USE OF THESES

This copy is supplied for purposes of private study and research only. Passages from the thesis may not be copied or closely paraphrased without the written consent of the author.
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AS A PROFESSION IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND

by

ALAN GRAHAM LEIGH HAIG

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Australian National University

December 1980
This thesis is my own work.

Atan G.L. Haig
# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acknowledgements</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter One:</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy Growth:</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and its 'professional' context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Two:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Universities and the Clergy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Background factors and ordination</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Academic and intellectual factors</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Avenues for poorer men</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The question of theological training</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendixes 1-4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Three:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Training of Non-Graduate Clergy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction: demand</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The non-graduate students</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The debate</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Internal problems and scandals</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Later developments: the growth of central control</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Four:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dioceses and Ordination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Samples and the dioceses</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ordination</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The ordinands</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Five:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellows and Curates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The Fellows</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Pre-incumbency options</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Six:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patronage</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONTENTS (Cont'd)

CHAPTER SEVEN: BENEFICED AND BEYOND

1. Town and country 421
2. Professional and private incomes 444
3. Retirement and pensions 486

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION 503

APPENDIX: TABLES 1 to 15

BIBLIOGRAPHY
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My first acknowledgement must be to my supervisor, Professor Oliver MacDonagh; without his encouragement, and timely prodding, this thesis would never have been written at all. That its language is the better for his oversight, no reader of his will doubt. Many others have assisted also; and I am greatly indebted to the staff and students of the History Department of the Research School of Social Sciences, collectively, for their aid and encouragement.

In England I owed a great deal to the forbearance of the staffs of several libraries: above all, that of the Bodleian, who accommodated my need to have access to runs of stack material with great tolerance, and some departures from the letter of their rules. I was similarly aided by the Librarians of Pusey House, Oxford, and by the staffs of the West Sussex Record Office at Chichester, the County Record Offices at Carlisle and Wakefield, the Archives of Liverpool University, and both the Archives Department at Sheepscar, Leeds, and the local history section of the same city's Central Library.

I gratefully acknowledge both the access to their papers and the hospitality granted by the Rev. T. Park of Broughton-in-Furness, and by the Principal and the student librarians of Chichester Theological College. I am grateful also for access to some papers held by the Bishop of Ripon, and for the help of Canon Ashworth, that cathedral's Canon Librarian. I was also given generous access to the papers of the Additional Curates Society, the Curates' Augmentation Fund, and the Poor Clergy Relief Corporation.
A guilty non-typer like myself owes a vast amount to his transcribers. I am immensely grateful to Janice Aldridge and Margaret Lanigan, particularly, for their sustained labour in transforming my scrawl into type.

To be the spouse of a Ph.D. student is not a fate one would wish upon a friend: my gratitude to Sally is thus heightened by wonder at her having put up with it for three and a half years. To her, and to Peter, this thesis is dedicated.
ABSTRACT

The clergy in 1800 were by tradition part of the 'professional' world; but the professions were not large, nor were they clearly defined in terms either of their membership or of their duties and skills. Responding to both the pastoral needs and the political necessities of an industrialising, reforming nation, the Church reformed itself and greatly expanded its men and materiel. More clergy and clergy of higher calibre were ordained. At mid-century they compared well in education, zeal and rewards with the other growing and reforming professions.

Various factors were to weaken this position. The need for clergy ran ahead of the capacity of the traditional source of supply, the universities, to provide them. The clergy had always tended to be recruited from the poorer university men; now many were from modest backgrounds but without the advantage of a degree. This was at a time when educational background was more and more emphasised and when connections with the old but reforming institutions of university and public school were increasingly prized. The clergy's position within the universities, particularly, was anyway less assured after 1860: there were currents of thought and opinion hostile or indifferent to religion, while at the same time more churchmen questioned the sufficiency of the university course as a training for the Church. The interests, in both senses, of the universities and of the clergy were diverging.

There was, nevertheless, considerable concern in the Church at the weakening of the tie to the universities. But there was no concerted response, if only because the Church possessed no means of making such a response. Theological colleges were set up and run almost as private institutions - or at the most, episcopal ones. They were needed, yet they were resented by many clergy and church people.
Gradually there developed a feeling of corporate responsibility to them; at the same time - the last quarter of the century - ordination procedures and requirements moved closer to standardisation. But even in the early 20th century there was far to go.

If entry requirements seemed to be approximating slowly to the standards of other professions, in their ordained lives the clergy were ever less like other professionals. The fact that, like them, their work was more specialised than before, was outweighed by the exceptional nature of the work itself, at a time when other professions largely rested their social acceptance upon their practical utility and disinterested services. And the careers of the clergy were even more clearly anomalous. The parochial system - with its concomitants of inflexibility, widely dispersed patronage, and an arbitrarily distributed and inadequate endowment income - was incapable of providing a satisfactory 'career structure' for most clergy. The apparent stability of the Church's agricultural income, and the widespread possession of private means by the clergy, delayed full recognition of the problems. By 1900 these factors were ceasing to apply. And though the town parishes were able to benefit from increased voluntary lay contributions, it was to prove immensely difficult to change the habits and assumptions ingrained by centuries of reliance upon an independent clerical endowment.

Before about 1860 the Church recruited more men than the universities could provide. Thereafter it found that a massive growth in the traditional educating institutions of the clergy was accompanied by at best a slow, and certainly a disproportionately small, growth in the number of ordinands. Doctrinal unsettlement doubtless contributed to this fact; especially as the level of religious commitment required for ordination had risen. It was also important that young men had less contact with the clergy in their school and university lives.
The practical and financial problems may, however, have been the most important of all; churchmen thought that such matters weighed particularly with parents, who usually had considerable influence on the careers of their sons. For the Church already presented an unhappy compromise: it would not renounce the social and intellectual standards of the professions, but it patently did not provide, for most of its clergy, the ways and means to maintain them.
ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used in the text and references (full titles are given in the Bibliography).

Reference Works:


Venn : J.A. Venn, Alumni Cantabrigienses ..., Pt. II, 6 vols., 1940-54.

Burke L.G. and Burke P. and B. : Burke's Landed Gentry and Peerage and Baronetage.


Church Records:

Ch.C. : Chronicle of the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury.

J.C. : Journals of the Convocation of the Province of York.

C.C.R. : Church Congress Reports.

Parliamentary Papers:


Secondary Works:


NOTE: Place of publication of all printed works cited is London, unless specified otherwise.
INTRODUCTION

The claims of the Victorian clergy to the interest of historians need little special pleading. They were representatives and officers of one of the central institutions of Victorian Britain. The Church of England loomed large in the considerations of politicians, educators and intellectuals, social reformers, and ordinary Sunday worshippers of all shades of religious persuasion. The clergy themselves constituted the largest body of 'professional men' in the country, and were distributed over it with a regularity and evenness that was unique - however imperfect it seemed to many churchpeople. There was a clergyman prominent in almost every village, and somewhere in every town. It was not until the last decades of the century that there was a generation of respectable Anglican adults¹ which had not been educated in the main by clergymen, at school and at university.

Nor have the clergy lacked historians. There are old-fashioned but thorough and well-informed books by C.K.F. Brown and F.W.B. Bullock². There are many lighter books, which have at least anecdotal value³. And there are more weighty scholarly works.

1. The word 'Anglican' is avoided in the text hereafter; in the Victorian period it had 'party' overtones - meaning 'High Church' (and even 'Romanizing') to many Protestants, and meaning moderate (in a pejorative sense) to many Anglo-Catholics. The use of the phrase 'the Anglican communion' was increasingly common after 1867 (the first Lambeth Conference), but the word itself was far from neutral for many years.

2. A history of the English clergy 1800-1900 (1953) and A history of training for the ministry ... 1800-1874 (St. Leonard's, 1955) - though only the latter is still a useful reference work.

3. Among recent examples are A. Tindal Hart, The curate's lot (1970), Brenda Colloms, Victorian country parsons (1977) and Peter C. Hammond, The parson and the Victorian parish (1977): all four male authors so far named were or are clergymen.
Dianna McClatchey's work *Oxfordshire clergy 1777-1869* (1960) is expert and illuminating on the parochial structure of her area, and provides an important description of the various roles the clergy filled in their parishes and the wider community. The latter subject of roles has been studied in considerable detail by A.J. Russell⁴, who gives a straightforward but thorough exposition of the changing emphasis placed on these different roles. Using, inter alia, the same rich evidence provided by the writings of the Victorian pastoral theologians, Brian Heeney⁵ has illustrated the clergy's shared ideals, and many of their methods and activities, in the mid-19th century. In these works, and in a large number of good books and articles about the church in general, or about other aspects of its history⁶, the background and many of the details relevant to the Victorian clergy may be found without great difficulty.

Yet this study is not self-consciously narrow in scope, an attempt to fill a gap in the detail of the historiographical mosaic. Its form is, indeed, perhaps too broad for its own good, at least in terms of the detailed ground covered. It began with the naive

---

4. A sociological analysis of the clergymen's role: with special reference to its development in the early 19th century (Oxford D.Phil., 1970): this is summarised, with much on modern problems, in his *The clerical profession*, 1980, which appeared too late to be used here, though it seems not to require any modifications of my views. (Another sociological work with historical background, *The fate of the Anglican clergy: a sociological study*, 1980, by A.P.M. Coxon and R. Towler, I have not yet seen.)


question (for I know very little about the subject) of how far the clergy, as a social group, were affected by 'the decline of religious faith' in later Victorian England. It soon became clear that the question was either too vague or too complex to be suitably tackled by an empiricist tyro like myself. But in the meantime I had realised that there had indeed been a noticeable change in the educational backgrounds of the clergy by about 1860. The questions as to what caused this, and what effects it had upon both the self-image of the clergy and the ways others saw them, have run - unevenly - through the whole study. The questions are not wholly original, but the field seemed open to a sort of basic empirical approach which had not been previously essayed. Another question tempted me greatly at the beginning, and echoes of it may be found in various places: what made different sorts of men want to be ordained at different times? But I still do not know how this can be satisfactorily answered; it remains one of those salutary questions which can only abash the historian.

The structure of the thesis is uncomplicated. After an introductory first chapter, in which the issue of 'professionalisation' is discussed, and some basic background blocked in, it follows roughly the pattern of a clerical life. The universities of Oxford and Cambridge are the subject of a large second chapter; this is called for both by their continued centrality in the provision of clergy, and by the related fact that the declining position of the Church at the universities was a major concern of many influential contemporary churchmen. There is also the advantage that the corporate intellectual and religious life of the universities was recorded at copious length by protagonists of all positions on the
religious spectrum: individually suspect, cumulatively these works provide a unique record. Here, if anywhere, one can at least approach the question of motivation in terms of articulated thought. All this has been excellently studied by others, and I stress that it is as background that I use it. I hoped to use samples of honours men from both places to discover the timing and extent of the effects, on the intellectual cream of the universities, of the well-known broader trends. In the event I was confined by the evidence to Cambridge. This was a pity in that Oxford was much the more dramatic religious arena in the period (c.1840-75); but perhaps this very fact, and the great attention it has received, makes it less necessary to have supporting statistical evidence.

If this evidence threatens to overwhelm at least some sections of the chapter, it must be pleaded that it is all that I claim to be original in it (or at least in the sections directly concerned with Cambridge). I trust, too, that the evidence of these honours graduates has not been made to cover too wide a field. There are two sections in the chapter which look away from the universities, to related institutions which, respectively, aided poor intending clergymen to obtain degrees, and trained (usually richer) graduates to be better clergy. From this chapter it was a natural progression to look at the growing supply of clergy who had not been to Oxford or Cambridge; they and their colleges (or at least the two main early ones) are the subject of chapter three.

The rest of the thesis attempts to cover the major milestones and characteristics of clerical life. From this point there is much reference to samples of clergy ordained between 1841 and 1873, the
years when the change in clergy backgrounds was consolidated. The aim here was not only to describe and discuss the clerical 'career', but also to relate it to the backgrounds of the clergy. It will cause no surprise that the widely differing backgrounds described in chapters two and three were matched by prospects and careers as various after ordination. The nature of the subject - shot through as it is with anomalies and exceptions, and permeated by the institutionalised variety of parishes and independence of the clergy - precludes anything like a 'comprehensive' treatment in such a brief space. The aim is simply to clarify the main elements of the Church qua career, as they affected the ordinary clergy. (There is no attempt at all to consider the factors affecting the winning of the Church's few 'prizes': the successes of the Church are not unknown, and are far less in need of study than their humbler brethren.)

This, it will certainly be objected, is a very partial view - the clergy without their theology, and without consideration even of their day-to-day work. This cannot be gainsaid. But it can be pleaded, first, that the balance has always been rather too much the other way: not that there may not remain much useful work to be done on the thought, theological and otherwise, of the English clergy; but the outlines are well-known. The struggles of Church parties, the agonies of theological restatement, must largely be taken as

7. The main Tables on these samples have been placed in the Appendix at the end of the thesis: this is because they tend to be referred to in more than one place; and also because they amount - with some other general tables - to a reasonably cohesive collection, for those with a strong stomach for figures.
read here; though this study may, in its turn, shed a small light
upon the channels by which the ideal splendours of theology were
actually presented in the parishes and pulpits of England. Second,
and despite the acknowledged heightening of vocation and of religious
standards among the clergy, they remained a body with many and
continuing points of contact and common interest with the lay world.
'Whatever else the ordained ministry is, it is also a profession',
wrote Leslie Paul;\(^8\) and the approach that he used in 1961-3 was at
least as applicable a century before (though obviously one cannot
hope for a similar fullness and exactness).

Another objection may be urged: that there is here a lack
of comparative perspective. Why, for instance, not compare the
clergy with missionaries, Dissenting ministers, or Catholic priests?
A main reason, undeniably, is that this would require a great deal more
research; so far as I am aware only missionaries\(^9\) have received the
sort of attention which would allow comparisons to be made without
considerable primary research. But at the same time they really do
not constitute a comparable 'profession' to that of the home clergy
(despite the fact that some ended up in English parishes). I do not

9. As Stuart Piggin points out at the start of his paper,
'Assessing 19th-century missionary motivation: some
considerations of theory and method', in D. Baker ed.,
Religious motivation: biographical and sociological
problems for the Church historian, Oxford 1978, p.327:
I have read only one of the 4 theses he mentions (by
S.C. Potter) but the evidence from this, from N. Gunson's
Messengers of Grace. Evangelical missionaries in the South
Seas 1797-1860, Melbourne 1978, and from the very recent
article by C.P. Williams in the Journal of Ecclesiastical
History Vol. 31 (July 1980) is consistent on the
relatively low status of most missionaries. Though the
Melanesian missionaries (D.L. Hilliard, God's gentlemen, A
history of the Melanesian Mission, 1849-1942, St. Lucia,
Queensland, 1978) and also (I gather from Dr Piggin) those
in India, were distinctly better-educated and more 'gentlemanly'.


mean that the clergy are *sui generis* and therefore not amenable
to comparative studies; and undoubtedly comparisons with the
nonconformist ministry will be useful. But the clergy were
sufficiently unique to be studied alone without, in my view, serious
loss of perspective. More relevant comparisons may be with the
secular professions. These are touched upon in the thesis,
sufficiently I hope to be useful. But again, there is little
published work of a kind that could be used in much more detail;
indeed the lack of basic background data for most lay professionals
(compared to the clergy, with their ordination papers and usually
an entry in the university register) makes such studies difficult.

Time inevitably imposed constraints on my scope. The use of
large samples necessitated spending long periods on the mechanical
process of tracking down the individuals in various registers and
directories, and in tracing them through ordination papers. Some
were then traced in further detail, through visitation returns,
local directories, and their wills (the main items). I trust that
my use of all this does not appear merely as the effort to produce
a result commensurate with the labour involved. But certainly the
months thus absorbed were so much lost to general archival research.
Then also much of my time in England was perforce spent in reading
at least a portion of the immense book and pamphlet literature that
might be relevant. The negative effects show in two admitted *lacunae*
in my evidence: the complete absence of private papers consulted,
and - probably more serious - the almost complete lack of reference
to the Church press. That the thesis would have been better for
either or both of these is certain: that it is adequate without them
is my sincere hope.
The result is that the thesis rests heavily on the following sources: biographical and statistical material, largely on the sample graduates and sample clergy, but including some Church-wide statistics: institutional records (particularly of the Elland Society, the theological colleges, and the Curates' Augmentation Fund): and the published debates (and reports) of the Convocations and the Church Congresses. Also, when I began I quarried eagerly into the mountain of clerical biography deposited by the Victorians; and if the specific results amount often to little more than the occasional anecdote or example, the experience was assuredly an excellent introduction to the subject - particularly once the limitations of the material became clear. The Church of England being what it is, records (like activities, and authority) are dispersed, and often difficult to track down. It would be ideal to be able to study more of the theological colleges, more of the Clerical Education Societies, and a lot more of the clergy charities. (And it would, for instance, have been better if I could have followed up in detail men who moved from diocese to diocese, as most did - but the logistics of working with the records of perhaps a score of dioceses were impossibly difficult.) All these will doubtless be studied one day; here I have only been able to use examples, and relate them at best as I could to a general picture.

There are other lines of research which I have not attempted, but which it may be useful to point out. There is, for instance, a

10. The St Aidan's papers took considerable work to find, and they had simply been moved recently: while after quite full efforts, I was unable to find any Ripon visitation returns after 1857: presumably they do exist somewhere, and would be a most valuable source. Societies of course vary in their policies: I gather that the Poor Clergy Relief Corporation disposed of many records quite recently, in an access of 'practical' housecleaning.
great need for more studies of the Church in the large towns: the mechanisms of 'Church extension' need closer examination, with more emphasis upon the issues raised by W.R. Ward in his paper on Manchester. It would be valuable to have a clearer idea of the sort of clergy available for particular towns, and of how far the Church was dependent upon, for instance, non-Oxbridge clergy, or young and unmarried clergy, or upon clergy of private means. (A related topic of interest is the extent and development of 'private enterprise' Church activity - the proprietary chapels, and the churches run up as speculations by builders or clergymen).

Patronage, below the level of important Crown appointments, is also ripe for study: apart from looking at the less exalted Crown patronage, it should be possible to trace the use of patronage by some other holders, including lay ones: some of the less reputable of the latter might well provide more insight into the 'patronage market'. And the growth of lay parochial help is a large subject which would certainly repay closer attention.

11. E.R. Wickham's study of Sheffield, Church and people in an industrial city (1975) remains unique.


13. The housing of the clergy in towns (where there was often no vicarage for many years, and usually no provision for curates) merits research also.

14. The Dowager Countess of Cardigan, ex-mistress of the notorious Earl and ostracised from respectable society, was a considerable patron: it is hard to imagine that families of this type - and the clubs and fashionable regiments must have been full of patrons - did not sell their patronage rights, rather than taking seriously the uncongenial duty of appointing good clergy.

But such questions constitute the matter for at least another thesis. With a subject like this, it is impossible to be comprehensive. I have tried to provide a somewhat new view of the clergy. I trust that it is not unjust to a body of men whose motives were often unimpeachable. It will however be very clear that most were well aware that they belonged to a profession which could not afford - even if it desired - to be wholly unworldly in its concerns, or in its rewards. After all, the most unworldly of clerics still had a 'background', and still had to find a title, to be ordained, to make arrangements about stipends, to benefit (or otherwise) from patronage, and often, to support a family. The prominence of these matters in the circumstances of individuals is naturally a question that only detailed biography can show. But no clergyman could quite escape them. A view that concentrates on these themes is certainly incomplete, but the part with which it deals is not unimportant, and its consideration is hence not without value.