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THE FAMILY AND THE CHURCH
IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

William Gibson

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy ^{by published works} of
Middlesex University

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ABSTRACT

The published articles and papers that form this submission focus on the nature of English Society between 1689 and 1900. In particular they address the nature of the family and the Church as social institutions. The underlying theme of the three groups of publications is the strength of continuity in these institutions.

1. THE EARLY MODERN FAMILY

This group of publications considers the nature of the family between the Restoration and the Edwardian eras. The function of the family, and the desire to make provision for its survival was an important feature, reflected in the practise of nepotism among the middle class professional families that dominated the clergy. Dynastic survival was also important, perhaps even socially imperative, for families from the upper echelons of society. As a result these landed families frequently resorted to social and legal fictions to suggest the continuity and legitimacy of their dynasties. Against the background of the vicissitudes that affected the Warre family, these fictions often assured survival.

2. THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY CHURCH

This group of publications demonstrates that the Church in the eighteenth century was not the moribund and corrupt institution it has been held to be by Victorian historians. It was, rather, a vibrant and dynamic institution, whose bishops and clergy were painstaking, committed and achieved a significant level of professional success. Where reform and change was necessary, there is evidence that eighteenth century bishops undertook it; often reversing the neglect of the preceding century. The system of patronage, often the subject of attack, contained more integrity than is often allowed, and even solicitous clergy are not easily censured.

3. THE NINETEENTH CENTURY CHURCH

This group of publications advances the view that the sharp delineation of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries into two 'eras' of ecclesiastical history is untenable. The reforms of the eighteenth century were extended into the realm of patronage by the Governments of 1812-30; the re-introduction of rural deans started in the 1820s and the career and educational patterns within the episcopate evolved only slowly. Thus rather than the Whig reforms of the 1830s acting as a historical watershed, they were another feature in a series of evolutionary reforms. Equally, features of the Church in the eighteenth century persisted late into the nineteenth century: the exercise of personal patronage by prime ministers, motivated by a range of secular factors, and the career and educational pattern of the episcopate are examples of this persistence.

These three themes confirm a number of associated historical trends. There is no doubt that they lend weight to the importance of the hereditary element among the professional classes. They also confirm the view that English society was one in which social mobility was present, particularly within the Church. Though it would be rash to suggest the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw the rise of a meritocracy, it may however be reasonable to suggest that the rise and reward of merit in the eighteenth century was more prevalent than has hitherto been suggested.

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DISCUSSION OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE SUBMITTED WORK TO THE GENERAL ADVANCEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE FIELD.

1. The Early Modern Family

The family in early modern England was subject to a plethora of circumstances that threatened its survival. Item 2 indicates the economic vicissitudes, dynastic failure and external events that could affect the survival of a family. One of the contributions of this article is the varying methods employed by families to survive dynastic turbulence. Item 4, for example, considers the way in which surname substitution was used as a mechanism not simply of dynastic repair, but also as a function of the social imperative of family continuity. It is suggested that social stability relied on visible continuity, particularly among the rural elite. Item 2 shows the way in which the maintenance of social status by the Warre family of Cheddon Fitzpaine was achieved through astute marriages, political service and the alliance between manor and rectory. Another example of dynastic continuity is analyzed in item 3, which examines the Compton family. The Comptons, like the Warres, demonstrated the value of the alliance between the Church and the lord of the manor. Like the Warres, the Comptons also used the advowsons of ecclesiastical livings as a form of provision for junior branches of the family.

The existence of families with connections in both Church and State exemplifies the pre-nuclear character of the early modern family. This is an important theme in items 1 & 5. Nepotism in the early modern family rested on a concept of family obligations that extended beyond parents and children, into more distant kin, and even into the wider community. Item 5 suggests that chaplains in episcopal households were absorbed into the bishops' family as well as his household. In these cases nepotism and provision for dependents became blurred. Elsewhere nepotism was accorded some legitimacy. As item 1 shows 'transferred nepotism',

the provision by one bishop for the descendants of his predecessors, was practised in the eighteenth century. More direct forms of nepotism were also regarded as an acceptable means of ensuring economic survival of members of a clerical family.

2. The Eighteenth Century Church

These articles indicate that the traditional view of the eighteenth century Church and its personnel is anachronistic and unsustainable. Victorian historians have censured the Church for its corruption, lethargy and neglect. Items 6, 7, 11 & 13 advance the view that whatever the system that selected bishops, prelates were not necessarily negligent or corrupt. Even those bishops appointed for nakedly political reasons (like John Wynne and Edward Willes) were conscientious and energetic diocesans, who were concerned to discharge the duties of their office with diligence. The model of corrupt, lazy prelates who abused the Church is not born out in the careers and work of these three prelates. Moreover as item 8 shows, those clergy often portrayed as both small in number and exemplary in the discharge of their duties, the evangelical clergy, were perhaps more common, and certainly as prone to pluralism, as their latitudinarian contemporaries.

Church structures did not go unreformed -again in contrast to the assertions of Victorian historians. Items 7, 9 & 10 show how conscientious bishops were active in rolling back the neglect of earlier generations, and in pursuing reforms in an era usually described as 'an age of negligence' -see item 13. (Moreover two of these examples took place in the Church in Wales, traditionally seen as subject to greater abuse than England.)

The system of ecclesiastical patronage that directed the appointments within the Church may also have been unjustly censured. Importunate clergy, such as that portrayed in item 12, may have had legitimate grounds for place-seeking and the solicitation of preferment. (See also Additional Paper No 2)

The Nineteenth Century Church

The concept of ecclesiastical patronage mentioned above is carried through into items 14, 16, 17 and 21. Item 17 demonstrates that efforts were made to reform Church patronage between 1812 and 1830. There was a systematic attempt to ensure that commendams were reduced, promises in advance of vacancies were abandoned and appointments were increasingly made on an embryonic criteria of merit. These reforms, however, did not completely change the motives and factors that determined the flow of patronage. Items 14, 16 and 21 indicate that there remained a tendency for appointments to be influenced by political and secular factors. Patronage was not the only feature of the Church that straddled the ecclesiastical reforms of the 1830s -and suggests thereby that those reforms were not the watershed that they are often taken to be, and that there was far more continuity between the eighteenth and nineteenth century Church than is often admitted. Item 19 suggests that the trends in the development of the Church as a profession evolved only very slowly, as separate rungs on the ladder of preferment emerged. The Church also became a meritocracy only very slowly. Certainly as item 18 shows, social mobility in the nineteenth century Church was by no means well developed. Whilst the middle classes came to dominate the episcopate, they did so to the exclusion of the aristocracy, but also of the working classes. Item 15 shows how the social composition of one particular cathedral chapter changed gradually over the century. Item 20 also suggests that the 'unreformed' era of the Church saw the introduction of rural deans, an important weapon in the armoury of reforming bishops, adding weight to the view that the pre-Victorian Church was beginning to reform itself.

Unpublished work in support of the application.

The Historiographical Background to the Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century Church

The study by historians of the Church in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has passed through three distinct phases since the Victorian era. For over a century the Hanoverian Church has been subjected to considerable criticism for almost all areas of its activity. This criticism is, in many ways, a good example of the Whig interpretation of history at work. The historians of the Oxford Movement, in alliance with the reformers of the 1830s and the Evangelicals, consciously blackened the character of the eighteenth century Church. They did not attempt to stand apart from history and view it dispassionately. Rather they were intimately interested in, and committed to, a thesis that raised the status of the Church in which many of them were clergy at the expense of its immediate predecessor. It was not until the 1920s that this conflict of interests was resolved by the work of Norman Sykes. Sykes was not committed to defend the Victorian Church theologically and was one of the first writers on the eighteenth century Church trained in historical research at Oxford in the early 1920s. He was therefore able to see that there was much that was worthy in the eighteenth century Church. He was prepared to mitigate the harsh judgements of the Victorians with an understanding of the circumstances in which the Hanoverian Church operated. But Sykes's view was not immediately taken up by historians in a way that developed and advanced his work, nor was his overall interpretation accepted in the mainstream study of eighteenth century history until comparatively recently. It is in the last twenty years that a further revision in the interpretation of the Church has occurred. This

latest shift has been largely a consequence of the development of the use of quantitative techniques in social history and their application in studying the eighteenth century Church.

Even before the accession of Victoria, nineteenth century writers were anxious to disavow the Church of the preceding century. As early as 1829 the Revd Stephen Cassan, writing a series of diocesan histories, critically reviewed the Church of the eighteenth century. Cassan regarded the bishops of the eighteenth century as a poor lot. He commented on ecclesiastical preferment in the Hanoverian Church that 'it may most truly be said... the race is not only *not* always but very *rarely* to the swift and the battle to the strong'.¹ Cassan was writing from a prejudiced viewpoint however. He was a zealous defender of episcopacy with a high view of celibacy, who despised the nonconformist movements that grew from the eighteenth century. Few writers defended the bishops of the eighteenth century. One *rara avis* in 1828 protested at the venom directed at one bishop, Barrington, 'he has been unfortunate in that his steady progress up the ladder of preferment is remembered when his blameless character and unaffected piety are forgotten'.² But this view was not consonant with the prevailing view that the eighteenth century was a decadent era. Cassan was soon joined by two louder voices. The first of these was that of John Wade and the radicals who urgently demanded reform of the Church by the Whigs. Wade wrote a series of denunciations of the establishment, *The Black Book*, which went through numerous editions between 1828 and 1832. In writing about the Church and society Wade was determined to paint them at their blackest in order to promote the arguments for reform. He used the tools of hyperbole and exaggeration, wildly overstating the values of dioceses: claiming that

¹ S. H. Cassan *The Lives of the Bishops of Bath and Wells...* Frome 1829, 168.

² G. Townsend *The Theological Works of the First Viscount Barrington...* London 1828, ii.

London was worth £100,000 a year and Winchester £50,000. He attacked the whole basis of patronage in the Church as corrupt and abused and denounced the liturgy of the Church as ineffective and akin to popery. He also advanced the argument that the dissenting churches were morally and educationally more efficient than the Church of England. Wade had an agenda that went beyond the study and writing of history. In his dedication and introduction he made clear that his book was not a work of history but a polemic, pressing for radical reform in Church and state. Indeed it was the arguments of Wade, and of the more moderate Whigs who felt similar disquiet, that lay behind the reforms of the Church undertaken in the 1830s and 1840s by the government of Lord Melbourne, which was reliant on the support of Irish Catholic MPs.

Wade was not an isolated voice. Richard Yates's pamphlets and books on the need to reform Church property and patronage, published between 1810 and 1823, argued effectively that the Church needed a calm and level-headed examination of its practices. Edward Berens joined the debate in 1828 with his *Church Reform: by a Churchman*. These works, principally addressed to government ministers, and often running through numerous editions, had a significant impact on the minds of laymen. A number of leading politicians, including Lords Sidmouth, Harrowby and Liverpool seem to have been convinced that some change would have to follow. Moreover the issue of ecclesiastical reform was set against a background of the broader debate regarding educational, social and even parliamentary reform. Just as the ultra-Tories rejected any response to the demands of public opinion on any of these issues and adopted a die-hard position; so the Whigs accepted the need to legislate for most of them. Using the wealth of, often exaggerated, material published by journals such as *The British Critic*, *The Christian Remembrancer*, *The Observer* and *The Westminster Review* the radicals were able to construct a case against the Church. Replies

and defences were published by clergymen, including T. Rennell's *A Letter to Henry Brougham...*, C. J. Blomfield's *Remonstrance...*, and A. Campbell's *Reply to an Article on Church Establishment...*, but these works were largely ignored. They were ignored because they argued against the prevailing trend that the Church establishment was not necessarily failing, -a view recently advanced by Clive Dewey.³ Advocates of reform turned a blind eye to the achievements of the gradualist Tory reformers, like Lord Liverpool, who significantly improved the quality of the exercise of Church patronage between 1812 and 1827.⁴ But the status quo, however open to change, was brushed aside because it did not fit into the pattern of reform upon which the Whigs had decided. The Whigs claimed they were not merely legislating for their own time; they often advanced the view that they were also legislating for a future and more permanent system founded on moral legitimacy. The Church reforms of the 1830s were passed by Parliament in a political mood which suggested that the ecclesiastical Augean Stable was undergoing a cleansing that should have taken place a century earlier.

The highest expression of this thoroughly Whig interpretation of events emerged in 1849 with the publication of T. B. Macaulay's *History of England*. Macaulay drew heavily upon John Eachard's *The Grounds and Occasions of the Contempt of the Clergy and Religion...*, published in 1670. Eachard regarded the clergy as an unlearned, poverty stricken and negligent profession. As A. T. Hart has pointed out, one of the weaknesses in Macaulay's position is that he painted his picture exclusively in black and white, there were no moderated shades of opinion. Moreover Macaulay's dislike of both historical speculation

³ C. Dewey *The Passing of Barchester* London 1991.

⁴ W. Gibson 'The Tory Governments and Church Patronage 1812-1830' in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* Vol 41 No 2 1990.

and of any contingent judgements made his assertions about the clergy of the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries prone to generalisations from single examples. As Macaulay generalised from the particular he did so with a specific motive, for Macaulay was the chief architect of Whiggish history. As a contributor to, and mainstay of, *The Edinburgh Review* he sought to promote the interests of reform and the Whig party at the expense of the preceding era. Macaulay's opinion of the clergy throughout his *History of England* was violently partisan, concluding, for example, that at the Reformation spirituality was a disqualification for high office in the Church. In short, Macaulay's anticlerical and value-laden interpretation of the Church became a dominant view, in spite of the lack of any deep foundations. Indeed Churchill Babbington's defence of the clergy, published in the same year as Macaulay's work, was largely ignored, and as Hart wrote in 1955, 'Macaulay's position has never substantially been overthrown'.⁵

To the voice of the Whigs and radicals was added a second voice, that of the Tractarian movement, which saw itself as part of a national Anglican revival. The Tractarians disassociated themselves from the Church of the Hanoverian era. They looked back to a Church which saw its roots architecturally in the Medieval period, and theologically in the High Church Caroline era, developing a mystic ritualism to replace the rational Latitudinarianism of the eighteenth-century Church, which Tractarians felt was tolerant to dissent and tantamount to the abandonment of the rigors of High Church doctrine. The historians of the High Church movement of the nineteenth-century consciously portrayed their predecessors as weaker brethren serving a Church less worthy than their own. These historians were, almost without exception, clergymen whose views of history were coloured by their own theological opinions. The nineteenth century, they reasoned, had produced a

⁵ A.T.Hart *The Eighteenth Century Country Parson* Shrewsbury 1955, 12n.

Church different in theological outlook, different in spirituality, and different in structure to its predecessor. How, thought Whiggish minds, could such a Church be other than better than its predecessors ?

A mature example of this historical view of the Church emerged in 1882 from the collaboration of Charles Abbey and John Overton. Their work, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, saw the Hanoverian Church as simply a period of transition between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Indeed the descriptions of the eighteenth-century Church leave little doubt that they saw its significance simply in its role as a precursor to their own era: 'the fire had burnt low, but there was yet enough light and heat left to be fanned into flame which was in due time to illuminate the nation and the nation's Church'. The Church of the eighteenth century simply did not, perhaps because it could not, bear the judgement of the Victorians. Charles Abbey, in his *The English Church and its Bishops 1700-1800*, published in 1887, could not assess the eighteenth-century bishops without making comparisons with those of his own era. Commenting on the bishops' relationships with the people, he wrote 'on no one point is there a greater change for the better in the Episcopate of our own days', though in evaluating eighteenth-century bishops, Abbey was unable to eradicate many positive comments.⁶

Abbey and Overton claimed that the eighteenth century Church suffered from a number of fundamental handicaps. The Church was enslaved by the state, which corrupted the flow of patronage. It was riddled with Latitudinarianism -a term they felt 'conveys an implication of reproach and suspicion by no means ungrounded'. Its bishops were undistinguished by anything other than scandal. Even in the area of taste censure was prevalent, Abbey and Overton charged the eighteenth century Church with failure to appreciate the Gothic style of

⁶ C.J. Abbey *The English Church and its Bishops 1700-1800* London 1887, i, 376.

architecture. They claimed the eighteenth-century Church had also lost its links with the High Church tradition when the Nonjurors left the establishment in 1689, and for Abbey and Overton this explained the 'listlessness' and 'spiritual lethargy' of the era.⁷ Yet this view does not bear close examination. Professor Mather's recent work on the High-Church champion Bishop Samuel Horsley of St Asaph has conclusively shown that the claim that there was no High-Church element in the eighteenth century is inaccurate. Horsley was one of a significant number of High Churchmen who exercised an influence on the Church in the eighteenth century. G. V. Bennett also identified a flaw in the Victorian view of the eighteenth century: 'nineteenth century historians... came to their subject with a rigid two party view of politics and with a predisposition to judge all ecclesiastical issues by the standards... of the Oxford Movement. In this way they were quite prepared to accept the high-flyers and Nonjurors as their propagandists represented them, as the supporters of a 'High' doctrine of the Church...' In fact of course, as Bennett points out there were 'Church Whigs' who were as 'high' as the Nonjurors and moderate churchmen who walked a *via media* between the extremes of High Churchmanship and Latitudinarian Low Churchmanship.⁸

In comparison with Christopher Wordsworth, Abbey and Overton seem restrained. Wordsworth dismissed the eighteenth century as an era in which 'Christian life (was) paralysed and obscured'. Another High-Church Victorian writer, W. H. Hutton, claimed that in the eighteenth-century Church deficiencies were 'as plentiful as blackberries'. Hutton, a committed Tractarian who had studied at Oxford under Bishop William Stubbs, stated what

⁷ C.J. Abbey & J.H. Overton *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century* London 1887, 113 et seq, 406.

⁸ G.V. Bennett *White Kennett* op. cit, 247.

might be the highest form of the Tractarian opinion of its predecessor: 'we are in a new world; light and hope stream into every habitation, for it is indeed felt that the Son of Righteousness is risen with healing in His wings... we judge and condemn the eighteenth century as an age of shackling conventions and grovelling aims...' Hutton also claimed that, in the pages of great bishops, the eighteenth century 'shows an almost entire blank'.⁹ It was Mark Pattison's essay, 'Tendencies of Religious Thought In England 1688-1750', which attacked the Hanoverian Church from an intellectual position. Pattison's view -that the rationalism and suspicion of 'enthusiasm' of the era were fatally flawed- led him to assume that it was these elements which promoted deism and anti-clericalism. Naturally, for an associate of Newman, Pattison felt that reason was 'feeble' and that without reference to revelation or the authority of the Church it was inadequate as an instrument of Christianity. It was a view which Bishop Horsley had also articulated.

It is significant that the burgeoning theological colleges of the nineteenth century were principally High-Church foundations, often created by Tractarian bishops determined to train clergy with a particular ritualist outlook. Inevitably, the teaching of Church history in these colleges reflected the views of their founders and these were borne like seeds far and wide by the clergy trained in them.

Historians of a different theological persuasion, the Evangelicals, joined forces with those of the Oxford Movement in denigrating the eighteenth century Church. They also had an interest in portraying the Church of the preceding era as decadent and corrupt. For the Evangelicals the decaying Hanoverian Church was that from which the Evangelical Revival of Methodism had stemmed. One historian, Wesley Bready, called the Hanoverian bishops

⁹ C. Wordsworth *Social Life at the English Universities in the Eighteenth Century* Cambridge 1874, 1. W.H.Hutton *Burford Papers* London 1905, 237 et seq.

'blind guides' who were unable to bring their congregations to true religion. In contrast, John Wesley was able to do this. When John S. Simon published his *The Revival of Religion in the Eighteenth Century* he went as far as to say that 'as there is so little dispute, in the present day, concerning the religious condition of England at the opening of the eighteenth century we shall not make any attempt to give a minute description of that condition.'¹⁰

Simon agreed with other writers that the chief cause of the decay of the Church was its priests. This was also the thesis accepted by John Ryle in his *Christian Leaders of the Eighteenth Century*, based on a series of articles in *The Family Treasury*. Ryle went on to preface his biographies of evangelical leaders by claiming that 'from the year 1700 till about the era of the French Revolution, England seemed barren of all that is really good. How such a state of things can have arisen in a land of free Bibles and professing Protestantism is almost past comprehension... Evidence about this painful subject is, unhappily, only too abundant. My difficulty is not so much to discover witnesses as to select them...' Ironically in his conclusion Ryle denounced ritualism and attacked the High Church faction, calling for more preachers and clergy who emulated evangelicals like Wesley, Grimshaw, Romaine, Rowlands and Berridge.¹¹ Yet, while he saw himself at the opposite end of the theological spectrum, Ryle's historical interpretation acted in concert and agreement with the Oxford Movement, validating the view that the eighteenth century Church contained little of worth. The evangelical message was received loudly and clearly by clergy. The young evangelical William Thomson, wrote in his diary, whilst at ^{the} Queen's College, Oxford 'one pardons good men of the last century for losing sight of the Doctrine of the Apostolic Succession. They

¹⁰ J. Wesley Bready *England Before and After Wesley* London 1939. J. Simon *The Revival of Religion in England in the Eighteenth Century* London n.d., 96.

¹¹ J.C. Ryle *Christian Leaders of the Eighteenth Century* London 1885, 13-14, 426-432.

did not believe that their clergy were descended from the Apostles, for there was no trace of family likeness.¹²

Given the weight of criticism of the eighteenth century Church, it is unsurprising that historians were convinced by the arguments of these writers. One of the most detailed Church histories of the nineteenth century, G. G. Perry's *History of the English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, published in 1864, was revised in 1887 as the third volume in the 'Student's Manual of English Church History' series. Perry admitted that in spilling over into a consideration of the nineteenth century he found it impossible 'to treat... the religious history of the present century in absolute historical fashion... but in speaking of contemporary events one cannot altogether occupy the position of an outsider (in) a colourless and dispassionate criticism...' Perry lived up to this in his conclusion, in which he claimed that 'it is in the vigour and earnestness of Christian work that the present era is most conspicuous, and in which it contrasts most strongly with the period touched upon in the beginning of this volume.'¹³ By the end of the century Mary Bateson, comparing the system of preferment of clergy in the eighteenth century and nineteenth century churches, crowed that her own century had produced a 'pleasing' system. One which represented 'considerable progress' from the 'frequent exhibition of vice' of Hanoverian place-seeking. The plethora of histories of the Church which emerged in the early years of the twentieth century simply followed in the furrow ploughed by the historians of the Evangelical and High-Church movements. John Stoughton's *History of Religion from the Opening of the Long Parliament to 1850* (which ran to four editions); J. H. Overton & F. Reltons' *The English Church From the Accession of George I to the end of the Eighteenth Century*, reprinted twice

¹² E.H. Thomson *The Life and Letters of William Thomson* London 1919, 19.

¹³ G.G. Perry *A History of the English Church...* London 1887, 533 et seq.

in 1906 and 1924, and Alfred Plummer's *The Church of England in the Eighteenth Century*, published in 1910, all advanced the traditional interpretation.

Occasionally writers like Abbey, Overton or Hutton made general comments to the effect that there were some areas of eighteenth-century Church life which were worthy and unaffected by the otherwise decaying Church. But they failed to consider these in any depth, while the 'decadence' of the Church was recorded in minute detail revealed the direction of the tide of history. Perhaps the zenith of the traditional interpretation of the eighteenth century Church came in the 1880s and 1890s with the publication of the SPCK diocesan histories. Almost without exception these works treat the eighteenth century as an era of neglect and decay and the nineteenth century as the age of revival. In an era in which the Church elevated the mystical and spiritual elements of worship, rationalism was not esteemed. Indeed Neville Figgis wrote that in the eighteenth century, rationalism in society bred carelessness in the Church. Only one work stands out as an attempt to reverse this critical view, John Wickham Legg's *English Church Life from the Restoration to the Tractarian Movement*. Published in 1914 its subtitle claimed to consider the Church '...in some of its neglected or forgotten features'. Wickham Legg noted the attacks on the eighteenth century Church and ascribed them to the Victorians, 'pluming themselves on the supposed excellency of their own age... The lustre of the age in which they wrote would be heightened by darkening the age which went immediately before.' Wickham Legg's preface made clear his goal: 'to draw attention to points that have been hitherto but little dealt with by writers, and thus remain unnoticed, and out of mind; and especially to emphasise the existence in the period of practices and ideas in which it has been often assumed that the time was most wanting.' Wickham Legg's book systematically considered various features of the Church. He examined *inter alia* the celebration of the eucharist and other services; church buildings

and decorations; discipline in the Church and the strength of its spirituality. Above all, Wickham Legg challenged the view that the eighteenth century had been stripped of a High Church element and of ecclesiastical discipline. The problem was, as Stephen Taylor has recently noted, that Wickham Legg's book was unjustly neglected.¹⁴ Equally disregarded has been Aldred Rowden's *The Primates of the Four Georges*, published in 1916. Like Wickham Legg's book, Rowden's paved the way for Sykes's more thorough revisionism. Rowden attempted to write a series of biographical accounts of Archbishops Wake, Potter, Herring, Hutton, Secker, Cornwallis, Moore and Manners-Sutton. In many ways the book is a comparatively unexceptional descriptive work. But in one particular it stands out as unique for its time, for Aldred Rowden, while he clearly held strong views on the eighteenth century Church, made clear that he was writing of an era which had different standards to those of his own century. Indeed he was scrupulous in identifying where there was a difference between his own values and those of the Hanoverian era. Thus for example, in discussing Thomas Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury 1758-68, he gave credit to Secker's undoubted qualities, but recognised that he was not free from the values of his time. Frequently Rowden commented that -unlike the era in which he was writing- features of the eighteenth-century Church were 'usual' and regarded by contemporaries as legitimate. This is not to say that Rowden did not make -sometimes damning- judgements (and sometimes reflects that he was himself writing at a time when Britain was at war, as when he ascribes slyness and immorality to George I concluding 'he was immoral: he was a German'). And Rowden's own opinions were no different from those of his Victorian predecessors. But in recognising that the eighteenth century had *different* values he cracked the monolithic face

¹⁴ S.J. Taylor 'Church and State in England in the Mid-Eighteenth Century: The Newcastle Years 1742-62', Cambridge University PhD thesis, 1987, 11.

of the assumption that there was a single yardstick of values against which all other eras were judged. As a result Rowden's book was more willing to concede that many bishops were dedicated churchmen of the highest order. He recognised for example that the toleration of dissenters in the Hanoverian era had a particular and valid rationale, and even that bishops were staunch in their support for morality.

The eighteenth century Church had to wait however until the 1920s before it was the subject of thorough re-evaluation. Norman Sykes's interest in the eighteenth century Church grew from his doctoral research into the life of Bishop Edmund Gibson of London (1669-1748). Gibson was the senior Whig bishop during the period of Walpole's premiership and helped to forge the alliance between Church and state. Sykes was rare in coming to the study of ecclesiastical history with a strong historical foundation, rather than a theological one, and -equally importantly- with a wider span of knowledge of the Church's history than many of his predecessors. It became clear to Sykes that the Victorian view of eighteenth-century Church was misguided. His thesis on Gibson undermined one of the principal charges against the Hanoverian era, that the bishops were mere political cyphers, meekly carrying out the demands of the state without regard to principle. Indeed under Gibson's leadership, Sykes argues, the bench of bishops voluntarily entered an alliance with Walpole, which was far from enslavement. The thesis was published in 1926 and was followed in 1934 by a work that took this argument further, *Church and State in England in the Eighteenth Century*. In this work Sykes was fortunate in being able to make use of a number of publications which had been undertaken in the 1920s and 1930s. Among these publications was Archbishop Herring's visitation returns for 1743; the diaries of Thomas Brockbank, William Cole and John Skinner; and a study of the diocese of Bangor from 1600 to 1900. Using these and a wealth of newly-hewn manuscript material *Church and State in England in the*

Eighteenth Century Sykes systematically reviewed the Church's bishops, clergy, patronage and relations with the state and did so without the prejudiced eye of a nineteenth century Tractarian or Evangelical. Daniel Hirschberg has described Sykes's works as 'at once much better and much worse than they appeared'.¹⁵ This assessment has some merit. The strength of Sykes's work lay in his unearthing of historical sources and his use of them to construct significant blows against the Victorian interpretation. In using such material, Sykes was able to challenge particular assumptions. He showed that political control of episcopal appointments in the eighteenth century was nothing new, but questioned whether a monolithic dominance by governments over bishops existed. In examining the episcopate in the eighteenth century he stripped away the Victorian judgements. Claiming that, 'in face of the many obstacles of unwieldy dioceses, limited means of travel, pressure of other avocations, and the infirmities of body incident to mortal flesh, the bishops of Hanoverian England and Wales strove with diligence and not without due measure of success to discharge the spiritual administration attached to their office.'¹⁶ He defended the Church from the imputation that it had ignored reform and showed that it had the vibrancy to produce proposals for reform which albeit ran aground on political rocks. Above all, Sykes wrote about the Church of the eighteenth-century in a way that laid aside theological prejudices. His work mirrored Namier's in judging the eighteenth century according to its own lights and not those of a later era.

Sykes's work was a massive historiographical leap forward, but it did not reverse the tide against censure of the Church. The reasons for this are worth recounting. One of Sykes's

¹⁵ D.R. Hirschberg 'A Social History of the Anglican Episcopate 1660-1760' University of Michigan PhD thesis 1976, 321.

¹⁶ N. Sykes *Church and State in England in the Eighteenth Century* Cambridge 1934, 145.

students, G. V. Bennett, considered that Sykes failed to completely overturn traditional interpretations because he failed to found a 'school' of ecclesiastical historians. His students came from many denominations and he supervised research that went beyond his own immediate historical interests. Moreover Sykes did not guide his students to labours on which 'the edifice of his own published works could be raised'.¹⁷ In addition to this selflessness, Hirschberg claims that Sykes's work had an uneven quality. His biographical works on Gibson and Wake carefully and systematically ascribe sincerity and integrity to them, but he frequently failed to attribute the same qualities to other churchmen of the era. Moreover Sykes allowed his enjoyment of colourful characters and incidents to cloud his judgements. Bishop Hoadly's career, for example, was cited by Sykes as 'the aptest illustration of the fulsome reward accorded to party services... through a series of episcopal promotions'.¹⁸ But Sykes forgot that Hoadly was unique in the eighteenth century in holding four sees during his career. How apt is the one extreme case of the century? Moreover Sykes, perhaps inevitably as a biographer, placed greater emphasis on Bishop Gibson's ability to lead the bench of bishops in parliament than the case merited. As a result it seemed that Gibson presided over a period of strong episcopal leadership and that before and after him there was subjugation. Moreover Sykes suggests that bishops clamoured for preferment, whereas there is a body of evidence to indicate that there were greater numbers who refused the burdens of a mitre. Essentially these criticisms of Sykes reflect the disappointment that one man failed single-handedly to reverse historical interpretation and to build a flawless edifice in its place.

In retrospect what is most astonishing is that some historical works continued to be published

¹⁷ G. V. Bennett and J. Walsh (eds) *Essays in Modern English Church History* London 1966, vi-vii.

¹⁸ Sykes *Church and State...* op. cit, 63.

which seemed to ignore Sykes's revisionism. In 1948 the Church Book Room Press reprinted Sydney Carter's 1910 work, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, which sought to 'give a concise and popular outline of the life and work of the Church during this century, so conspicuous for its religious and moral degeneration.' Worse still, historical works, which often acknowledged debts to Sykes, were published which did not effectively accommodate the revisionist interpretation to any degree. Examples of this sort of work are Edward Carpenter's *Thomas Sherlock*, published in 1936, which advances special pleading for Sherlock not to be judged alongside his brethren on the bench of bishops. And S. C. Carpenter's *Eighteenth Century Church and People* claims 'there is much in the story of the century that is uncongenial to a Churchman of my stamp, and indeed to most Churchmen of today, but I have been eager to praise wherever I could.' Unfortunately the book's Victorian kind of censoriousness undermines any attempt to adopt an unprejudiced view indeed, one chapter ends with the sort of question which revealed the pre-Sykesian foundations of the book: 'are we to say that there is a visible Church of Christ, with a Creed, Ministry, Sacraments and a moral discipline, or that there is not ?' The epilogue of the book makes patronising comments about Georgian Churches which have a certain 'charm' and nods at various artists and literati of the era before it launches into a forthright condemnation of the eighteenth century Church. Its conclusion reverts to traditionalism of the most highly coloured type: 'not till the time of Oxford Movement... did the idea of the Church as a divinely-created society... which must discharge its vocation... emerge...'¹⁹

A survey of the studies of the eighteenth century Church between 1934 and 1960 reveals only a couple of historians who seem to have absorbed the direction of the Sykesian revision. One of these was Dr. A. Tindal Hart whose work, though focused on the early part of the

¹⁹ S.C. Carpenter *Eighteenth Century Church and People* London 1959, ix, 136, 280.

century, stands as an attempt to re-assess the bishops as a part of the Church. Perhaps Hart's most significant work was his study of *The Eighteenth Century Country Parson* published in 1955. In his introduction Hart followed Sykes's attempt to judge the eighteenth century Church by the standards of its own day, and not by the age of the motor car and diocesan committee. And while Hart's conclusion draws heavily upon Victorian writers his text attempts to deal even handedly with the eighteenth century Church. Equally important is the much smaller work of W. K. Lowther Clarke, *Eighteenth Century Piety*, published in 1944, which complements Sykes's work. Lowther Clarke's book, essentially a collection of essays on the work of the SPCK, confirms much of what Wickham Legg had suggested regarding the existence of a popular High-Church piety. By examining a slice of religious life in the eighteenth century Lowther Clarke contradicted the view that there were no significant elements of piety and spirituality in the Church.

The decade in which Sykes died also saw the fruits of his work harvested in earnest. It was both evidenced and stimulated by R. W. Greaves's essay on 'The Working of the Alliance: A Comment on Warburton' in Sykes's *festschrift*.²⁰ Greaves advanced the view that Warburton's ideas on the alliance between Church and state confirmed Sykes's interpretation. At the core of this view lay the assertion that the Church could not be disentangled from either society or the state and thus could not be viewed in isolation from them. At the same time that Greaves and his colleagues were publishing their homage to Sykes, Arthur Warne was completing his study of Exeter diocese in the eighteenth century, a study which sought to apply Sykes's ideas at the diocesan level. Warne's study, whilst descriptive rather than analytical, achieved some of its aims in ratifying Sykes's interpretations. Like Greaves,

²⁰ R.W. Greaves 'The Working of the Alliance: A Comment on Warburton' in G.V. Bennett & J. Walsh (eds) *Essays in Modern English Church History* London 1966.

Warne looked at the Church as an institution which could not be separated from the morals, education and welfare of the society it served. This was a new departure from the Sykesian view, which tended to regard the Church and politics as welded together but to ignore other aspects of society.

The further development of interpretations regarding the eighteenth-century Church also came from social historians. Up to the 1960s the ecclesiastical history of the eighteenth century had been viewed by historians as essentially a branch of political history. Even avowedly social historians, like Norman Ravitch, considered the eighteenth century Church within a political framework. Indeed Sykes himself supported this view. During the 1970s social historians, particularly those from the United States employing quantitative techniques, examined the Hanoverian Church. John Pruett considered the career patterns of Lincoln Cathedral clergy from the viewpoint of a historian interested principally in social mobility and the factors which influenced it. Pruett was not the first historian to use quantitative methods to look at the eighteenth-century Church, Norman Ravitch had used them in the 1960s to compare the eighteenth-century Churches in France and England. Ravitch's work argued that while the English Church was dominated by the aristocracy, one of the traditional criticisms of it, compared with the French Church, it was far more open to advancement by merit.

The zenith of the quantitative analysis emerged in 1976 in Daniel Hirschberg's brilliant doctoral thesis. Hirschberg developed a full-blooded statistical analysis of the episcopate but, in doing so, dismantled traditional views of the patronage which preferred clergy to the bench of bishops. Hirschberg asserted that the patrons of the Church were not enslaved by the Duke of Newcastle, the Whig 'ecclesiastical minister'. Moreover he claimed that, stripped of moral judgements, there was a functional merit in the control of nominations to the bench

by the state. Hirschberg also claimed that in the eighteenth century the principal conduits for preferment were the great institutions, the universities, the cathedrals and bishops, as well as private individuals; and that these institutions were more effective in advancing social mobility than had hitherto been thought. Above all Hirschberg, using a mass of evidence, was able to describe for the first time the career profile of the episcopate from quantitative evidence rather than opinion or prejudice. He detected the emergence of the episcopate as a social caste and one which sought to use patronage to overcome the particular financial insecurities of office. Hirschberg has succeeded in shifting the ground beyond the Sykesian revision. Sykes had assumed that the moral judgements of the Victorians were too blinkered and too harsh; and the eighteenth-century Church needed a plea in mitigation to be made for it. In this sense Sykes played the Victorian historians on their home ground. Hirschberg moved the game to a different pitch: in considering the Church and its bishops as a social organism, from a functionalist perspective he was able to make judgements which did not depend on theological prejudices.

This was essentially a structuralist approach. It considered quantifiable structures within the Church including career patterns, patronage and place-seeking. It was also structuralist in the broader sense of treating the Church not simply as an institution apart from society, but as an integral element in society and thus one which shared and reflected other social structures and features. This structuralist approach was gradually fed into the mainstream of history. In 1982 Geoffrey Holmes's examination of the professions between 1680 and 1730, *Augustan England*, began to blend the work of Pruett and Hirschberg into an attempt at an even-handed Sykesian analysis. Elsewhere there were challenges to the traditional assumption that nepotism was as morally unacceptable in the eighteenth century as it became

in the nineteenth.²¹ There was also a vibrant reassertion of Wickham Legg's argument that the eighteenth-century Church was not uniformly Latitudinarian. Frederick Mather argued that there was a pervasive High-Church tradition in the Church of England which retained Catholic piety through the century. Unlike Wickham Legg's qualitative work, Mather used modest quantitative methods to test and verify his views.²² Even the bishop most cited by the Victorians as the embodiment of corruption and abuse, Benjamin Hoadly, was defended from complete obloquy by R. K. Pugh.²³

Most recently Stephen Taylor's doctoral thesis has further advanced the structuralist view of the Church.²⁴ Taylor promotes three principal arguments which serve to rehabilitate the Church. Firstly Taylor argues that the bishops in the mid-eighteenth century were prepared to avoid political controversy largely because they saw it as inhibiting pastoral work. Thus, according to Taylor, the alliance between Church and state under Newcastle emerged from a desire to protect and defend the Church. Whilst it may have delayed Church reform it also prevented another damaging 'Church in danger' controversy. Secondly, Taylor recognises that the Church was 'an integral part of the domestic apparatus of the English state'. As such it had a function in eighteenth century society very different from that which it evolved in the nineteenth century. It had a role in providing education and charity, and in inculcating citizenship and defending the state at a time of dynastic threat. This goes further in explaining the actions of individual churchmen than most episcopal biographies. Finally

²¹ W. Gibson 'Patterns of Nepotism and Kinship in the Eighteenth Century Church' in *The Journal of Religious History* Vol 14 1987.

²² F.C. Mather 'Georgian Churchmanship Reconsidered: Some Variations in Anglican Public Worship 1714-1830' in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* Vol 36, No 2, 1985.

²³ R. K. Pugh 'Bishop Hoadly: A Plea in Mitigation' in *The Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society Proceedings* Vol 41, 1985.

²⁴ Taylor op. cit. passim.

Taylor argues that the dominant theory of Church and state in the eighteenth century was one which did not artificially divide the two. Indeed most churchmen and politicians saw the two institutions as part of a single entity, and this view motivated the distribution of patronage and the exercise of the pastoral function.

Taylor's work has coincided with two other recent developments in the study of the eighteenth century Church. The first of these has been the publication of primary sources which support the reassessment of the Church. Two sets of visitation returns, those of Bishops Barrington and Archdeacon Bickham, and Bishop Secker's Diocese Book, have shed greater light on the state of religion in the dioceses and parishes. They have also revealed further evidence of the dedication of the higher clergy. Additionally, the autobiography of Archbishop Thomas Secker, published in 1988, has confirmed that eighteenth century primates were as pious and conscientious as any in English history.²⁵ The second development has been the growing assertion by historians that there were strong elements of continuity between the eighteenth century and the nineteenth century. This continuity has been detected in the High Church tradition in the Church. And patronage and the role of politics in ecclesiastical appointments have also been recognised as a thread that runs from 1700 to 1900.

It is regrettable that two recent works have reverted to a pre-Sykesian position. Peter Virgin's study of the Georgian Church claimed to 'overturn orthodoxies'.²⁶ Yet Virgin advances the view that there are two schools of thought on the eighteenth century Church:

²⁵ W.A. Pemberton 'The Parochial Visitation of James Bickham, Archdeacon of Leicester 1773-1779' in *The Transactions of the Leicester Archaeological and Historical Society* Vol LIX, 1984-5. M. Ransome (ed) *The Visitation Returns of 1783* Wiltshire Record Society 1971. E. Ralph (ed) 'Bishop Secker's Diocese Book' in P. McGrath (ed) *A Bristol Miscellany* Bristol Records Society Vol XXXVII, 1985. R.W. Greaves and M. Macauley (eds) *The Autobiography of Thomas Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury* Lawrence, Kansas, 1988.

²⁶ P. Virgin *The Church in an Age of Negligence: Ecclesiastical Structure and the Problems of Church Reform 1700-1840* Cambridge 1989.

a 'cataclysmic school' arguing that Church reform came only in the 1830s, and a gradualist school which argues that the Church was steadily reforming itself before 1830. This dichotomy ignores the existence of a third option, that the Church in the eighteenth century can no longer be seen as an institution riddled with corruption that needed wholesale reform. Virgin ignored the work of Hirschberg, Pruett, Holmes, Mather and Taylor as well as some of the publications of primary sources.²⁷ Throughout Virgin's book new ideas on tithes, clerical magistracy and clerical incomes are set in the context of a traditional interpretation encapsulated in the title. Structuralist interpretations of pluralism, nepotism, place-seeking and patronage are ignored and Virgin is content simply to scourge the bishops and clergy for the neglect of their duties. For the reader it is as if the book, for all its other strengths, had been written in an Edwardian Oxford college. Perhaps Virgin relied too heavily on primary sources relating to East Anglia, which may colour some of his perceptions. Certainly, for a book that claims to be avowedly Namierite, quantitative material is often swamped with anecdotes and biographical information which moves Virgin toward a traditionalist interpretation. Virgin's inability to steer away from the traditional ruts may be illustrated by his interpretation of one particular episode. In the early years of the nineteenth century Bishop Walker King of Rochester wrote to Earl Fitzwilliam with details of the five clergy with claims upon him: a nephew, a curate, a former tutor, a poor scholar and a colleague from university. For Walker King it was clear that he felt himself bound by ties to each of these clergymen, and that these bonds were part of the existence of a wider sense of a clerical community. These bonds also took note of qualifications of merit (both the poor

²⁷ Virgin's work was hampered by the fact that it was written as part of a PhD thesis in the 1970s and only subsequently published. For a full evaluation of the book see W. Gibson 'The Hanoverian Church in Search of a New Interpretation' in *The Journal of Religious History* Vol 16, No 3, 1991 and F. Knight 'The Hanoverian Church in Transition: Some Recent Perspectives' in *The Historical Journal* Vol 36, No 3, 1993.

scholar and the former colleague were men of achievement) and of charity. In other words Bishop King's obligations were ethically legitimate, yet Virgin simply condemns him for writing 'very frankly -perhaps too frankly-' and concludes the section with a condemnation of the patronage and leadership of the bishops. Similarly when Virgin's examination of the evidence shows that 'the clergy was less pluralistic than historians have thought, and it was also less pluralistic than contemporaries thought' he prefaces the comment with ten pages of traditional condemnation of the 'abysmal' level of pluralism.²⁸

More disappointing perhaps is that E. P. Thompson's brilliant work *Customs in Common* also fails to notice the shift in thinking on the eighteenth century Church. Of the clergy Thompson comments 'the majority fawned for preferment, dined and joked (under sufferance) at the tables of their patrons, and, like Parson Woodforde, were not above accepting a tip from the squire at a wedding or a christening... It would not be difficult to find, in this parish or in that, eighteenth century clergy fulfilling, with dedication, paternalist functions. But we know very well that these are not characteristic men... The Church was profoundly Erastian; had it performed an effective... role the Methodist movement would have been neither necessary nor possible'.²⁹ For Thompson the Church was too closely related to the establishment to escape pungent criticism. Moreover in the fields in which Thompson is interested, the moral economy of the crowd, folk customs and industrialisation, the Church could play little positive role. But the failure to acknowledge the change in historical perceptions of the Church is disappointing.

The revisionist view of the Church has not, however, been abandoned. The French scholar Viviane Barrie-Curien, in a brilliant study of the eighteenth century diocese of London, has

²⁸ Virgin op. cit, 179-180, 191-203.

²⁹ E.P. Thompson *Customs in Common* London 1993, 32, 49.

advanced it once again. Dr Barrie-Curien concludes that the dominant impression from her study is an optimistic one. Far from being 'une Eglise en crise' the clergy possessed a strong professional identity built on the tendency of sons to follow their fathers into the Church, and there was no absence of scruple or concern for the interests of their cures. Above all the discharge of their principal offices of the administration of communion and other worship was of a high standard.³⁰

The publication in 1993 of *The Church of England c 1689-1833* has by no means crystallised the shift in thinking on the eighteenth century Church. In a cautious introduction Walsh and Taylor conclude that 'favourable and adverse verdicts are still being delivered' and that 'the debate about the Georgian Church has moved on little since the 1930s. The arguments... have a judgemental character that would be familiar to Sykes'.³¹ The editors concede that the work of Church courts indicates the resilience of the Church's administrative structure and that outside the formal structure of the Church men and women enjoyed a rich religious life. They also question the existence of a 'caesura' between the Georgian and Victorian churches. However the views expressed by Walsh and Taylor are too tentative to lead a full-blown re-assessment of the Church. Their conclusions claim to be contingent on further research and they see no alternative to the assumption that it will produce 'evidence to support the claims of both optimists and pessimists'.³²

³⁰ V. Barrie-Curien *Clerge et Pastorale en Angleterre au XVIIIe siècle: Le Diocèse de Londres* Paris 1992, 345. See also my review of this book in *The British Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies* 1993. A less optimistic statement of the picture is produced in Professor Barrie-Curien's essay in J. Walsh, C. Haydon and S. Taylor (eds) *The Church of England c 1689-1833* Cambridge 1993.

³¹ Walsh, Haydon and Taylor op. cit, 3.

³² Ibid, 6, 25, 63, 12.

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Continuity of Patronage: self-recommendation and place-seeking

Ecclesiastical patrons used a broad range of criteria to select clergy for preferment to livings and dignities in the Church in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The qualifications of nobility, of academic standing, of services to the Church and State, of a patron's influence and of strong churchmanship were among those which were most common. But a further factor affected advancement: that of self-recommendation. Ecclesiastical historians, particularly those of the Victorian era, have tended to see this as morally questionable, if not corrupt method of gaining advancement -and one which was primarily a feature of the Hanoverian Church. Indeed the traditional view of ecclesiastical history, though increasingly under challenge, regarded the Hanoverian and Victorian Churches as standing in strong contrast to each other. This contrast has tended to include the quality and recruitment of the clergy. [1] Yet there was no fundamental difference in the methods used by patrons in distributing livings and offices in the Church in these two centuries. Crown livings and senior posts in the Church were distributed by ministers and patrons who were prone to favour, influence and persuasion. It was to this system that self-recommendation was directed, in the hope of securing preferment. Because of the success of personal solicitation, self-recommendation remained a factor in nominations to places in the Church throughout the nineteenth century. Even when it was declared unacceptable in by Gladstone in 1881, self-recommendation remained in existence in a covert form. It is the aim of this article to indicate the nature of self-recommendation; to suggest that in Hanoverian society self-recommendation was accorded some legitimacy and to demonstrate that it remained a

feature of preferment in the Church well into the Victorian era, long after its apparent legitimacy had declined.

Self-recommendation was undoubtedly a frequently used feature of preferment in the eighteenth century Church. A study of the patterns of preferment in the Church between 1660 and 1760 has demonstrated that the Church systematically relied on self-recommendation as a means of attracting patronage, particularly that of the Crown. This was, in many ways, a meritocratic feature: promoting the interests of able clergy who had no high connections or who, in spite of such connections, lacked access to the flow of patronage. [2] Indeed the Duke of Newcastle, the 'ecclesiastical minister', encouraged deserving clergy to apply directly to him and to others. In 1741, for example, he encouraged the Duke of Richmond's chaplain, Mr Green, to apply directly for the chaplaincy of the Chelsea Hospital.[3] The eighteenth century was, moreover, a time of severe clerical unemployment and the pressure for livings was great. It has been estimated that a fifth of all clergy in the eighteenth century were permanently unbeneficed.[4] As a result a clergyman with no living, and no one to recommend him, was forced to consider direct approaches to sources of patronage. In 1767 John Robson expressed this problem to his brother, who had entered the Church. 'If you expect preferment, you must bustle and try to peep after it, as most of the profession do in these days; a friend and application may yet advance you something better.'[5] Even further up the ladder of preferment, there were more clergy than available livings and offices. The claims of applicants for places were varied. Some were self-effacing and indicated that they had been encouraged by others to apply for preferment. An applicant for the deanery of Christ Church in the eighteenth century claimed 'I am pressed... by several who think I am more capable of doing service to the College than I think myself...' Others more boldly

promised future favours to the government, such as the applicant for a canonry of Chichester who promised his patron that he would 'cultivate and improve... an interest for your ...friends both in the Church and in the country...' A number of applicants cited their service to the Church and State, like a bishop who claimed promotion to Ely on the grounds of his seniority and of being 'an old faithful subject'. In an era of Jacobite invasion and fears of a Church threatened by deism and dissent these were reasonable claims.

George Jordan of Burwash, applying for a prebend, cited another common cause as poverty. In Jordan's case it was occasioned by 'a large and increasing family... and (the need for) a way to make provision for so large a family...' However, such applicants tended to suffer since they rarely formed part of a regular client-patron network. The Duke of Newcastle recognised that it was far more advantageous politically to prefer a clergyman who was recommended by a nobleman or political magnate than merely to oblige a man who recommended himself.[6] Those who recommended themselves, therefore, probably fared worse than those who were recommended by others. William Markham's comment in 1763 to his patron, the Duke of Bedford, indicates that on occasion self-recommendation formed part of a wider system of patronage and was more likely to be successful when supported by a patron. Markham wrote, 'I have laid my pretensions before Mr Greville, and although I have had a very civil answer, I am afraid they will not have much efficacy if not aided by some (other) support...'[7]

These applications can not be divorced from the network of obligations which was the principal feature of the client-patron system. Indeed the application of Bishop Henry Bathurst of Norwich in the early 1830s to Lord Grey suggests that there was a strong inter-relationship between self-recommendation and place-seeking for others. His request was a hybrid of solicitation and recommendation. Writing to Lord Grey, Bathurst indicated that

he had once hoped for the diocese of Worcester and that since he was too old for a translation, he asked that his 'right' to advancement be transferred to his son. In fact Lord Grey did not accept that this right was able to be transferred and did not allow his request. Self-recommendation for Church livings should not be seen in isolation from other contemporary institutions which commonly used the same methods. The Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy for example, a charitable body which supported clerical widows and children, relied upon direct applications for provision of pensions. The legal profession and the universities used, and encouraged, direct application for places and particularly for the privileges accorded to founders' kin.[8] Moreover the landed classes were prepared to solicit the Crown and politicians for places.

Many of the reasons for self-recommendation were the same as those advanced by patrons in recommending clients to the government. Applicants relied on the same sense of charity, community and, above all, status reinforcement which applied to recommendation by others. Status reinforcement may be illustrated by the appeal of the Revd Joseph Greene to the Hon. James West, Secretary to the Treasury. In asking for the living of Wellsbourn, Greene told West that he would thank God for any preferment he was offered 'and especially among all his other mercies, that of raising me up so great a friend as Mr West'. Supplicants were also quick to dispel any charges of rapacity, which a patron might have found distasteful, and thus taint the condescension. In 1727 one applicant to Newcastle assured him 'neither avarice nor ambition makes me importunate'.[9]

That self-recommendation was accorded moral legitimacy may be seen in the establishment of customs and practices which regulated the process. The legitimacy of solicitation may be judged from the message passed on by Duchess of Ancaster to the King in 1747 on behalf of Dr Lockyer which was 'the Dr presents his humble duty to your Majesty and hopes your

Majesty will have the goodness to excuse him at present, for he is soliciting some preferment from your ministers.' When George Lavington applied for the deanery of Worcester in 1746 and when Spencer Cowper repeatedly applied for Church preferment in the 1740s it was clear that there was an etiquette surrounding such requests. It was, on occasion, prudent to attend the Court; but at other times it was not acceptable to be seen there. Some patrons had preferences regarding where they might be solicited. Sir Robert Walpole, for example, expressed a preference not to be asked for a place at his Levees: 'In the year 1739, the Deanery of Wells became vacant, and Doctor Pearce, who knew that Sir Robert had expressed his inclination to serve him in such a way, waited upon him one day at his Levee, to put himself in the way and thoughts of that Minister...' when it was clear to Walpole what Pearce wanted he said "dont come here any more, for I will see you at any other time." Accordingly Doctor Pearce went no more to his Levees but... waited upon him at his house...'[10] This is confirmed by the series of applications made by Thomas Wilson for a place, during which he was advised by the Master of the Rolls on where to attend and when to be seen, and when not to be seen, at Court. Wilson was also advised by Walpole to meet the Bishop of London and see 'what was fit to be asked (for)'.[11] Similarly, the Revd Joseph Greene was advised by his patron, Secretary of the Treasury James West, to make enquiries about the prebendal stalls at Lichfield, so that West could try to ensure that Greene would be considered if a vacancy arose. The application of William Markham, for the deanery of Bristol in September 1763, also suggests that direct application for a particular office was considered proper from men of significant achievement, who could naturally expect preferment in due course. Equally in 1746 Archdeacon Ball's application for the deanery of Worcester was recognised by the Duke of Richmond as entirely reasonable. Richmond wrote to Newcastle, 'I cannot help thinking that it will look odd for you to refuse

(him)...'.[12]

A churchman could not however demand advancement too roughly. In 1791 Pitt rejected a peremptory application from Bishop Cornwallis of Lichfield and Coventry for the deanery of St Paul's. The tone of the application was such that Pitt replied: '...on further consideration, and on recollecting all the circumstances, there are parts of that letter which you would yourself wish never to have written. My respect for your Lordship... prevents my saying more... until that letter is recalled...'[13]

One bishop who refused to consider persistent applications from clergy was John Gilbert of Salisbury. In 1753 the Revd George Woodward wrote 'he is not a man to be solicited too much, and I have heard him say he that he would never do anything the sooner for being asked; and seems to be one who would have this merit to go along with his favours: that they were a free gift; a proper address, whenever I fall in his way, is the utmost I must pretend to; anything beyond this would mar all my expectations, and be very inconsistent with the policies of that court...' But after Gilbert's translation to York he relaxed his rule and supported Woodward's application for a canonry at Salisbury (in support of which Woodward wrote asking for help from three canons, an archdeacon, the Warden of All Souls, the Dean of Salisbury and the Bishop of Winchester).

Whilst supplicants excused their direct appeals and recognised that they were worldly; they applied in such numbers that large sections of the clergy -including often the best pastors and churchmen- regarded supplication as a morally legitimate method of gaining advancement. Thomas Wilson recorded in his diary that in August 1735 he 'modestly asked for (the living of) St Christopher's', and saw nothing wrong in reminding his patrons of their promises of preferment. Little came to those who, like Phillip Skelton, waited quietly for his work to gain attention.[14] Skelton did so in the absence of any system or mechanism for bringing

such men to the attention of patrons other than recommendation or self-recommendation. Moreover Wilson's diary demonstrates that, though he besieged bishops and ministers for a living, he was a pious clergyman and possessed a profound faith. It might therefore be unjust to assume that place-seeking indicated an inherent lack of spirituality. Examples of such pious supplicants are Thomas Brockbank and William Jones. Brockbank applied in 1696 for the role of King's Preacher in Carlisle and Jones in 1798 asked his bishop for preferment. Jones's account in his diary recounts the sort of support that encouraged self-recommendation: 'I waited on the Bishop of London at Fulham, under an idea that two alternate presentations were vested in the Bishop... he received me very graciously, desired me and urged me to take some form of refreshment, after having refreshed my pocket with a 10£ check on his Banker...'[15]

Few supplicants were persistent in writing more than once to a patron, though there were exceptions, usually where particular circumstances suggested a claim. The Revd John Thomlinson, a young curate in London in 1721-22, anxious to obtain a living, applied on a number of occasions to potential patrons. On December 20th 1721 he waited on the Bishop of London who welcomed him and encouraged him to come again; on December 16th Sir Christopher Musgrave wrote on Thomlinson's behalf to the Duke of Wharton, who was patron of a number of livings. On 31st December 1721 Thomlinson's diary records that he 'waited on Duke of Wharton on 22nd. He would do his endeavour for me, and I must go another time... Went to Parliament House... Mr Lawson bid me ply the Duke till he did it...' By the start of January Thomlinson had fixed his attention on a living which it was rumoured a Mr Nicholson would soon resign. On January 10th he wrote to Nicholson asking him if he intended to resign, and on February 6th he promised his father 'I'll take care to apply to the Bishop when anything falls'. [16] Another pressing cleric, who besieged the Duke of

Newcastle, was the Revd Lucius Henry Hibbins, Hibbins wrote to the Duke over thirty times between 1740 and 1758. But he could claim some justification in being so persistent, as he had a legitimate claim on the government's patronage arising from political service for the government in time of the Jacobite Risings of 1715 and 1745. Another applicant who renewed his requests was the Revd Robert Austen. Austen applied unsuccessfully to Newcastle for livings in 1739, 1740 and 1741. On the latter occasion he assured the Duke 'if I am too pressing in any application... I hope you will impute it to my occasions.' Eventually Austen did obtain a living. The applications of Richard Blacow for preferment were even formalised into a tract in 1748, entitled A Humble Memorial of Richard Blacow, Master of Arts of Brazen Nose College in Oxford. Blacow supported the Duke of Newcastle in the Oxford elections of the 1740s, and in 1752 drew Newcastle's attention to a vacant prebend at Canterbury which he told Newcastle 'would make me extremely happy after above four years wait'. Blacow's reward came in due course in the form of a canonry of Windsor.[17] Perhaps the most extraordinary method of self-recommendation came from Claudius Crigan. The Revd William Jones heard the gossip that in 1784 Crigan was appointed to the See of Sodor and Man after he had deliberately painted his face and affected an asthmatic cough to give the impression of great age. The Duchess of Athol, seeking a clergyman to keep the see 'warm' briefly, until a relative could receive it, appointed Crigan to Sodor and Man. She was furious when it became apparent that Crigan was in good health; he held the see for twenty nine years. Such applicants were well aware that, in the crush, their recommendations would be lost or forgotten, and that lacking an influential patron they would have to remind a source of patronage of the obligations they felt should be discharged.

There is no doubt that for the purveyors of patronage self-recommendation caused problems.

The weight of requests, and particularly requests for places which were not yet vacant, presented a serious difficulty. When the Revd Walter Bartelot applied in 1741 for the deanery of Chichester he indicated that there would be other direct supplicants for the place, though it was not yet vacant. 'Being informed by my friends at Chichester that the dean is in a very dangerous and declining way and that several of the clergy are now preparing to address your Grace in the hopes of succeeding him, I take the liberty among the rest thus early to solicit your favour and recommendation in behalf of myself.' [18] Equally, Joseph Greene, applying to James West -this time for support in an application to the Bishop of London for the living of Todenham- emphasised that 'in attempts of this kind the earliest application generally bids fairest for success'. Speed was often crucial. In 1702 Bishop William Nicholson of Carlisle heard of the death of one of his clergy, and within an hour had three applications for it. The Duke of Newcastle even kept an 'Ecclesiastical Book' in which promises and obligations were recorded. In 1749 the Duke of Richmond informed Newcastle of a request for a living from a clergyman and asked that he 'be minuted for that living, when it shall become vacant'. In 1730 Bishop Edmund Gibson of London recommended that Walpole act quickly in making an appointment to forestall a flood of applicants. But indications that this system of institutionalised application found disapproval from contemporaries are rare. Indeed the Lord Chancellor, who exercised the Crown patronage of all livings in the second section of the King's Book, established a bureaucracy to service the applications, employing a secretary of presentations for this purpose. Between 1763 and 1900 these requests filled one hundred and thirty eight registers.[19]

The legitimacy of self-recommendation is consistent with other recent indications of the patterns of patronage in the eighteenth century. Certainly nepotism in the Church, for example, was accorded a moral legitimacy and was regarded by contemporaries as a

mechanism which promoted family welfare in an institution which could leave a family in perilous circumstances when a cleric died. It also avoided circumstances in which the family of a bishop or cleric became a burden on the Privy Purse.[20] One regular supplicant at Salisbury, the Revd George Woodward, recognised that the family of bishops had a greater claim on episcopal patronage than he had. Moreover, for the clergyman of the eighteenth century, there was no conflict between spirituality and self-recommendation.

During the nineteenth century self-recommendation continued, in much the same form as it had in the eighteenth. One of the most pressing applicants in the early nineteenth century was George Pelham, successively Bishop of Bristol, Exeter and Lincoln. Pelham, the son of the Earl of Chichester and a former guards officer, had obtained the diocese of Bristol largely through family influence. But within two years he sought advancement to Norwich. He did so with cunning, writing to William Pitt in 1805 that 'I have heard from so many quarters that you have been kind enough to think of recommending me to His Majesty to succeed to the vacant see of Norwich, that I can no longer refrain expressing my gratitude to you, if such is your intention...' The Prime Minister was horrified. He wrote in reply, 'in answer to the letter which I have just the honour of receiving from your Lordship, I am sorry to be under the necessity of acquainting your Lordship that the report which has reached you respecting the See of Norwich has arisen without my knowledge, and that I cannot have the satisfaction of promoting your wishes...'[21] But Pelham was thick-skinned and not easily discouraged. Subsequent advancement to Exeter did not satisfy his ambition and in 1813 he wrote to Lord Liverpool, 'I have this moment been informed of the sudden and much to be lamented death of the Bishop of London and although I feel some hesitation in making this application, yet if your lordship should think me worthy of succeeding him you would confer

on me an obligation....'[22] Liverpool did not, however, think Pelham worthy. Nevertheless, in 1820 Pelham was advanced to Lincoln. His promotion indicates that, backed with the support of aristocratic connections and appropriate influence self-recommendation could prevail over a prime minister's better judgement. Five years later Pelham used his wife's dislike of the damp air at Buckden as an excuse to seek advancement to Salisbury. This time Pelham approached the King directly, though Liverpool was responsible for disappointing him.[23] Pelham also made attempts to gain appointment to both Winchester and Durham.[24] In the latter case, Durham was not yet vacant and Lord Liverpool wrote a blunt letter to Pelham stating it was 'not His Majesty's practice to reply to requests for preferment, particularly when the bishopric is not vacant.'[25] Liverpool also told Pelham sharply that he would not get Winchester. Pelham was undoubtedly the most rapacious applicant on the bench of bishops in the early nineteenth century. What marks Pelham as qualitatively different from the majority of applicants during the eighteenth century was the persistence with which he sought advancement, the fact that he was by no means in straitened circumstances and that there were doubts regarding his 'worthiness'. He was also regarded by contemporaries as unwise in allowing his chagrin at his failure to spill over into abusing government ministers.[26] But Pelham shared a belief with other place-seekers that they might otherwise fail to obtain advancement because of the fragility and unreliability of political patronage. Ministers could not be relied upon to be permanent fixtures, or to reward long service in an unpartisan way and therefore immediate application was preferred to waiting for advancement.

Pelham was not unique however. In 1813 William Mansel, a successor of Pelham's at Bristol, wrote to Liverpool having 'heard of the dangerous health of the Bishop of Peterborough', and made it clear that he wished to be considered for that see.[27] Most

clergymen making applications had ready excuses. In 1820 Lord Liverpool was approached by Bishop Law of Chester with a request based on the needs of his family: 'neither on the present nor on any former vacancy on the bench have I troubled your Lordship with an application. I well know you are apprised of the size of my family and of the inadequacy of the income of the Bishopric of Chester. Indeed so strongly impressed were the clergy of my diocese with these facts that they wished to petition your Lordship to add a good commendam...'[28] In the face of this sort of claim Liverpool was prepared to entertain applications and in 1824 he promoted Law to the diocese of Bath and Wells. He was also indulgent in responding to a similar request from his nephew, John Banks Jenkinson, Dean of Worcester. Jenkinson wrote to Liverpool in 1824 complaining that Worcester was bad for the health of his wife and children and begged to be moved from the deanery: 'I trust you will not regard it as unreasonable or unbecoming if I add that when I ask to be removed from Worcester I contemplate promotion... '[29] Jenkinson went on to mention the deaneries of Durham and St Paul's as his preferences. A year later he received elevation to the see of St David's.

Sheer avarice was not usually considered to be a valid claim. Liverpool tried to fight off Pelham's most extreme claims and was frequently to disappoint clergy who appeared to be rapacious. In 1820 Liverpool received an application from Bishop Henry Bathurst of Norwich which claimed that, after his lengthy tenure of his diocese, he was 'not a shilling richer for my profession...' Bathurst added 'it is not my intention to supplicate', but he asked for a more prosperous diocese. In the knowledge that the see of Norwich yielded an income of £4,000 a year, Liverpool denied the request.[30] Liverpool also heard from John Kaye of Bristol in 1826 of 'an accidental circumstance has induced me to alter a resolution which I had made never to trouble your Lordship on the subject of preferment. In Dorsetshire a

gentleman intimately acquainted with the Bishop of Carlisle's family mentioned to me in conversation that the Bishop was again in a very critical state and not expected to live many months. Conceiving that in the case of his death no one of my brethren will be anxious to succeed him, I venture to express my wish to be appointed to the See...'[31] Liverpool was unmoved by this, though Kaye's scholarship did justify his subsequent translation to Lincoln in 1827.

During the fifteen year tenure of Liverpool's premiership there was a gradual shift in the policy toward the distribution of Church patronage. Commendams were no longer automatically given with sees, and were often required to be surrendered. Aristocratic dominance of high offices was reduced, royal incursions were restrained and evangelical clergy were considered for preferment for the first time.[32] Yet clergy still applied for, and received, advancement as they had done under the early Hanoverian governments. The exercise by Liverpool of Church patronage indicates that a modest self-regulating element in the distribution of livings operated. Liverpool received and denied numerous requests from undeserving clergy. The practice of self-recommendation was not one which promoted wholesale corruption in Church and State.

The Duke of Wellington found that the quick succession of George Canning and Lord Goderich to the premiership in 1827, prior to his appointment left many clergy with promises -real or invented- which they sought to realise. Among these were the requests of Dean Ireland of Westminster, claiming that Canning had promised him Rochester when the bishop of that diocese died,[33] and Henry Pepys who claimed that Lord Goderich had promised him the deanery of Chester.[34] Other clergy voiced the claim that they had been passed over by the previous prime ministers. Edward Nares told the Duke that all his fellows had received some form of preferment and that he had been ignored. The Duke also received

detailed requests from Arthur Kenny, the rector of St Olave's, Southwark. Kenny claimed that he had performed service to the government in Ireland and that he had been unfortunate in being passed over for a series of appointments there. The Duke formally acknowledged receipt of these letters but did not act upon them.[35] What Ireland, Pepys, Kenny and Nares had in common was their fear that they would be victims of the principal flaw in the distribution of patronage by the government: to be the client of a fading minister and to be overlooked by a new premier. In the heightened polarisation between Whig and Tory in the 1820s and 1830s changes of ministry could condemn a clergyman to years of disappointment.

Decline in the acceptability of place-seeking for oneself occurred only gradually. In 1854 Archbishop Richard Whateley of Dublin expressed his surprise that the talented Edward Coplestone's rise in the Church had happened without the self-recommendation which might have been expected. 'All the most remarkable steps of his elevation in life took place without any application whatsoever on his part. He was elected fellow of Oriel College, Provost of the same, Doctor of Divinity by Diploma, Dean of Chester and Bishop of Llandaff... all without his having offered himself for any one of these appointments.' Some clergy however, in applying directly for a church office demonstrated that they were aware that self-recommendation was declining in legitimacy. Lord Liverpool, replying in 1820 to a place-seeker, Dr Charles Hall of Christ Church, indicated that self-recommendation was, on occasion, regarded as 'improper'. [36] Similarly George Moberly, in applying to Lord Palmerston for a professorship recognised that self-recommendation was becoming less acceptable. Moberly wrote in embarrassment, 'I fear you will hardly like receiving this letter from me, and in truth it is not without some trouble of mind that I write it. I only hope you

will pardon it...' And Edward Nares, applying for preferment in 1830, recognised that desire to advance oneself was not seemly. He commented, 'it was not what I wanted to have that made me so anxious, it was rather what I wanted to have not... I was getting too old to read lectures to boys...'[37]

It might be expected that the ecclesiastical reforms of the 1830s and 1840s would erode place-seeking.[38] Certainly if the traditional view of Church history is accepted the general atmosphere of reform and the heightened spiritual values generated by the Oxford Movement improved the 'tone' of the Church and the clergy. Churchmen were expected to be modest, unworldly men with their eyes set only on spiritual goals. Yet applications and place-seeking remained. Moreover, as in the eighteenth century, applications were by no means confined to the most rapacious and negligent clergy. Some strong administrators, pastors and diocesans made direct application for advancement. In 1862 William Stubbs, later Bishop of Chester and of Oxford, applied to Archbishop Longley for the post of chaplain and librarian, an important stepping stone.[39] In 1842 Thomas Turton successfully applied to Peel for the deanery of Westminster. Turton listed his qualifications for the deanery as his lengthy tenure of the Regius Professorship of Divinity and his contribution to theology. He also commented that he would not have shrunk from the responsibility if he were offered a bishopric.[40] However Peel was not always so obliging. In 1845 he refused to consider the proposal from Archdeacon Croft that he succeed as dean of Canterbury and resign one of his pluralities to his son. And in 1834 Peel had received the worthy application of Samuel Butler, headmaster of Shrewsbury School, for a diocese. Butler's application illustrated the mechanisms that were used to disguise direct place-seeking. He bluntly told Peel that, 'difficult as it is for a man to speak of himself I venture to do so on this occasion rather than adopt an indirect course through the medium of friends, whom I have no wish

to trouble with solicitations, because I merely beg leave to represent my situation to you without asking a reply...' Butler then laid before Peel his financial situation, his sacrifices for his school and the meagre preferment he had received so far in his career. He also produced a somewhat stale promise from Canning to nominate him to a see. Peel did not respond to Butler's appeal, probably because Butler was honest enough to tell the Prime Minister that he was a Whig. However, a year later Lord Melbourne responded and appointed Butler to Lichfield and Coventry.[41] In such circumstances there was no clear indication that direct applications would be unsuccessful.

Lord Palmerston was faced with similar appeals, including one in 1864 from Bishop Powis of Sodor and Man, asking to be nominated to the diocese of Peterborough. Powis wrote: 'I yield most reluctantly to the advice of my friends who strongly urge me to lay before your Lordship the grounds on which I seem to them to have some claim to your favourable consideration in selecting a successor to the See of Peterborough. Lord Aberdeen's note to me, which I enclose, states the grounds on which he was pleased to nominate me to the Crown for this see. In a subsequent interview with him... he encouraged and comforted me by the assurance that I should not spend my life in the Isle of Man. I have now laboured longer in this diocese... than any of my predecessors... and have made great sacrifices for the permanent benefit of the diocese.' Bishop Powis went on to list various considerations, including that he had previously assisted the bishop of Peterborough in his diocese when he had been ill; that the clergy in Peterborough diocese liked him; that the bishop of Peterborough himself approved of the succession and that Powis's friends could attest to his character. Palmerston refused to help Powis,[42] nevertheless the supplications of Butler and Powis were not essentially different from those of the clergy who appealed to the Duke of Newcastle a century before and who feared that they would be forgotten or overlooked.

The supplication of William Connor Magee in 1868 demonstrates one of the happy circumstances which continued to make self-recommendation a successful and attractive process in the nineteenth century. Magee, the Dean of the Irish Chapels Royal who had despaired of being offered any church preferment, wrote in 1868 to Disraeli asking for an English deanery as a reward for his staunch support for the Tory Party in Ireland. Disraeli faced with the vacant see of Peterborough, and no one to fill it, replied -to Magee's surprise- with an offer of the diocese.[43] The Magee incident is important because it demonstrates that -like Lord Aberdeen and Lord Palmerston- Disraeli was ignorant of the Church and churchmen. This ignorance had reached a new peak in the 'sin of Sarum' of 1854 -when Aberdeen advanced Walter Kerr Hamilton to the diocese of Salisbury unaware that he was an extreme high churchman who had once considered conversion to Rome- and in Palmerston's advancement of Robert Bickersteth to Ripon in 1857 -under the misapprehension that he was appointing Bickersteth's father to it.[44] The patent inability of prime ministers to reward merit over circumstantial advantages had always been at the heart of self-recommendation, and continued to be so in the Victorian Church. The exercise of Church patronage by ministers and laymen who failed to generate confidence in the consistency of the criteria they used to advance clergy promoted the need of clergy to draw attention to themselves. For while the clerical profession had emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it had not evolved a system which demonstrably rewarded merit over connection. As Trollope wrote in 1866 'if he (a clergyman) can get to the soft side of his bishop, if he have an aunt that knows some friend of the Lord Chancellor... and he be not himself of too tender a conscience... then he may hope to rise. But of rising in his profession because he is fit to rise he has no hope.'[45] Such place-seeking was even successful when directed at Gladstone, who employed a private secretary especially to administer ecclesiastical

patronage and who enjoyed a reputation of scrupulousness in his exercise of patronage. In 1870 Richard Durnford, archdeacon of Manchester, wrote to Gladstone 'My brother-in-law made known to you what passed through my mind on the occasion of the late vacancy in the See of Manchester. There is now a vacancy on the episcopal bench in the Southern Province, which opens a charge of far less anxiety and toil...' The vacancy was that of Chichester and Gladstone agreed to appoint Durnford, whose churchmanship and politics he respected, if not his methods.[46]

In 1881, however, Gladstone decided that the sight of clergymen supplicating for offices was unedifying, and declared that he would not nominate a man to a bishopric, deanery or dignity in the Church if he had recommended himself, or if he had arranged for others to make a recommendation on his behalf.[47] However, Gladstone was not relieved of the burden of such applications. In 1882 he received a letter of self-recommendation from Canon Watkins of Durham, who petitioned Gladstone for the deanery of Durham, which was being vacated by the incumbent dean's move to Exeter. Watkins was aware of the caution that he had to exercise when he wrote, 'the Dean of Durham (Dr Lake) has told me in confidence that it is proposed to nominate him to the deanery of Exeter and thus vacate the deanery of Durham... If I were not certain that the climate of Exeter would prove materially better for him than that of Durham I would not desire to say a word...'[48] Having established his concern for Dean Lake, Watkins then presented his request, without success. Gladstone had detected an unacceptable tone in the process of bishop-making and under his premiership direct personal applications were to decline sharply in moral legitimacy.[49] Yet social attitudes towards advancement in the Church changed only very slowly and probably more slowly than Gladstone's action suggests. In 1854, for example, a handbook for parents entitled The Choice of a Profession indicated that recruitment to the Church was changing.

The motives for entry to the Church, it was suggested, differed to those for entry to other professions. Yet the writer went on to state: 'the true motives which induce the youth of England to engage in the ministry of the establishment are not one whit less time-serving, or selfish, than those that create the lawyer...'[50]

The 'improved spirituality' of the Oxford Movement doubtless affected some clergy. But others were still prepared to adopt old forms of place-seeking late into the century. Connop Thirlwall, a model reforming bishop, anxious to find a place for his nephew, wrote in 1863 to his old friend Lord Houghton: 'to you I may say what I could not to any one else... much as I have the thing at heart, I could not summon enough courage to write to the Chancellor myself...' Nevertheless, Thirlwall wrote to Houghton begging him to approach the Lord Chancellor on behalf of his nephew.[51] For many clergy, faith in the meritocratic ideal did not extend into the Church or the State. In these circumstances practical concerns regarding ambition and financial advancement remained. Gladstone's decision of 1881 did not alter any of the factors which militated in favour of self-recommendation: clergy still saw Church patronage flowing from the government, and ministers had not shown any greater aptitude in selecting higher clergy. Whilst place-seeking changed in form it did not die. As one writer bluntly put it in 1892, 'our self-seeking can no longer be quite open'.[52]

Since the middle of the nineteenth century a number of senior clergy used new and more subtle methods in attracting the attention of the distributors of patronage. One of these was Samuel Wilberforce, the strongly ambitious bishop of Oxford. In 1841, as an archdeacon, he had written to Peel on the election of the new Tory government. With his letter he sent the Prime Minister a copy of his sermons and concluded, 'I... lay it before you in that exalted station in which I most heartily rejoice to see you so firmly placed. May all your

conduct in it be guided by that masterly wisdom with which you have performed and ordered the Great Party by which... England must be saved. May the God of wisdom direct your counsels to the Blessings of the Church and nation, and you, Sir, will not feel the sacrifices and anxieties of office to have been without their recompense...'[53] Rightly was Wilberforce nicknamed 'Soapy Sam'. In 1858, when Lord Derby considered the vacancy at York with Samuel Wilberforce and, in passing, quoted a verse translated from Homer, Wilberforce replied 'better translate Samuel'. This leaden hint was not taken up.[54] Wilberforce remained an assiduous cultivator of politicians in the hope of the primatial see for many years; even promotion to Winchester did not quench his burning ambitions.

The basis of this new technique, much practised by Wilberforce, was to establish a link, or connection as it would have been called a century before, with a purveyor of patronage. Like self-recommendation, it was predicated on the assumption that, on their own, patrons and prime ministers could not select the most deserving clergy for advancement. The best example of a clergyman who, whilst scrupulously avoiding self-recommendation, drew attention to himself and established a connection with a politician, which led to high office in the Church, was Edward Bickersteth. In 1872 Bickersteth, the evangelical vicar of Christ Church, Hampstead and chaplain to his cousin the bishop of Ripon, began a bombardment of Gladstone that reached extraordinary levels. In 1872 Bickersteth, who seems to have had no contact with the Prime Minister before this time, sent Gladstone a hymnal which he had composed.[55] In answer to a formal letter of thanks from Gladstone, Bickersteth sent an 'organ edition' of the hymnal.[56] Just before Christmas 1872 Bickersteth sent Gladstone a copy of a memoir of one of his children who had recently died, feeling the Prime Minister 'would wish to read it'.[57] This was followed soon after by Bickersteth's book of parables,[58] and some months later with a copy of the second edition of his memoir of his

dead child, this time illustrated with photographs.[59] In December 1874 Bickersteth sent Gladstone a copy of his tract on the resurrection,[60] and this was followed nine months later with a book of his poems and hymns.[61] In November 1875 Bickersteth sent Gladstone a lengthy discussion of a tract he had read,[62] and in the following year a copy of his lectures.[63] 1876 saw Gladstone receive from Bickersteth a diatribe on Islam which coincided closely with the premier's own views on the Turkish question. In the same letter Bickersteth casually mentioned that Gladstone's son was the curate of his cousin.[64] The correspondence flowed to and from Hampstead at regular intervals until, in 1885, Bickersteth was elevated first to the deanery of Gloucester, and within four months to the diocese of Exeter. At the time Gladstone sought an evangelical bishop to go to Exeter to balance the controversial nomination of the ritualist Edward King to Lincoln diocese. Bickersteth was known to Gladstone sufficiently well for him to nominate him. There seems little doubt that the correspondence that Bickersteth generated with Gladstone was consciously calculated to achieve preferment. Little by little Bickersteth was able to draw attention to himself and to remind the Prime Minister that he was waiting, in the previous century Zachary Pearce had referred to this as putting 'himself in the way, and in the thoughts of the minister'. Significantly Bickersteth maintained the fiction of modest shock at his elevation. On hearing of the offer of Exeter he wrote 'I had counted on rest, but if He says "Work on till the time come", His will is and must be best.' Bickersteth's biographer commented that these words 'indicate the spirit in which he received the summons... of Episcopal Office'.[65] Coincidentally during the concurrent appointment of Edward King to Lincoln a small matter arose which demonstrates that indirect methods were not confined to the evangelical section of the Church. Gladstone had heard, during his deliberations regarding Lincoln, that King was in ill-health, and it was known to be one of Gladstone's requirements that candidates for

a mitre must be active and energetic. In horror at the prospect of losing his prize King telegraphed to Gladstone denying that he was at all ill. As late as 1890 Bishop Bardsley of Sodor and Man seems to have adopted an indirect form of supplication. In that year, on the death of the bishop of Durham, Bardsley wrote to Gladstone offering his sympathy for the death of the bishop and concluded the letter with a request for a copy of Gladstone's essays on Church and State. He added that he remembered, as a boy, seeing Gladstone and 'anticipated your distinguished career'. [66] Is it too cynical to see this too as a covert form of canvassing? Perhaps so, but within two years Bardsley had left Sodor and Man for the see of Carlisle. That Gladstone was not alone in still being subject to importunities was noted by William Magee, bishop of Peterborough on his nomination to York in 1891. Magee was offered the preferment by Lord Salisbury, who begged that Magee answer with a telegraph answering 'yes' or 'no' to the offer. Magee's interpretation of Salisbury's desire to know his answer quickly was that he wished to avoid the requests that would come from other clergy. Magee confided to his secretary and chaplain, John MacDonnell, that he 'quite understood Lord S's desire to be freed from importunities by my answer; but it was a tremendous decision to make at a few hours' notice'.

Victorian ecclesiastical historians noted, with unjustifiable pride in their own era, that when they looked back to the previous century 'even men who were estimable in life and religious in feeling did not hesitate to avow such self-seeking...' [67] For these historians place-seeking and direct supplication for a living ran counter to the high view they had formed of the clerical calling. Mary Bateson, writing in 1892, suggested that 'coarse' examples of self-recommendation were due to an absence of clerical self-discipline. She went on, 'the growth of a healthy sentiment against the solicitations of personal favours will be

noted by historians of the future as one of the pleasing features of the nineteenth century... We have made considerable progress in concealing, if not subduing, our natural appetite for promotion...'[68] Ambition and self-advancement were as affectedly unfashionable in the late nineteenth century as the trend of individualism had been fashionable in the eighteenth century.[69] But it is important to strip away the moral opinions which the Victorians overlaid onto these fashions. For contemporaries, like Dr Samuel Ogden, Master of St John's College, Cambridge in the second half of the eighteenth century, self-recommendation was a common feature of the advancement of 'the good and great'.[70] Its existence was due to the nature of the establishment and its use of patronage. Bishop Kaye of Lincoln identified the problem in 1846. He claimed that one of the inherent problems with an established Church was 'the tendency to produce secularity in the clergy; to assimilate them to the laity in their habits... to forget their character as ambassadors of Christ.'[71] The prime ministers of Victorian England proved as unable to establish an effective meritocratic system of preferment as their Hanoverian predecessors. 'Connection' and a minister's personal interest in a clergyman remained the surest means to climb the ladder of preferment. Self-recommendation remained therefore in spite of Gladstone's decision of 1881, albeit under a heavy disguise. Emergent meritocratic ideas ultimately acted against the foundations of self-recommendation. But this did not coincide with the reforms of the Church in the first half of the nineteenth century. Self-recommendation was a factor in Church appointments until the turn of the twentieth century, and perhaps beyond. Mary Bateson hoped in 1892 that, 'when the secrets of the private correspondence of our public men are revealed, it seems unlikely that... self-appreciative application will be found to have materially improved any candidate's prospects...' [72] She was quite wrong. Self-recommendation remained one of the threads of continuity which made the Victorian Church closer to its Hanoverian

predecessor than it claimed.

NOTES.

1. An example of this commonly held interpretation is C. K. Francis Brown A History of The English Clergy 1800-1900, London 1953, 122. It is also explicit throughout C. J. Abbey's The English Church & Its Bishops 1700-1800, London 1887. One of the most recent writers on the subject of episcopal history defined self-recommendation as 'blatant canvassing': B. Denny King's Bishop, London 1985, 202.
2. D. R. Hirschberg A Social History of The Anglican Episcopate 1660-1760, University of Michigan Ph.D. Thesis 1976, p 98 et seq. The same view is echoed in S. J. Taylor Church and State in England in the Mid-eighteenth Century: The Newcastle Years, 1742-62 Cambridge University PhD thesis 1987.
3. L. P. Curtis Chichester Towers, New Haven 1966, 85.
4. P. Virgin The Church in an Age of Negligence, Cambridge 1989, 140.
5. N. Sykes Church and State in England in the Eighteenth Century, Cambridge 1934, 205.
6. D. R. Hirschberg thesis op. cit, chapter 1. W. T. Gibson 'Patterns of Nepotism and Kinship in the Eighteenth Century Church' in The Journal of Religious History, Vol 14 Part 4 1987, demonstrates the way in which there was an advantageous 'multiplier' effect in the distribution of Church patronage within the client-patron relationship.
7. C. Markham A Memoir of Archbishop Markham, Oxford 1906, 27.
8. F. Arnold Our Bishops and Deans, London 1874, ii, 209. E. H. Pearce The Sons of the Clergy 1655-1901, London 1904, passim. For a plethora of examples of direct application for privilege of founders' kin see G. D. Squibb Founders' Kin Oxford 1972, passim.
9. For Greene see L. Fox (ed) The Correspondence of the Revd Joseph Greene London 1965, 79. Where not otherwise cited all sources for Newcastle's patronage is quoted in D. Barnes 'The Duke of Newcastle, Ecclesiastical Minister' in The Pacific History Review, Vol 3 1934, 172. L. P. Curtis op. cit., pp 84 et seq.
10. The Lives of Dr Edward Pocock... Dr Zachary Pearce... Dr Thomas Newton... and the Revd Philip Skelton... London 1816 Vol 2, 81 British Library Additional Mss (hereafter B.L. Add.) 32,709 f 53. E. Hughes (Ed) The Letters of Spencer Cowper, Dean of Durham 1746-74, Surtees Society Vol CLXV, London 1956, 31 et seq. The Lives of Dr Edward Pocock...etc op. cit, i, 389-390.
11. For Wilson see C. L. S. Linnell (ed) The Diaries of Thomas Wilson DD London 1964, 180 and 125. For Greene see L. Fox (ed) op. cit, 83-84.
12. C. Markham op. cit, 26-27. T. J. McCann (ed) The Correspondence of the Dukes of Richmond and Newcastle, 1724-50, Sussex Record Society Vol 73, 1982-3, 232.

13. F. Arnold op. cit, ii, 210-211.
14. D. Gibson (ed), A Parson in the Vale of the White Horse Gloucester 1982, 39, 100-101.
15. For Wilson see C. L. S. Linnell op. cit, 133 et seq. For Skelton see The Life Dr Edward Pocock and... of the Revd Phillip Skelton, London 1816, ii, passim. For Brockbank and Jones see R. Trappes-Lomax (ed) The Diary and Letter Book of Thomas Brockbank, 1671-1709, Chetham Society, 1930, 110. O. F. Christie (ed) The Diary of the Revd William Jones, 1777-1821, London 1929, 106. This is a point which deserves some emphasis: clergy should not be judged according to the quality of the system which appointed them. Those judged to have come to the bench of bishops from the worst of motives and by the worst routes were on occasion good diocesans. An example is Edward Willes: see, for example, W. T. Gibson 'The Decypherer-Bishop: The Career of Edward Willes' in The British Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies, Vol 12 Part 1 1989.
16. Part of the Thomlison Diary is published in Six North Country Diaries Surtees Society Vol, 1910 see pp 161-164 for entries for December 16th and 31st, 1721 and February 6th 1722 (n.s.). The remainder of the diary is in ms: B. L. Add. Ms. 22,560 entries for December 20th 1721 and January 10th 1722 (n.s.).
17. B. L. Add. Mss. 32,719 to 32,886, passim. For details of the remarkable Hibbins-Newcastle correspondence see W. T. Gibson 'Importunate Cries of Misery: The Correspondence of Lucius Henry Hibbins & The Duke of Newcastle 1740-1758' in The British Library Journal, Vol 17, No 1, 1991. It seems clear that Hibbins had quite realistic encouragement from the Dukes of Newcastle and Richmond, and they cynically abandoned him to abject poverty. For Austen's claims see L. P. Curtis op.cit, 93-96. For Blacow's claims see R. J. Robson The Oxfordshire Election of 1754 London 1949, 164. For Crigan see O. F. Christie (ed) op. cit, 189-191.
18. For Bartelot see B. L. Add. Ms. 32,698 ff 92-3 & L. P. Curtis op. cit, 59. For Greene see L. Fox (ed) op. cit, 90. For Nicholson see F. G. James North Country Bishop New Haven, 1956, 119.
19. D. R. Hirschberg 'The Government and Church Patronage, 1660-1760' The Journal of British Studies, 1981, pp 126-127. T. J. McCann (ed) op. cit, 292. W. A. Salmon Churches and Royal Patronage Cowbridge 1983, 52-53. Public Records Office Lord Chancellors' Office C196/1-138.
20. For the legitimacy of nepotism see W. T. Gibson 'Patterns of Nepotism and Kinship in the Eighteenth Century Church' in The Journal of Religious History, Vol 14 Part 4, 1987. For Woodward see D. Gibson (ed) op. cit, passim.
21. quoted in C. K. Francis Brown op. cit, 94.
22. B. L. Add. Mss. 38,253 f 342.
23. *ibid*, 38,300 f 60.

24. *ibid*, ff 61-64.
25. *ibid*, 38,301 f 116.
26. F. W. Steer (ed) The Letters of J. Hawkins and S. Lysons, Chichester 1966, 55.
27. B. L. Add. Mss. 38, 255 f 57.
28. *ibid*, 38, 286 f 284.
29. *ibid*, 38,299 f 27.
30. M. Thistlethwaite The Memoirs of Henry Bathurst, London 1853, 128.
31. B. L. Add. Mss. 38, 302 f 26.
32. For details of the remarkable evolutionary changes in church patronage begun under Liverpool see W. T. Gibson 'The Tory Governments and Church Patronage 1812-1830' in The Journal of Ecclesiastical History, Vol XLI Part 2, April 1990.
33. Southampton University Archives, Wellington Papers, WP1/922/14.
34. *ibid*, WP1/937/29.
35. *ibid*, WP1/1083/9, WP1/937/7 & WP1/1023/11.
36. For Coplestone see R. Whatley (ed) The Remains of the Late Edward Coplestone DD... London 1854, 2. For Hall see B. L. Add. Mss. 38,574 f 176.
37. Southampton University Archives, Palmerston Papers GC/CA/412. J. Black 'A Regency Regius: The Historian Edward Nares' in Oxoniensia, vol 52 1987, 177.
38. For an example of how these reforms affected a Cathedral Chapter see W. T. Gibson 'Continuity and Change, the Chapter of Winchester in the Nineteenth Century' in The Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society, Vol 45, 1989.
39. Lambeth Palace Library Longley Ms. 7, f 87.
40. B. L. Add. Mss. 40,515 f 64-65.
41. For Croft see P. J. Welch 'Blomfield and Peel: a Study in Cooperation between Church and State 1841-1846' in The Journal of Ecclesiastical History Vol 12, 1961, 76. For Butler see B. L. Add. Ms. 40,411 f 11 and Add. Ms. 34,590 f 168.
42. Southampton University Archives, Palmerston Papers, MPC/1593.
43. J. C. MacDonnell The Life and Correspondence of William Connor Magee, London 1896, i, 197.

44. D. W. R. Bahlman 'The Queen, Mr Gladstone & Church Patronage' in Victorian Studies, June 1960 Vol 3, 353. O. Chadwick The Victorian Church, London 1968, i, 475.
45. A. Trollope The Clergymen of the Church of England Leicester 1974, 96.
46. B. L. Add. Mss. 44,425 f 235. Significantly Durnford's biographer, reflecting the values of the later era, altered the details of the nomination, claiming quite erroneously that it was Gladstone who offered Chichester to Durnford and it was Gladstone who recognised that Durnford would prefer a less taxing see. L. Stephens The Life of Bishop Durnford, London 1899, 106. For Gladstone's detailed dealings in church patronage see the diary of his secretary: D. W. R. Bahlman (ed) The Diary of Edward Hamilton, Oxford 1974. W. T. Gibson's 'Gladstone and the Llandaff Vacancy of 1882' in The Transactions of the Cymmrodorion, 1987, gives an insight into the lengths that Gladstone went to in order to get the right man for the right see.
47. B. L. Add. Mss. 44,545, f 30.
48. *ibid*, 44, 483 f 192.
49. Though late in the century and into the twentieth the Archbishops of Canterbury received direct applications. E.g. Lambeth Palace Library Temple Ms. 15, ff 295-297.
50. quoted in A. Haig Victorian Clergy, London 1984, 10.
51. Columbia University, New York, Butler Library, Ms. X825T34-56 Vol 1 ff 91-93.
52. M. Bateson 'Clerical Preferment Under the Duke of Newcastle' in The English Historical Review, Vol 7 1892, 685.
53. B. L. Add. Mss. 40,489 f 283.
54. P. H. Ditchfield The Old Time Parson, London 1905, 65.
55. B. L. Add. Mss. 44,433 f 34.
56. *ibid*, 44,435 f 95.
57. *ibid*, 44,436 f 165. Edward Bickersteth was indeed unfortunate in this respect having lost two daughters in 1872: Alice and Irene. They were soon followed by their mother. The book giving an account of his child was The Master's Call Home. S. Bickersteth The Life and Letters of Edward Bickersteth, London 1901, p 11n.
58. B. L. Add. Ms. 44,441 f 213.
59. *ibid*, 44,438 f 149.
60. *ibid*, 44,445 f 159.

61. *ibid*, 44,448 f 113.
62. *ibid*, f 167.
63. *ibid*, 44,452 f 251.
64. G. W. E. Russell A Short History of The Evangelical Movement, London 1915, 152.
65. B. L. Add. Mss. 44, 489 f 162. & F. K. Aglionby The Life of Edward Henry Bickersteth DD, London 1907, 54. The Lives of Dr Edward Pocock... and Dr Thomas Newton *op. cit*, ii, 132.
66. For Bardsley see B. L. Add. Ms. 44,509 f 19. For Magee see J.C. MacDonnell The Life of Archbishop Magee London 1896, ii, 296.
67. C. J. Abbey *op. cit*, i, 372.
68. M. Bateson *op. cit*, 685.
69. L. Stone The Family, Sex and Marriage 1500-1800, London 1979, p 160 et seq.
70. D. Winstanley The University of Cambridge in the Eighteenth Century, Cambridge 1958, 11.
71. quoted in A. Russell The Clerical Profession, London 1980, 42.
72. M. Bateson *op. cit*, 685.