers assessed their social status, and ultimately, if they believed they had arrived at a higher standing than 'plebeian', then their descriptions have to be taken at face value.

The most problematic category, and certainly the broadest, is that of 'gentleman'. In Tables 24a and 24b it is used to cover all fathers of clerics who described themselves as esquires and gentleman, but as with the other categories this could cover a wide range of lifestyles, occupations and incomes. 'Gentleman' was generally used with pride by "small country squires who did not presume to count themselves among the county gentry....Substantial tradesmen and merchants felt free to resort to it where their courage failed them in

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[23] ibid., p. 103; Pruett, p. 35.
[24] Gregory, 'Thesis', p. 385.

regard to 'Esquire', especially when they sold up or retired." 'Esquire' was usually the preserve of men of property or professional standing.[25]

In both Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire, the number of sons of the gentry rose steadily during the period 1730-1780. This is perhaps no surprise, given the contraction in the social composition of the universities in the period,[26] and the way in which contemporaries increasingly viewed the Church as a respectable career for the sons of men of social standing, especially towards the end of the century.[27] In Buckinghamshire there was a modest increase in the number of clergy who were sons of gentlemen or esquires until 1760, after which their numbers levelled off and even fell very slightly. Overall, however, about a quarter of the archdeaconry's incumbents were from this rank, a significant proportion of the whole.

In Gloucestershire clerics in this category were always the majority of those clergy who could be categorised, and their numbers rose from a quarter to over a third of all incumbents. These figures are rather problematic, even more so than for Buckingham, because of the preponderance of clergymen here who matriculated at Oxford University. This means that the figures are derived largely from the terms chosen by Joseph Foster in his *Alumni Oxonienses* to describe the social standing of a boy's father. Of all the defects with this source, it is Foster's use of the term 'gentleman' that is most

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[25] Langford, *Polite and Commercial*, pp. 65-7.
[26] Green, p. 314.
[27] Langford, 'English Clergy and the American Revolution', p. 304.

problematic because his use of it was generally "excessively liberal and also, often, exceedingly misleading".[28] Yet the rise in the number of gentle clergy to about a third by 1780 roughly tallies with a similar proportion found by Barrie-Curien to have had livings in the diocese of London between 1721-80.[29] To some extent, however, this increase in Gloucestershire also modifies her claim that in "poorer dioceses in the north and west of England, the increase of the gentry class was not yet perceptible in the eighteenth century", although her observation may have been referred more specifically to dioceses above the Severn-Trent line.[30] Certainly it would be wrong to exaggerate the social standing of Gloucestershire incumbents within the ranks of the genteel. Few of the clergy, either here or, indeed, in Buckingham, were of noble birth, and without question the majority emerged from the ranks of the 'gentlemen' rather than 'esquires'. But in spite of this, by 1780 there was a substantial and growing number of genteel clergy, sons of men of standing in local polite society. From such a foundation, a rapid expansion in their numbers could have easily emerged during the next generation, such as occurred in the diocese of London, and, by all accounts, throughout the Church, in the last decades of the century.[31]

The number of clergymen in either archdeaconry who

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[28] Virgin, p. 281.

[29] Barrie-Curien, p. 103. The percentages of clergy who were sons of the gentry in London are as follows: 1721-40 36.2%; 1741-60 25.5%; 1741-80 34.6%. The dramatic rise (to 56.7%) of the numbers of gentry-born clergy in the diocese of London which she highlights occurred between 1780 and 1800, a period not surveyed here.

[30] ibid., p. 88.

[31] Langford, 'English Clergy and the American Revolution', p. 304; Walsh et.al., 'Introduction', p. 7.

specifically identified themselves as having professional fathers (such as doctors and lawyers) was not significant at any stage, which is perhaps surprising given the fact that these professions blossomed during the period. The exception to this were, of course, the sons of the clergy. It has already been explained in Chapter 2 that the numbers of clergymen who had followed their father's profession in both archdeaconries increased during the eighteenth century, especially in Buckingham. This rise parallels similar changes in other counties during the period, and indicates that the Church was not an unattractive career option for one brought up within the parsonage. This notion is reinforced by the fact that few parsons in either archdeaconry emerged from the ranks of the higher clergy. In Gloucester no cleric was found to have a father amongst the clerical elite, while in Buckingham there were just four: George Sandby, son of Josiah, a prebend of Worcester; Stephen and Henry Sleech, children of Richard, a canon of Windsor; Decimus Reynolds, son of Richard, bishop of Lincoln, and William Gibson, who was Edmund, bishop of London's son. The presence of a growing number of sons of clergy, whatever their father's rank in the Church, can only have served to induce a sense of professionalism or vocation amongst the clergy as a body, for they experienced first-hand aspects of pastoral care, tithe collection and other facets of the parochial cleric's life, things that their university education would never teach them.

Overall, it is evident that there was a rise in the social origins of

the parsons of the archdeaconries of Gloucester and Buckingham, despite the variations between each region. More and more men who were the sons of professionals, especially clergy, and also country gentlemen found their way into the Church. But while the origins of the clergy were becoming increasingly professional and gentrified, the ministry was not a socially elitist profession, nor was it an entirely socially homogeneous one.[32] Differences of status and wealth of men even within these higher social ranks from which clergy increasingly emerged remained multiplicitous, and, it must not be forgotten that in spite of the preponderance of sons of clergy and gentlemen, many parishes in both archdeaconries continued to be served by clergymen of lesser social origins.

Socially, there was more similarity between the two archdeaconries than there was in the geographic origins of their incumbents, and indeed, a greater similarity with other parts of the country, suggesting that there was less diversity between regions with regard to the social complexion of the Church in the eighteenth century, especially in the southern counties of England. The main difference between Buckingham and Gloucester by 1780 was the higher ratio of parsons in the former who were themselves the sons of clerics, whilst in the latter, there were more parsons who described themselves by the amorphous term, gentleman.

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[32] Pruett, p. 39.

Clerical social relations within communities

It is difficult to measure the effect that the place of origin had upon a cleric's ministry and relationships within his local community. In a highly mobile society there was an obvious advantage in the sense of stability derived from the presence of a cleric who returned to the region in which he had been brought up. A local man would have an advantage over a newcomer, in that he was already part of the community, he was aware of local customs and traditions; in a face-to-face society, his was a recognisable countenance, or at least a familiar name. Yet the clerical profession was a highly mobile vocation, and parishioners might well be used to having strangers performing ecclesiastical and pastoral duties for them, not least because of the custom of many eighteenth-century clergy of sharing duty amongst themselves. And, moreover, in the longer term a resident parson who was a "foreigner" would, especially if his incumbency was a lengthy one, become as accepted and integral part of the parish community as any native-born parson.[33]

Certainly many of the clergy of both archdeaconries enjoyed very long incumbencies, as can be seen from the figures in Table 25. Overall, the average length of an incumbency in Gloucester between 1730 and 1780 was just over 22 years, whilst in Buckingham during the same period, 24 years. In both regions between 60-75 percent of clergy served their livings for longer than ten years, and similarly,

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[33] ibid., p. 76.

more than 10 percent of them were in possession of their benefices for more than forty years. The slightly higher rate of turnover before the five-year mark in Gloucester compared to Buckingham probably reflects the prolonged poverty of the smaller livings in the former, as parsons tried to move to more lucrative benefice. But this was not always the case, as has been seen, some clergymen stayed in poor livings for many years. Such length of service by the clergy in all benefices shows not only their commitment to their duty and the community, but also the fact that there was no institutional provision for the retirement of elderly clergymen: they were reliant on what they were able to provide for themselves, and so few of them ever 'retired'.

This raises the question of the extent to which some clergy beneficed in both archdeaconries were themselves actually able to take an active part in the community by the end of their incumbencies. The prevalence of such long incumbencies and fact that the eighteenth century witnessed the steady senescence and striking longevity of the clerical community in the Church of England, meant that perhaps as many as 15 percent of all clergymen were too incapacitated through illness and old age to undertake the duties of their office.[34] The average ages of the clergy of both archdeaconries, shown in Table 18, shows that they were also caught in this trend towards longevity, and that, therefore, it is highly likely that there was a similar proportion of incapacitated clergy in each region. Charles Coxwell, for instance, held

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[34] Virgin, pp. 169-70, 161-2.

a number of livings in Gloucestershire, as well as the deanery of Fairford, in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth century. By 1817, at the age of 77, he began to decline noticeably in bodily strength; he resigned the deanery of Fairford, having already given up all his livings, except the rectory of Barnsley, which he still seems to have served. In 1824 he had given up his office as a Justice of the Peace and performance of clerical duties, but he still retained the rectorship of Barnsley and until his death was regularly granted licenses for non-residence because he was "subject to frequent returns of the Gout and other bodily Infirmity".[35] William Cole (1714-82) is another example of a cleric who was too infirm to perform ecclesiastical duty. He was made vicar of Burnham in 1774 at the age of 58. As he describes,

> for the two first years of my Incumbency, I resided there 6 weeks each year: the last of which sent me Home [to Cambridgeshire], after a very bad Fever, in the Gout: since which Time, to this very Day, I may safely say, with the severest Truth, that I have not enjoyed one Day's Health,....The Inside of a Church has never seen me but once, since I left Burnham the last time; & when I was there, I think, I was only at Church but one Day.[36]

Despite such incapacity towards the end of their lives, when they would often need a stipendary curate to undertake their ecclesiastical duties, the longevity of the eighteenth-century clergy was remarkable, and it matched the life expectancy of the rural elite, of which they were increasingly a part.[37] As such, it is testament to the comfortable,

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[35] GRO, D269B F119, 'A Short Narrative of the Life of the Reverend Charles Coxwell, A.M. written by Himself....'; D269B F25, Licences for Non-Residence.
[36] BL, Add. MS 5855 f. 102, William Cole to Bishop Thomas Turlow, 14 May 1780.
[37] Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, p. 72.

easy and rhythmic lifestyles they could enjoy if they had a reasonable income, and they could entrench themselves in a parish community for many decades.

The more settled and active a part he played in his local community, the more likely it was that he would be integrated into that community. In some instances, however, it may actually have been more difficult for clergy themselves, especially newcomers to an area, to fit into a community than it was for their parishioners to accept them as their priest. Richard Hurd commented on his appointment to a living in Leicestershire in 1756 that he found little suitable company in his new community and led

> a life here which you will think pitiable, and most men wretched. I am so entirely alone that for weeks together I see not human face but that of my own servants, and of my parishioners at church on Sundays.[38]

Few can surely have shared the dislocation of John Skinner of Camerton in Somerset, who was in fact a local man, who never throughout his entire incumbency belonged to the community to which he ministered,

> I am tied hands and feet, and placed in a pillory to be pelted at by Methodists, Catholics, Colliers; and have moreover a combination of worthless Farmers, and an overbearing Woman with an unprincipled Steward to contend with....Who will undertake the office of a Clergyman if he is exposed to the miseries I have sustained during the twenty-five years I have been RECTOR OF CAMERTON.[39]

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[38] Richard Hurd, *Memoirs of the life and writings of the right rev. Richard Hurd, D.D., lord bishop of Worcester; together with a selection from his correspondence and other unpublished papers. By the rev. Francis Kilvert, M.A.*, (London, 1860), p. 80, Hurd to Dr Thomas Balguy, 6 September 1759.

[39] Skinner, p. 283.

No instances of such a sense of exclusion or alienation from the community were found amongst the parsons serving parishes of either Buckingham or Gloucester, but this does not necessarily mean that it did not occur during the period.[40] Certainly there may have been parsons who were lonely and who sought suitable company, particularly in parts of Gloucestershire, which had regions less densely populated in the eighteenth century than most of Buckinghamshire, and in which there were a number of isolated parishes.[41] One instance of such a lonely parson was Richard Cumberland, who for want of company shut up the parsonage of Driffield for a few months and took lodgings in nearby Cirencester.

> Had I the smallest circle of social neighbours to near me or a better Constitution to bear the severity of this Climate at all hours and all seasons, nothing would tempt me to quit a situation in every other Respect desirable - Indeed if it were good for man to live alone, there is not a single Comfort wanting to make a reasonable Being Happy.[42]

In Cirencester he was far happier, commenting that it was "impossible to pass one's time more agreeably or more innocently that I do at present in well mixed Circles".[43] It is difficult to gauge just how many other parochial clergymen suffered the same sense of social isolation as Cumberland. It is likely that many of them, however, both natives and newcomers, in both regions settled into their parishes one way or

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[40] See Secker, *Speculum*, p. xviii for examples in Kent.
[41] Moir, p. 3; W.K. Jordan, *The Charities of Rural England 1480-1660. The Aspirations and Achievements of Rural Society*, (London, 1961), p. 24;
[42] Cumberland, *Letters*, pp. 333, Richard to George, 7 November 1784.
[43] ibid., p. 293.

another, and soon found a niche for themselves amongst whatever communities were to be found there. Such was the experience of Richard Radcliffe in 1757,

> I am now fixed and settled in the county of Lincoln, - a corner, in which I have neither Countryman, Kinsman, nor (which is worth both) college acquaintance....But though I came into the Country a perfect stranger, I am already acquainted with many neighbouring gentlemen, and am in a likely way to be acquainted with more.[44]

It is clear then that the parochial clergy aspired not merely to be accepted by their parishioners when they came to a parish, but also to find and to integrate socially into suitable company. In particular, this meant acceptance amongst the country gentry and other members of the middling classes to which it has been shown eighteenth-century clergy expected to belong. The impression that is received from the extant diaries, correspondence and other personal writings of the parochial clergymen of both the archdeaconries is that this seems generally to have been achieved, though such sources are so fragmentary that it is difficult to quantify this contention in any meaningful way. But in general terms, the position of the clergyman amongst the middling ranks of his local community was widely accepted.[45] This often came less from a recognition of his social origins, though no doubt those of gentry or professional backgrounds found it easier to assert their place within this rank of society, than from the authority of his office, his income and especially landed

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[44] Radcliffe, *Letters*, p. 9, Richard Radcliffe to John James senior, 19 October 1757.
[45] Virgin p. 110.

property, and also his education. The actual extent to which the clergy of the two archdeaconries had received a university education has been touched upon obliquely in the above discussion. The evidence of the statistics contained in Tables 20a and 20b indicates that the majority of the clergy of both archdeaconries had attended university. It is likely, however, that proportion of the clergy in Buckingham with such an education was higher than in Gloucester, especially at the start of the period, when the matriculation records of proportionately fewer incumbents from the latter archdeaconry could be discovered. To this extent it is possible that some of the parsons of Gloucester, especially those in poorer livings, had a more difficult task in embracing a genteel lifestyle. That said, by 1780, many in this archdeaconry had seen significant improvements to their incomes, and it can be established that a greater number of them were university educated, and so it may be that their social experiences matched more closely those of the parochial parsons in more cosmopolitan Buckingham.

The other important qualification for acceptance into the ranks of the middling classes was giving an appearance that one deserved to take one's place there, that one was willing and able to behave a 'polite' fashion, to use the nebulous contemporary term.[46] Such display might include ownership of material possessions, and can be evinced generally among the eighteenth-century clergy as a motivation

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[46] Langford, *Polite and Commercial*, p. 66; Lawrence E. Klein, 'Liberty, Manners, and Politeness in Early Eighteenth-Century England', *Historical Journal*, 32, 3 (1989), pp. 583-605.

for improvements to parsonages. It may also be seen more specifically in individual cleric's consciousness of their own social standing, reflected in passing comments in the diaries and correspondence written by clergy from many parts of England. It can be seen, for instance, decisions such as that of the Norfolk rector, James Woodforde, to have his coat of arms painted on the front of his garden "temple", or in the fear of John Thomlinson, a Leicestershire parson, that he would be seen riding an inappropriate horse.[47] William Cole, too, was advised to buy a London-built chaise, for it would be "more genteel", as well as being "made of better materials than those in the country".[48] For some less well-off parsons of Buckingham and Gloucester, it may have been more difficult to afford the trappings of such status, but contemporaries also recognised that 'politeness' also applied to personal conduct or demeanour as much as to material possessions, social display, or even social origins.[49] Cole's criticism of his episcopal superior rested upon such notions, since the latter's

> clownish Carriage, & want of Behaviour and Manners...[of Bishop Green] was so notorious at his last Visitation, that every one was scandalized [sic] at it....Indeed the B[isho]p's ungain, awkward, splay-footed Carriage & Yorkshire Dialect is a full Indication of his humble Education & Extraction....B[isho]p Thomas [his predecessor] was as low bred as B[isho]p Green: yet his Behaviour as a Gentleman was such, that I never heard any one make any Reproach to his Character: whereas the contrary Carriage of his Successor is continually the Subject of Ridicule in

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[47] James Woodforde, *The Diary of a Country Parson 1758-1802*, ed. John Beresford, (Oxford, 1978), p. 163; John Thomlinson, 'The Diary of John Thomlinson', *North Country Diaries*, (Surtees Society, CXVIII, 1910), p. 77ff.
[48] Cole, *Blecheley Diary*, p. 200 n1.
[49] Langford, *Polite and Commercial*, p. 71.

whatever Company his Name is mentioned.[50]

Clearly if a parson could meet most or all of these material, social, educational and personal 'requirements' his place among genteel of his community, if such people were to be found there, would be assured.

A not untypical example of the social set of an eighteenth-century clergyman who had thus integrated into the ranks of the middling classes may be found in William Cole's friends. The circle of friends with whom he had regular, day-to-day contact when he was rector of Blecheley in Buckinghamshire was made up of twenty-two different couples and individuals. Of them, eleven were other clergymen, both married and single men, who held benefices in the northern part of the archdeaconry of Buckingham close to Cole's. The other people with whom he socialised were moderately well-to-do country gentlemen, professionals and businessmen who lived in the same area. They included Nathaniel and James Cartwright, a pair of brothers who employed all the lace-makers in the district, and who alternated their time between Buckinghamshire and London and an elderly solicitor, Benjamin Pomfret, who lived at Newport Pagnell. There were also two married couples, three wealthy widows and a widower, all of whom owned manor houses in the countryside surrounding Cole's house. He also mixed with Matthew Knapp, brother of the rector of Shenley, and the High Sheriff of the county, and his wife, as well as two politically prominent landed brothers,

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[50] Cole, *Blecheley Diary*, p. 35.

Richard and Robert Lowndes, the former having been the Member of Parliament for Buckinghamshire.

With such members of the local gentry and professional middling sorts, Cole's social circle was typical of many parochial clerics of the period. As such, this community constituted a 'neighbourhood', very much an eighteenth-century social phenomenon. This group was tied together by tacit acceptance of the 'polite' rules of reciprocal hospitality and social intercourse, intermarriage, and shared familial, economic and even political interests. Unsurprisingly for the eighteenth century, with its obsession with status, even the ranks of such social circles would be stratified.[51] Thus, while the Rev. Thomas Porter and the successful Sussex shopkeeper Thomas Turner socialised together along with other members of their local neighbourhood, often somewhat indecorously, there was no mistaking that in this instance the parson, a wealthier and more educated man, was the socially superior of the two.[52] Such stratifications are also indicative of the restrictiveness of such middle class communities. Not only were they circumscribed by the social limitation of confining their social activities to acceptable company, but also by geographic constraints. Hence, though it generally extended well beyond the bounds of a parson's parish or a single village community, the 'neighbourhood' was founded upon networks of such leisured "carriage" families who lived close

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[51] Langford, *Polite and Commercial*, p. 75; Collins, p. 105.
[52] Thomas Turner, *The Diary of Thomas Turner 1754-1765*, ed. David Vaisey, (Oxford, 1985), pp. xx, 139, 155.

enough to one another to socialise on a daily basis if they so desired.[53] In this sense, such practical constraints of travel and communication served to limit the scope of the day-to-day social communities of many eighteenth-century clergy.

There were, of course, exceptions to this, occasions when the social intercourse and activities of the middling ranks would encompass a wider society. These usually occurred less frequently, and were special events, often held on a county scale, such as the county race meetings, balls and hunts, or social occasions linked to the Assizes. Such occasions were not confined to the middling ranks of the community, but, as they encompassed a wider geographical circle, so too, their social scope was broader and they would often include the elites of county society. The *Gloucester Journal*, for example, noted in 1781 the "leading and noble characters that gave a lustre to this meeting" of the Three Choirs Festival held triennially in that city. But this was also a huge social event, looked forward to and attended by those lower in the social scale, including parochial clergymen.[54]

Such society events were obviously less intimate than the sorts of entertainment and social intercourse conducted in local communities or neighbourhoods, and to this extent the clergy's relations with their social superiors, be they secular or ecclesiastical, appear to have been

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[53] Alan Everitt, *Landscape and Community*, (London, 1985), pp. 80-1.

[54] *Gloucester Journal*, 3 September 1781, cited in Watkins Shaw, *The Three Choirs Festival*, (London, 1954), p. 15; for example, Francis Witts, rector of Upper Slaughter in Gloucester 1808-54, recorded attending the 1823 Festival in his diary. F.E. Witts, *The Diary of a Cotswold Parson*, ed. David Verey, (Gloucester, 1980), pp. 30-1.

conducted in a more formal and more distant fashion. Most eighteenth-century parsons had personal links with people higher in the social hierarchy than themselves, be it their patron, a great landowner who only rarely returned to his country seat, or with their episcopal superiors. Yet these relations, too, were usually conducted on a formal basis, one in which the parson would pay his "Respects" to his superior.[55] Such relations certainly seem to have been very cordial, as can be evinced, for instance, in the many extant examples of gifts of wine, or game and other food bestowed on the parsonages of both archdeaconries by patrons or other social superiors,

> I received your favour of a three dozen hamper of Old Hock yesterday...and indeed very good it is; I am sure there is none such to be had in this neighbourhood. Considering the scarcity of it, I am afraid You have been too liberal; However I must love you and thank you the more.[56]

Small-scale, or more intimate social events between these groups were also marked by a formality which indicated the gulf between their social stations. But "exceedingly polite and civil" though such occasions were, very often they left the parochial incumbent feeling decidedly ill at ease, conscious of their inferiority,

> As far as my experience reaches, I have very seldom attended any such grand dining-matches, without saying many things, which, in the first moment of reflection, I have felt reason to be ashamed of & doing too many things, which have given me pain, though perhaps they have escaped...observation...

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[55] BRO, D/LE/D10/18, Henry Schultz to Sir William Lee, 25 August 1762.
[56] BRO, D/DR/8/21, John Eaton to John Drake, n.d.

William Jones reflected.[57] Many would have undoubtedly agreed with Woodforde's comment after his meeting with the Bishop of Norwich and his entourage that "being with our equals is much more agreeable".[58]

Relationships between clergy and their social inferiors generally operated within a smaller-scale community, usually limited by the parish bounds for which the parson had responsibility. These relationships might be closer than those with superiors, since the parson would, or should, have an intimate knowledge of his parishioners, and their economic fortunes were often tied closely together. But ultimately, by virtue of his profession and authority, as well as his education and personal sensibilities, most eighteenth-century parsons would feel that a social distinction existed between himself and the "country bumpkins and shopkeepers" that he lived alongside.[59] It can be seen in Cole's habit of taking dinner in the parlour with his friends on Sundays, while his clerk and half-a-dozen of the humbler members of his church ate with his servants in the kitchen.[60] It also evident in his comment that he "chose to be amongst his Hay People" in the fields when the Chancellor of the Diocese called upon him, "it being a particular Pleasure & Amusement" to him, to display his local authority to his own social superior.[61] And it is evinced in the trepidation with which some eighteenth-century incumbents anticipated

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[57] Woodforde, p. 148; Jones, p. 178.
[58] Woodforde, p. 216.
[59] Jones, p. 184.
[60] Cole, passim.
[61] ibid., p. 68.

their farmers' annual tithe dinner, at which they were expected to play host:

> Next Monday is the farmers' tithe feast, which is but a troublesome time, sitting for half a day amongst such a sort of folks in a cloud of tobacco, attending to the price of corn and fat hogs, and almost stunned with the noise of their rustic mirth.[62]

Yet for all the real or professed aloofness of the clergy from this rustic mirth they had to tread carefully with their inferiors; whilst they might condescend towards them and expect deference from them, for, as has been shown, deference was a relationship of mutual respect. If a parson or, in fact any other member of the rural elite, was to offend the sensibilities of those beneath him, "only trouble could be expected".[63] For the parson, however, it had a particular consequence, for as with tithe disputes, it could undermine his pastoral effectiveness, alienating parishioners from his ministry. Such a breakdown of understanding lay at the root of John Skinner's notorious and lengthy troubles with his parishioners during his incumbency of his Somerset rectory. By contrast, an awareness of the consequences of exacerbating a disagreement prevented Cole from prosecuting a parishioner when he might have had a cause to in a dispute over trespassing livestock,

> As I never yet had occasion to fee & consult a Lawyer, I was loath to do it against one of my Parishioners: & so am determined to sit down under my Injury, rather than suffer the greater on of going to Law.[64]

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[62] George Woodward, *A Parson in the Vale of the White Horse. George Woodward's Letters from East Hendred, 1753-1761*, ed. Donald Gibson, (Gloucester, 1982), p. 114.
[63] John A. Phillips, 'The Social Calculus: Deference and Defiance in Later Georgian England', *Albion*, 21, 3 (1989), p. 447.
[64] Cole, p. 89.

The clergy of the eighteenth-century, therefore, integrated socially not merely into one level of community, but in an hierarchical society, into concentric circles of social exchange, each bounded by differing spatial limitations, and all circumscribed by limits of appropriate behaviour. In this respect, they differed little from the laymen with whom they formed their enclaves of polite society within the communities in which they lived. There was, however, one significant social difference between the clergyman and his lay counterpart, and that was the fact that the former belonged to a community which transversed all parochial, neighbourhood and even county bounds, namely that of his profession. Whilst the parochial clergy lacked a formal professional body to represent and defend their interests with the prorogation of Convocation during the eighteenth century, they did not lack a sense of professional identity, as can be evinced from clerical handbooks, or works defending their rights and property such as tithes.[65] One of the strongest, yet most nebulous, props to this professional identity was the social ties that clergymen had with their colleagues. These spread like a network throughout the country, and might be contacts derived from their university days, or other incumbents for whom they had acted as stipendary curates, or clergy they had met in other parts of the country when they were beneficed elsewhere. The epitome of such a nexus of the social and the professional for the parochial incumbent was the Visitation. Though

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[65] Corfield, p. 186.

this was a local event, in the sense that it had an archidiaconal basis, it drew parsons from many different backgrounds and incomes and many different local communities within the archdeaconry together into a social and professional community of their own.

For all that such a clerical community existed, however, the majority of eighteenth-century parochial incumbents lived not a peculiarly clerical lifestyle, but rather that of a gentleman. Within the social enclave of the neighbourhood, clergy participated in a wide range of social activities typical of 'polite' society. These might, depending upon their taste, temperament and age (or state of health) include exchange of hospitality in the form of formal visits or dinners, attendance at local assemblies or clubs, outdoor pursuits such as hunting or fishing, or more sedentary activities like attending local book clubs and libraries. Nor were clergy unwilling, as many historians have shown, to take up the community responsibilities of the gentleman, such as taking their place on the bench, the land tax commission, enclosure, and other secular bodies. The clergy of Buckingham and Gloucester were certainly no exception to this, as Paul Langford has shown in great detail with relation to both of these areas, the number of active clerical justices in both rising markedly during the period, as did the proportion of clerical land tax commissioners.[66]

Both for their adoption of these secular administrative activities

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[66] Langford, *Public Life*, pp. 410-20, 421-8, 430-36. See also Moir, pp. 53-57, Virgin, pp. 109-121, McClatchey, pp. 178-210.

and in their gentlemanly social interaction, criticism has been levelled at the eighteenth-century clergy by contemporaries and historians alike.[67] In essence such criticism derives from the fact that to juxtapose such secular concerns with pastoral roles and responsibilities would, and did, create a tension between the two spheres in which the parson operated. It would distract him from his pastoral tasks, and would possibly undermine his relationship with his parishioners:

> many clergymen are Magistrates, - but the office seems to be unsuitable for any Minister of the Gospel; it must consume much time, & create many enemies.[68]

Yet by the same token it can be argued that his participation in civil government might prove valuable to his ecclesiastical role, heightening his authority and power within the parish, and reinforcing the paternalistic aspects of his pastoral responsibilities. It might also provide an additional incentive for the parochial clergyman to remain resident within his parish, and to become more intimately embedded in the affairs of his parishioners and local community.[69] Socially, many clergy might have pushed to the limits guidelines contained in the many contemporary handbooks with regard to appropriate behaviour and activities for

> *clerical amusement*. It should intend the *exercise of the body*, and *the recreation of the mind*; but it should also be *united to the genius of the profession*.[70]

Yet parsons themselves were not uncritical of activities and conduct

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[67] For fuller discussion see Evans, 'English Rural Anti-Clericalism', pp. 101-8; Langford, *Public Life*, pp. 430-6.
[68] Jones, p. 258.
[69] Walsh et.al., pp. 28-29.
[70] Gilpin, p. 21.

that were unbecoming to members of their profession, not least because of the example it provided to their flocks. Cole, for instance, albeit rather affectionately, reported the inappropriate behaviour of his archdeacon at a visitation, noting

> that our good Friend Dr Forester should persevere to be so much like himself! Methinks a Titty whisky & a great Dignity in the Church, seem to be as incongruous as a Doctor's Scarfe with a single curled bob Wig![71]

Jones was critical of his own behaviour at a social event, writing how

> truly sorry am I that I staid so long at Mr. Cawthorn's, particularly last night, but my sorrow is unavailing. A clergyman's life should be chiefly spent among his books....Whatever time he can spare should be laid out in exhorting, advising, comforting, & assisting his poor parishioners, especially those who are sick. In other respects, his life cannot be too recluse. It he mixes with the rich, he will be very apt, if of my volatile, naturally-gay temper, to speak "unadvisedly" & "unguardedly with his lips." How must this damp, & daunt, his spirits, for some time afterwards, in his pulpit-exertions! How destructive of his usefulness, as a Minster, must be every instance of misconduct![72]

Rightly or wrongly, however, the clergyman's participation in such activities was a fact of the eighteenth-century Church and society, his pragmatic response to the world around him and the ambitions that he may have had for himself within that community.

Pastoral work

The discussion both of this and preceding chapters begs the question of the degree to which the clergy of the archdeaconries of Buckingham

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[71] BL, Add. MS 5825, f. 100b-101b, Cole to Susanna Barton, 6 July 1768.
[72] Jones, p. 111.

and Gloucester fulfilled their pastoral duties, and their effectiveness in doing so. Whilst it is possible to find examples of clergy in the archdeaconries who undertook many facets of the pastoral care expected of them, such as Jones outlined in the preceding quotation, it is impossible to measure the extent and effect of these actions meaningfully. It is conceivable to discover the extent to which they fulfilled the most basic of their ecclesiastical responsibilities, that of provision of services of public worship within their parishes. It has been argued that two Sunday services every week was the "uncontroversial minimum" standard of services expected in the eighteenth-century Church.[73] But it has also been shown that there was a great deal of regional diversity within the Church as to fulfilment of this standard.[74] The two archdeaconries under consideration here are no exception to this.

Diocesan records for 1743, coincidentally the only year such information was most fully available, have been used in Table 26 to break down the duty undertaken in parishes of both archdeaconries.[75] Despite the larger proportion of parishes for which no records were provided in Gloucester, it is evident that the clergy of the archdeaconry lagged well behind their Buckingham counterparts in the provision of a morning and an afternoon service on a Sunday. Further, of those counted in the "Full Service" category, there were many fewer parishes

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[73] F.C. Mather, 'Church, Parliament and Penal Law: Some Variations in Anglican Public Worship, 1714-1830', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 36 (1985), pp. 265.
[74] ibid., pp. 266-267.
[75] LA, SPE 3, A True Account of the Accustomed Service in all small Churches...1743; GRO, GDR 397, Survey of the Diocese 1743.

in the archdeaconry of Gloucester than in Buckingham (21 percent of parishes) where weekday services were held, although aside from the City churches where they did occur, these may not have been noted in the Survey. Buckingham also compares favourably to other parts of England in its provision of double services on Sundays: for instance in the same diocese, in the archdeaconry of Lincoln, services were held twice on Sundays in only 28 percent of parishes in c.1744.[76] There is some correlation between Buckingham and its neighbour, Oxfordshire, where double duty occurred in 85 percent of parishes in 1738.[77] Oxfordshire was identified by Mather as the exception to the norm of mostly single duty on Sundays in southern and eastern England, but it appears that Buckinghamshire provides an additional deviation to this.[78] Location may be one reason for the high level of duty in the archdeaconry, for the closer proximity of many of its parishes to Oxford than some of those in Gloucestershire, meant that it was more easily served by stipendary curates from the university every week. Proximity to London may also have played a part, as many of the nation's elites had their country residences in the county, the corollary of which being a larger attendance of elite worshippers at services, forcing clergy to fulfil their ecclesiastical obligations completely, and inferior parishioners to attend services. The density of the population, too, may also have made clergy more willing to undertake two services

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[76] Mather, p. 267.
[77] Taylor, 'Thesis', p. 32.
[78] Mather, p. 268.

on Sundays, since they might be better assured of a congregation than in more remote parts of the country. And finally, because the county was compact and its terrain generally undemanding, it may have been easier for clergy to fill in for absent colleagues than in other places.

In Gloucester, by contrast, there were more remote parishes, and, in particular, the hilly landscape of the Cotswolds may not have made travel so easy to serve other benefices. There was also a more dispersed population (and also some strong pockets of Dissent) in parts of that county, which made performing more than one service a day unviable. The greater poverty of livings and the higher rate of indigenous pluralism in the archdeaconry than in Buckingham, too, may have seen incumbents serving both their livings themselves just once every week, instead of appointing a stipendary curate to officiate at two services on a Sunday. Certainly Bishop Benson was aware of the problem and in 1738 he had exhorted his clergy at length to serve only one Church on a Sunday, so that both morning and afternoon services would be provided,

> It was for many reasons to be wished, that no Person shd serve more than one Church in one day. The contrary may in some case be necessary, but it must in almost all be of evil consequence....To prevent these Evils, I have this Instruction given me, That you do not allow any Minister to serve more than One Church or Chapel in one day, except y^{t} Chapel be a Member of the Parish Church or United there to:...unless ye said Church or Chapel...be not able in our judgement to maintain a Curate....As there are such Cases within this Diocese I cannot altogether take away ye evil. But I shall endeavour to lessen ye evil & prevent ye bad consequences of it as much as I possibly can. And in order to do this, I shall permitt [sic] this in as few cases as possible. And where it is permitted, I insist upon it,

> y[t] Morning Service be not constantly performed in One of ye Churches & Evening in ye other, but alternatively at least those y[t] come thither may hear Both Services.[79]

Clearly his sermon had had not solved the problem, for in less than half of the archdeaconry's parishes five years later, were there two services per day. It may be that the laity in the archdeaconry adopted the practise of attending two services on a Sunday, at two different churches, to counter the lack of one or other service in their own parish church.[80] It is not possible to say if the situation rectified itself in Gloucester over time, nor indeed to see if there were any changes to the level of duty in Buckinghamshire during the period, but the fact remains that the latter far outstripped the former at mid-century in provision of "full" duty every week.

Unfortunately there were no records extant of the performance of Holy Communion or of catechism in the archdeaconry of Gloucester during the period, but the same source which indicated the accustomed service in Buckingham's churches also provided information about these two aspects of eighteenth-century worship. Table 27 shows the frequency of Holy Communion in the archdeaconry in 1743. In just over one-third of parishes the canonical minimum of three performances of the Sacrament a year; in a slightly lower proportion of livings, pastors reached the eighteenth-century norm of quarterly communion.[81] Whilst there were very few parishes in Buckingham

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[79] BL, Add. MS 39313, 'Charge deliver'd to the Clergy Churchwardens &c of the Diocese of Gloucester, at the Triennial Visitation. 1738', f. 120r.
[80] Taylor, 'Thesis', p. 33.
[81] Taylor, 'Thesis', p. 31; Norman Sykes, *Church and State in the XVIIIth Century*, (Cambridge, 1934), p. 250-1.

that failed to achieve the canonical requirements as far as the sacrament is concerned, this situation compares unfavourably with that of the archdeaconry of Lincoln in c.1744, where there was a higher level of quarterly communion. But once again, there is some similarity with the diocese of Oxford, where in 1738, 39 percent of parishes had quarterly communions.[82] It is difficult to say why, given the high level of Sunday services in the archdeaconry of Buckingham, there was not a higher rate of communion. But it is likely that attendance did not warrant more frequent celebrations, and that parishioners' unwillingness to communicate lay in the same apathy, popular religious prejudices and practical considerations highlighted by many historians of the period.[83] This is in spite of clerical injunctions to receive the sacrament more often,

> I have given you the Plainest, the most convincing Reasons I think that could have been urg'd why you *should* receive it; have shewn [sic] the absolute Necessity of it; and have likewise answer'd (and that upon the best Authority, as I told you) all the Objections that you Yourselves have made to it one wou'd have imagin'd that, after all this, something might have been done. But I cannot say, that I have succeeded as I expected.[84]

It was, however, common in the eighteenth century for communion to be celebrated more frequently in the larger villages and towns where there were more people, and this also occurred in Buckinghamshire, such as in Amersham, where it was held six times a year, and the town

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[82] Taylor, p. 31.
[83] They are well summarised, for instance, by Mather, pp. 272-273.
[84] John Doughty, *A Plain and Friendly Farewell to the Parishioners of Oddington in the County of Gloucester. A Sermon preached July 6, 1740.* (London 1744), pp. 14-15.

of Buckingham, where there was communion between ten and twelve times per annum.[85]

The evidence for catechism in the parishes of the archdeaconry shows a similar degree of commitment to duty by the clergy of Buckingham (Table 28), with only a very small proportion of parishes in 1743 where no catechism occurred at all. In the majority of cases it was conducted during Lent, with the summer (26 percent) being the next most common time it occurred, which again paralleled Oxfordshire, and other regions of England as well.[86] No particular pattern can be put to performance of these lessons, but it appears to have been more constantly practised in parishes with frequent communion and two services on Sundays, revealing the dedication of the incumbent at the time, and perhaps also the custom of the parish.

In general it may be argued, at least on the basis of Sunday worship, that Buckingham was better served by its clergy than Gloucester, but as already mentioned, it is difficult to say how comprehensively the parsons of both regions fulfilled other aspects of their ecclesiastical duties and pastoral care. It is not easy to determine how committed the laity in each archdeaconry were to the Anglican faith. The continued presence of Dissent in both archdeaconries, particularly Gloucester, ensured that the Church of England did not have a monopoly upon ecclesiastical worship, nor were Anglican

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[85] Mather, p. 270.
[86] McClatchey, pp. 144-6; Mather, p. 280; Warne, p. 48.

pastors able to eradicate it from their communities.[87] There was too, often a sense of fluidity in the beliefs of the Anglican laity, which saw them adhere to many of their own popular beliefs and practices, and for great variety to exist in religious practices from parish to parish.[88] Such variety of belief, for instance, can be see in the example of Edward Evanson of Tewkesbury. After a lengthy court case brought against him by a group of his parishioners there, for the Unitarian content to his sermons and his alterations to the liturgy, he resigned the living in 1778.[89] He also held a second benefice Longden, in nearby Worcestershire, which he subsequently resigned too, because of the controversy which surrounded him, and in spite of

> the partiality of the congregation...for their minister [which] was so strong, that they would willingly have kept him among them, permitting him to make, as he had been accustomed, any alterations in the church service that his own views of the subject might have dictated.[90]

It is, in fact, difficult, for want of evidence, to do anything more than speculate about the effectiveness of ministries upon the communities which they served. Certainly the clergy in both areas were not unresponsive to the demands of their parishioners, in both the location

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[87] See LA, SPE 4, Speculum 178-92; GRO, GDR 381a, which provide indications of the level of Dissent in each region. Also, Anthea E. Jones, 'Protestant Dissent in Gloucestershire: a Comparison between 1676 and 1735', *TBGAS*, 102 (1983), pp. 131-145.

[88] Hempton, p. 213.

[89] James Bennett, *The History of Tewkesbury*, (Tewkesbury, 1830); Neast Harvard, *A Narrative of the Origins and Progress of the Prosecution against the Rev Edward Evanson...*, (London, 1778); *Monthly Magazine, or British Register*, December 1805, pp. 477-483.

[90] *Monthly Magazine, or British Register*, December 1805, p. 479.

and timing of services. The congregation of Gloucester St John, for instance, had by 1813 requested that its services be held at St Aldates, "a more quiet situation and less subject to damp".[91] The parishioners of the chapelry of Falfield, attached to Thornbury in Gloucester, normally attended the latter church, but a service was held in the chapel once a month in the afternoon "at their own requst".[92] Such a willingness on the part of the clergy to concur in the requests of their parishioners for services at particular times did not always meet with the approval of their superiors. Benson, for instance, criticised the practice

> I have been indeed told, yt ye People of such a Place desire to have Service always in ye afternoon. Perhaps in some Places they might be willing not to have any Service. But will this be a good reason why ye Minister shd perform none? The People are not to be left to judge, what Quota of Divine Service they will have performed. What ye Minister ought to perform to them is marked out by ye Rubrick [sic] to him. He knows w^{t} his duty is. And if ye People are negligent of theirs, he is not to comply with y^{m} in it, much less to be glad in his heart of it, but on ye contrary to reprove them for it.[93]

In essence, however, such practices reflected the reality of the eighteenth-century Church within the community, and as with so many aspects of this relationship, the parochial clergy's response to such realities may not have been the canonical or handbook ideal, but it was a pragmatic response, one which combined as best as they were able

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[91] CERC, F1903 Gloucester St John, 1813 survey.
[92] GRO, GDR 397, Survey of the Diocese 1743.
[93] BL. Add. MS 39313, 'Charge deliver'd to the Clergy Churchwardens &c of the Diocese of Gloucester, at the Triennial Visitation. 1738', f. 120r.

their own, the Church's and the community's needs.

Conclusion

It is evident that the clergy of Buckingham and Gloucester came to their parishes from a wide variety of backgrounds. It is also apparent, that for all that, in the majority of cases they integrated into the communities that surrounded them, and into not one, but to several different, concentric communities. The degree to which they fulfilled their ecclesiastical duties was, in large measure, a product of the realities of the communities in which they found themselves, and of eighteenth-century life in general. Ultimately, therefore, just as there was a broad similarity, but great individual variation in the endowment of livings and the customs practised with the parishes of Buckingham and Gloucester, so too, the origins, circumstances and experiences of the parsons within the communities in which they lived and worked, were generally similar, yet never exactly alike.

Conclusion

> The rector of a parish has much to do. — In the first place, he must make such an agreement for tythes as may be beneficial to himself and not offensive to his patron. He must write his own sermons; and the time that remains will not be too much for his parish duties, and the care and improvement of his dwelling, which he cannot be excused for making as comfortable as possible. And I do not think it of light importance that he should have attentive and conciliatory manners towards everybody, especially towards those to whom he owes his preferment.[1]

This thesis has shown in detail the part played by the eighteenth-century clergy of the archdeaconries of Buckingham and Gloucester within the communities in which were beneficed. To some extent, the sheer ubiquity of the clerical presence in the parishes of England guaranteed them a place in any community, but what this thesis has shown is the extent to which they were immersed within communities, not merely on the periphery, and, moreover, that they were willing to be so immersed. This immersion occurred in almost every sphere of community life in which clergymen played a part. Clergy took their place within the community as such, always conscious of their distinctiveness, and of belonging to a professional community of their own. Yet at the same time, their integration with their parish communities involved a fusion of the ecclesiastical and secular in every aspect of their involvement in community life.

Socially, for instance, the gradual improvement of their origins

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[1] Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, (Oxford, 1990), p. 91.

and more importantly their education, and status as parsons and property owners, provided an opening for them to entrench themselves within concentric spheres of social relations that operated within any community. In particular, their participation in the enclaves of the middling ranks of the 'neighbourhood' in which they lived, and the adoption of the secular responsibilities, though sometimes creating a tension with their ecclesiastical responsibilities, also tied them firmly to the communities in which they lived and worked. Politically, their close alliance with the other elites of the electorate, as well as the influence which they possessed over other voters, gave them a important position with the local, and indeed, wider political community. Further, their economic links with their parishioners, in the sense that their fortunes were tied intimately together, also created bonds within the community. In their domestic affairs too, their actions had a part to play in their integration to parochial life, most obviously through the example which a parson's family could provide to the rest of the congregation. More that than, however, the marital ties of clergy and their children, and the prevalence of clerical dynasties, especially within the same benefice, also served to bond them to specific communities. Pastorally this was achieved through the long incumbencies which many of them enjoyed, and in their awareness of, and pragmatic responsiveness to, the ecclesiastical realities of the communities to which they ministered.

It would be wrong, however, to paint these communities of

which the incumbents of Buckingham and Gloucester were part as constant rural idylls, and the parsons as being universally dedicated, respected and liked. Conflict occurred in these communities, and the parson was not always a welcome member of it. Similarly, this portrait takes no account of the great variation that existed between the two archdeaconries, in terms of the clergy and their involvement in the community. In Buckingham, for instance, there was a greater sense of the clergy and their communities being more cosmopolitan and active. More clergy came to the archdeaconry as outsiders and they retained more links with other regions through a greater propensity to exogenous pluralism. Gloucester contrasted noticeably with this, being more insular, with more native clergy returning to parishes, which, even when served in plurality, were more likely to both be within the archdeaconry. As a whole, the clergy were better off in Buckingham, and, more over, there was less disparity in the material wealth between clerical colleagues within the archdeaconry than was the case in Gloucester. Gloucester's parsons displayed less measurable commitment to their parochial duties than their Buckinghamshire counterparts. All of these factors meant that the experiences of the clergy within the communities of both archdeaconries would never be exactly alike.

These differences belie the fact that there existed significant differences even within the archdeaconries, from parish to parish, from community to community and from parson to parson. Ultimately, as

has been reiterated many times throughout this thesis, the experience of the each clergyman in the eighteenth century within the community depended upon the idiosyncrasies and inclinations of the man, of the character and peculiarities of the community of which he was parson.

Appendix

DEANERY	*RECTORIES*	*VICARAGES*	*CURACIES*	*AVERAGE*	*% Increase of Average 1750-1779*
1750					
Campden	£133	£60	£8	£101	
Cirencester	£105	£86	£10	£84	
Dursley	£125	£106	£39	£98	
Fairford	£148	£110	£30	£116	
Gloucester	£42	£68	£24	£42	
Hawkesbury	£131	£109	£37	£118	
Stonehouse	£116	£118	£80	£114	
Stow	£129	£43	£24	£87	
Winchcombe	£107	£52	£21	£58	
1779					
Campden	£165	£79	£27	£122	17%
Cirencester	£143	£87	£10	£113	26%
Dursley	£138	£119	£51	£103	5%
Fairford	£190	£134	£30	£144	19%
Gloucester	£60	£83	£34	£54	22%
Hawkesbury	£150	£140	£53	£142	20%
Stonehouse	£135	£156	£80	£135	16%
Stow	£177	£44	£24	£129	33%
Winchcombe	£164	£62	£20	£79	27%

TABLE 1: ***Average value of parishes in archdeaconry of Gloucester, where known.***

	RECTORIES	*VICARAGES*	*CURACIES*	*OVERALL*
North	**£114**	**£86**	**£38**	**£114**
South	**£167**	**£101**	**£50-90**	**£128**
Buckingham	**£131**	**£67**	**£34**	**£105**
Burnham	**£182**	**£105**	**£50-90**	**£105**
Mursley	**£127**	**£96**	**£36**	**£102**
Newport	**£163**	**£81**	**£39**	**£134**
Waddesdon	**£146**	**£85**	**£38**	**£93**
Wendover	**£137**	**£114**	**£50**	**£111**
Wycombe	**£138**	**£93**	**---**	**£114**

Table 2: ***Average value of archdeaconry of Buckingham parishes, where known, 1780.***

	£0-50	£51-100	£101-150	£151-200	£201-300	£301-400	£401-500	£501-600	?
Glos - 1750	35%	29%	16%	9%	4%	1/3%	----	1/3%[1]	7%
Glos - 1779	26%	30%	15%	13%	6%	2%	2%	----	6%
Bucks - 1780	16%	30%	20%	8%	8%	2%	----	----	16%

TABLE 3: ***Value of benefices (where known) in archdeaconries of Gloucester and Buckingham, 1750 & 1779-80.***

	Bucks - Rectories	*Glos - Rectories*	*Bucks - Vicarages*	*Glos - Vicarages*	*Bucks - Curacies*	*Glos - Curacies*
£0-50	4%	8%	22%	32%	80%	82%
£51-100	28%	32%	53%	40%	15%	18%
£101-150	32%	26%	18%	10%	5%	----
£151-200	16%	19%	3%	11%	----	----
£201-300	17%	9%	2%	7%	----	----
£301-400	3%	3%	2%	----	----	----
£401-500	----	3%	----	----	----	----

TABLE 4: ***Comparison of (known) values of types of livings in archdeaconries of Buckingham and Gloucester, 1780 & 1779.***

	Pluralists	*Non-pluralists*	*Uncertain*
Buckingham	39%	42%	19%
Gloucester	35%	38%	27%

TABLE 5: ***Incidence of clerical pluralism in archdeaconries of Buckingham and Gloucester, 1730-80.***

	Within archdeaconry	*Outside archdeaconry*	*Both*
Buckingham	33%	54%	13%
Gloucester	67%	26%	6%

TABLE 6: ***Location of pluralists' additional benefice(s), where known, 1730-80.***

	1730	*1750*	*1780*
Buckingham	14%	23%	13%
Gloucester	21%	29%	30%

TABLE 7: ***Proportion of clergy with two (or more) benefices within archdeaconries of Buckingham or Gloucester, where known, 1730-80.***

[1] Bishop's Cleeve and Stoke Orchard were valued at £600 in 1750 and £500 in 1779.

	Two Parishes	*Three Parishes*	*Four Parishes*	*Five Parishes*
Bucks - 1730	**100%**			
Glos - 1730	88%	12%		
Bucks - 1750	**97%**			
Glos - 1750	89%	7%	4%	
Bucks - 1780	**90%**	**10%**		
Glos - 1780	79%	9%	8%	4%

TABLE 8: ***Number of benefices held by pluralists within archdeaconries of Buckingham or Gloucester, 1730-80.***

	<£50	*£51-100*	*£101-150*	*£151-200*	*£201-300*	*£301-400*	*£401-500*	*£501-600*	*£601+*	*?*
Bucks 1730	**8%**	**17%**								**74 %**
Glos 1730	12½ %	22½ %								65 %
Glos 1750	10%	21%	21%	7%	11%	7%	2%	2%	----	19 %
Glos 1779	6%	11%	13%	9%	24%	7%	2%	2%	2%	24 %
Bucks 1780	—	**5%**	**18%**	**13%**	**22%**	**13%**	**5%**	—	—	**24 %**

TABLE 9: ***Income of pluralists from benefices held within the archdeaconries of Gloucester or Buckingham.***

	<£50	*£51-100*	*£101-150*	*£151-200*	*£201-300*	*£301-400*	*£401-500*	*£501-600*	*£601+*	*?*
Bucks 1730	**22%**	**3%**								75 %
Glos 1730	28%	4%								68 %
Glos 1750	23%	29%	17½ %	9%	6%	3%	½%	1%		11 %[2]
Glos 1779	15%	17%	16%	10%	13%	3%	3%	½%	½%	22 %
Bucks 1780	**8%**	**21%**	**21%**	**9%**	**12%**	**4%**	**1%**			**25 %**

TABLE 10: ***Clerical incomes arising from benefices held in the archdeaconries of Gloucester and Buckingham, 1750 & 1780.***

[2] A higher percentage of incumbents can be identified in the archdeaconry in 1750 because of the episcopal survey of all benefices.

	Tory Drake	*Whig Lee*	*Whig (Indep.) Dormer*
Clergy	47% (81)	47% (81)	6% (10)
Total	37% (2441)	37% (2415)	26% (1704)

TABLE 11: ***Result of the 1722 Election in Buckinghamshire.***

	Oppn Whig Stanhope	*Oppn Whig Lee*	*Tory Lowndes*
Clergy	27% (23)	46% (39)	27% (23)
Total	44% (2414)	32% (1763)	24% (1314)

Table 12 ***Result of the 1734 Election in Buckinghamshire.***

	Grenville	*Aubery*	*Verney*
Clergy	44% (69)	26% (42)	30% (47)
Total	40% (2261)	30% (1740)	30% (1716)

Table 13 ***Result of the 1784 election in Buckinghamshire.***

	Government Chester	*Opposition Berkeley*
Clergy	63% (96)	37% (56)
Total	50% (2919)	50% (2873)

Table 14 ***Result of the 1776 Election in Gloucestershire***

a. *BUCKINGHAMSHIRE* 1722

	Lee	***Drake***	***Dormer***
Esquires	47% (99)	46% (100)	7% (15)
Gentlemen	44% (80)	46% (76)	10% (17)
Clergy	47% (81)	47% (81)	6% (10)
Total	37% (2415)	37% (2441)	26% (1704)

b. *BUCKINGHAMSHIRE* 1734

	Lee	***Lowndes***	***Stanhope***
Esquires	42% (48)	36% (41)	22% (24)
Gentlemen	39% (15)	37% (14)	24% (9)
Clergy	46% (39)	27% (23)	27% (23)
Total	32% (1763)	24% (1314)	44% (2414)

c. *BUCKINGHAMSHIRE* *1784*

	Verney	***Aubery***	***Grenville***
Esquires	20% (57)	35% (99)	45% (126)
Gentlemen	24% (27)	28% (32)	48% (54)
Clergy	30% (47)	26% (42)	44% (69)
Total	30% (1716)	30% (1740)	40% (2261)

d. *GLOUCESTERSHIRE* 1776

	Chester	***Berkeley***
Esquires	52.5% (84)	47.5% (76)
Gentlemen[3]	37% (10)	63% (17)
Clergy	63% (96)	37% (56)
Total	50% (2919)	50% (2873)

Tables 15a-d ***Social breakdown of votes cast in Buckinghamshire 1722, 1734, 1784 and Gloucestershire 1776.***

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[3] The term 'gentleman' appears to have been used only occasionally be freeholders voting in Gloucestershire, which is why these figures are perhaps rather anomalous.

	Glos 1776	*Bucks 1722*	*Bucks 1784*
% of lay patrons whose vote identifiable	30%	36%	25%
% of times at least 1 vote of parson and patron same	85%	88%	87%
% of times both votes of parson and patron same	---	75%	54%

TABLE 16: ***Comparison of votes of parish incumbent and lay patrons in Buckingham and GLoucester.***

	Glos 1776	*Bucks 1722*	*Bucks 1784*
# of parishes where comparison possible	111	76	86
% of parishes where parson and maj. of parishioners' votes identical	80%	87%	46%
% of parishes where parson and maj. of parishioners' votes completely different	20%	8%	6%
% of parishes where one vote of parson and maj. of parishioners same	--	5%	48%

TABLE 17: ***Comparison of votes of parish incumbent and majority of parishioners***

	Gloucester	*Buckingham*
1730	46	45
1740	45	48
1750	45	48
1760	47	48
1770	50	49
1780	51	52

TABLE 18: ***Average age of incumbents of archdeaconries of Buckingham and Gloucester, (where known).***

	Bucks 1730	*Bucks 1780*	*Glos 1730*	*Glos 1780*
Crown	9%	10%	12%	13%
Bishops	10%	11%	9%	10%
Eccles. Corps., incl. Colleges	10%	11%	15%	18%
Secular Corps.	1%	1%	2%	2%
Individual clerics	4%	6%	1%	6%
Lay	66%	61%	61%	51%

TABLE 19: Patronage in archdeaconries of Buckingham and Gloucester, 1730 & 1780.

	Oxford	*Cambridge*	*Unknown*
1730	60%	8%	32%
1740	58%	7%	35%
1750	64%	7%	29%
1760	67%	6%	27%
1770	65%	8%	27%
1780	67%	11%	22%

TABLE 20a: ***University attended by clergy of archdeaconry of Gloucester, 1730-80.***

	Oxford	*Cambridge*	*Unknown*
1730	59%	29%	12%
1740	62%	30%	8%
1750	58%	29%	13%
1760	63%	27%	10%
1770	60%	30%	10%
1780	60%	29%	11%

TABLE 20b: ***University attended by clergy of archdeaconry of Buckingham, 1730-80.***

1730	*1740*	*1750*	*1760*	*1770*	*1780*
Pembroke 10%	Pembroke 15%	Pembroke 18%	Pembroke 23%	Pembroke 27%	Pembroke 21%
Christ Church 9%	Balliol 12%	Christ Church 10%	Balliol 12%	Balliol 12%	Christ Church 12%
Balliol 9%	Christ Church 7%	Balliol 9%	Christ Church 11%	Christ Church 12%	Balliol 9%
Trinity 8%	Trinity 7%	Oriel 8%	Oriel 7%	Oriel 7%	Oriel 9%

TABLE 21a: ***Oxford colleges most attended by incumbents of archdeaconry of Gloucester, 1730-80.***

1730	*1740*	*1750*	*1760*	*1770*	*1780*
King's 33%	King's 36%	King's 43%	King's 29%	St John's 25%	St John's 23%
Clare 20%	St John's 29%	St John's 29%	St John's 29%	King's 19%	Magdalene 18%
Trinity 13%	—	—	—	—	Christ's 18%

TABLE 21b: ***Cambridge colleges most attended by incumbents of archdeaconry of Gloucester, 1730-80.***

1730	*1740*	*1750*	*1760*	*1770*	*1780*
Christ Church 14%	Christ Church 16%	Christ Church 15%	Christ Church 19%	Christ Church 16%	Christ Church 14%
New 9%	New 9%	New 10%	New 9%	Trinity 9%	Magdalen 10%
Lincoln 8%	Merton 9 %	Trinity 9%	Magdalen 8%	Magdalen 8%	New/ Merton/ Lincoln/ Queen's 8%
Merton 8%	Magdalen 7%	Merton 8%	Brasenose 8%	Queen's 8%	

TABLE 21c: ***Oxford colleges most attended by incumbents of archdeaconry of Buckingham, 1730-1780.***

1730	*1740*	*1750*	*1760*	*1770*	*1780*
Trinity 22%	St John's 22%	Trinity 18%	Trinity 27%	St John's 31%	Trinity 30%
St John's 20%	Trinity 17%	St John's 13%	St John's 25%	Trinity 23%	St John's 26%
King's 12%	King's 11%	King's 13%	Emmanuel 10%	Emmanuel 8%	King's 11%
		Emmanuel 11%	Peterhouse 10%	King's 8%	

TABLE 21d: ***Cambridge colleges most attended by incumbents of archdeaconry of Buckingham, 1730-80.***

	<30	*30-39*	*40-49*	*50-59*	*60-69*	*70-79*	*80+*
1730	13%	28%	22%	17%	8%	9%	3%
1740	8%	24%	37%	18%	8%	3%	2%
1750	11%	27%	23%	25%	9%	3%	2%
1760	8%	17%	32%	24%	14%	4%	1%
1770	6%	19%	19%	30%	17%	8%	1%
1780	9%	16%	24%	17%	21%	9%	4%

TABLE1 22a: ***Age Distribution of Clergy of archdeaconry of Gloucester, 1730-80.***

	<30	*30-39*	*40-49*	*50-59*	*60-69*	*70-79*	*80+*
1730	12%	26%	28%	19%	10%	4%	1%
1740	8%	19%	31%	21%	15%	4%	2%
1750	5%	22%	27%	24%	15%	6%	1%
1760	8%	21%	26%	21%	15%	7%	2%
1770	3%	24%	22%	27%	15%	8%	1%
1780	1%	17%	26%	22%	21%	10%	4%

TABLE 22b: ***Age Distribution of Clergy of archdeaconry of Buckingham, 1730-80.***

	Gloucestershire	*Surrounding*	*Southern*	*Central*	*Other*
1730	54%	25%	12%	3%	2%
1740	48%	32%	15%	2%	2%
1750	49%	29%	13%	3%	4%
1760	56%	22%	13%	5%	4%
1770	48%	29%	16%	4%	3%
1780	41%	34%	16%	3%	4%

TABLE 23a: ***County of Origin of Gloucestershire Incumbents 1730-80, where known.***

	Bucking-hamshire	*London*	*Surroun-ding*	*Central*	*Southern*	*Other*
1730	26%	10%	19%	22%	11%	12%
1740	26%	9%	23%	19%	9%	14%
1750	32%	12%	14%	22%	9%	11%
1760	27%	19%	16%	14%	8%	16%
1770	25%	16%	18%	15%	6%	21%
1780	15%	18%	18%	19%	6%	24%

TABLE 23b: ***County of Origin of Buckinghamshire Incumbents 1730-80, where known.***

	Cleric	*Gent.*	*Plebian*	*Prof.*	*Peer*	*P.P.*	*Unknown*
1730	17%	24%	18%	4%	--	4%	33%
1740	19%	25%	16%	1%	--	3%	36%
1750	21%	26%	18%	3½%	--	½%	31%
1760	20%	27%	20%	2%	½%	½%	30%
1770	20%	32%	16%	2%	1%	1%	28%
1780	20%	36%	16%	2%	--	--	26%

TABLE 24a: ***Social Origins of Clergy of archdeaconry of Gloucester, 1730-80.***

	Cleric	*Gent.*	*Plebian*	*Prof.*	*Peer*	*P.P.*	*Unknown*
1730	20%	24%	21%	2%	1%	4%	28%
1740	21%	23%	21%	3%	3%	3%	36%
1750	22%	25%	18%	3%	2%	1%	29%
1760	22%	30%	14%	4%	2%	1%	27%
1770	24%	28%	14%	7%	2%	--	25%
1780	28%	27%	14%	3%	2%	--	25%

TABLE 24b: ***Social Origins of Clergy of Archdeaconry of Buckingham, 1730-80.***

	<5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51+	?
Bucks	12%	14%	11%	9%	9%	10%	8%	9%	6%	2%	5%	5%
Glos	18%	12%	10%	9%	11%	8%	6%	7%	6%	3%	5%	5%

TABLE 25: ***Length of incumbencies (in years) in archdeaconries of Buckingham and Gloucester***

	Bucks	***Glos***
Twice on Sundays/"Full service" (incl. parishes with weekday prayers & services on festival days)	74%	43%
Twice in Summer; once in winter	2%	3%
Once on Sundays (incl. parishes with weekday prayers & services on festival days)	21½%	27%
Less than once a week (incl. fortnightly, every 3 weeks and monthly)	2%	6%
Unknown	½%	21%

TABLE 26: ***Duty undertaken in parishes in the archdeaconries of Buckingham and Gloucester in 1743.***

<3	*3*	*3-4*	*4*	*5-11*	*Monthly*	*Unknown/Not stated*
4%	36%	3%	33%	17%	4%	3%

TABLE 27: ***Frequency of celebration of Communion, archdeaconry of Buckingham 1743.***

Lent	*Several months of year*[4]	*All year*[5]	*Never - no children*	*Unknown /Not stated*
35%	40%	14%	5%	6%

TABLE 28: ***Frequency of Catechism, archdeaconry of Buckingham 1743.***

[4] Either all winter or all summer, half or quarter of the year, or "Lent and other times".

[5] Either weekly, fortnightly or twice a week.

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