Walker, Matthews and the Sufferings of the Lincolnshire Clergy

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The central part of this article may interest only those who study closely the religious upheavals of the middle of the 17th century. It is hoped, however, that some of it will be of value to the general reader as an indication of the way in which the clergy who suffered at the hands of Parliament during the Civil War and Commonwealth are regarded nowadays.

In 1714 John Walker's great work appeared. Its full title is An Attempt towards recovering an account of the Numbers and Sufferings of the Clergy of the Church of England, Heads of Colleges, Fellows and Scholars etc. which were Sequester'd, Harass'd etc. in the late Times of the Grand Rebellion, occasion'd by the Ninth Chapter (now the second volume) of Dr Calamy's Abridgment of the Life of Mr Baxter, together with an Examination of that Chapter.

This work was long regarded as 'gospel' by those who were Anglican in their sympathies, and an attempt will be made to assess its value for today. At first, however, a little may be said about the sources of the information about Lincolnshire contained in it. The writer of this article had occasion to take a rapid, and by no means comprehensive, look at the Walker manuscripts in the Bodleian Library. What he saw was interesting.

During the years of research Walker had a rival, Dr Charles Goodall, who eventually handed his papers over to Walker. The manuscript Walker C.I.1 contains a letter written by Samuel Wesley to Goodall from Epworth, 7 November 1704: 'Good Sir, I have been so hurryd with my Harvest and other affairs that I hant time to send you what I promisd concerning the Persecution of the Clergy hereabouts in the time of the Rebellion... What's below is well attested.' The letter is accompanied by an account from 'A Reverend and Learned Clergy-man in the Diocese of Lincoln aged above seventy years'. This man had known John Coup of Corringham, whom he described as 'a person of fair character and his crime was reading the Common Prayer'. He told of the death of George Stratford on the road to Northampton when he was returning after a vain effort to obtain money due from the intruder at Bassingham. He spoke of the sufferings of Thomas Hurst of Leadenham and Dr Luddington the Archdeacon of Sleafow, and stated that Dr Kettleby was 'sequester'd out of Scotter'. Then, after retelling what his informant had had to say about sufferers in other counties, Wesley concluded 'Thus far that reverend person'. He himself wrote about Robert Holder who was ejected from Claxby and Normandy-le-Wold: 'he and his wife and family had six pounds per annum allowed them to live on'.

Walker C.I. f. 31 (no. 25 altered to 21) has an account by William Chapman, vicar of Minting, of his old schoolmaster, Thomas Gibson, and of it Walker made great use.

It appears that Goodall sent a printed paper entitled 'Queries' to the clergy at the Easter visitation of the archdeaconry of Lincoln in 1705, and that the Registrar forwarded the information that he had received from the incumbents of Gedney, East Keal, and Barrowby concerning Robert Rich, Robert Hastings, and Thomas Hurst. The Registrar added, 'I received the inclosed and noe more.'

One difficulty in obtaining information was that by 1705 two generations had passed since the sequestrations had begun. So Wesley wrote, 'I thought that I might have sent you more, but a Friend from whom I expected to receive considerable assistance in that affair is lately dead.' The Rector of East Keal obtained his information from the son of Robert Hastings and added, 'this is the best account that he can now give in the matter, for though he lived in that time and was a spectator of those times, yet time hath worn some things out of his memory'. Time explains also why there are some inaccuracies in the references by Wesley's septuagenarian to Scotter. Indeed, it is difficult to fit Kettleby into the Scotter story.

Goodall had other difficulties to contend with besides failing memory and the death of possible informants. Documents had disappeared. In an index at the House of Commons Walker found reference to two committee books containing articles presented against 'orthodox' clergymen in Lincolnshire, but could not find them. After much search Goodall managed to obtain a copy of a summary which the Reverend John Nelson had made of one book. He handed this over to Walker, and it may be found in the Bodleian (Walker C.6.d.4).

In spite of all the difficulties Walker wrote an invaluable book, and preserved material that might have been lost for ever. Of course it is a partisan work, but it should be read in its original form, not only for its details but because its very partisanship helps us to understand why the sufferings of the royalist clergy produced a legacy of resentment that made a comprehensive church impossible in 1662. One may admit that Paul Prestland of Market Deeping brought some of his sufferings upon himself, but to read Walker’s harrowing account of the plight of Prestland and his family makes one comprehend why the defeated were so unyielding when the wheel once more turned and they were again the victors.

Since Walker’s time fresh material has become available. There is space only to mention two sources.

Firstly, when Dean Gordon of Lincoln died in 1845, his executors sold to the British Museum three manuscripts dealing with the work of the Committee for Plundered Ministers. That was a Committee which rapidly became known as the Committee for Plundering Ministers because, although it was set up to assist those plundered by royalists, it soon extended its work to removing those whose sympathies were anti-Parliament. These three manuscripts in the British Library, Add. MSS 15669-71, are of interest to Lincolnshire readers as a copy was made at some time of the Lincolnshire portions. This was secured by W. E. Foster, who published it in Guildford in 1900 as The Plundered Ministers of Lincolnshire. That book also contained details of augmentation to Lincolnshire ministers as contained in State Papers 22/1, 2 in the Public Record Office. The book is still useful, but should be read with caution. One reason is that it must not be assumed that these are all the existing minute books of that Committee. There are eight more in the Bodleian, numbered 322-9. Again, the man who made the Foster manuscript does not appear to have been always good at reading 17th-century script or to have been familiar with Lincolnshire names. Thus on pages 55 and 56 of The Plundered Ministers the name of John Howe the vicar of Horbling appears as Flower and Low. Sometimes it was the
London scribe who made mistakes. Thus Bodleian 324.170d had Robert Alford’s benefice as Harborough instead of Ludborough.3

Secondly, and for Lincolnshire the most important, is the rediscovery of one of the volumes which Walker failed to find at the House of Commons. It is now in Lincoln City Library and has become known to students of this period as the Lincolnshire Manuscript. It was transcribed and edited for Lincolnshire Architectural and Archaeological Society Reports and Papers by Sir Francis Hill in 1938 under the title of ‘The Royalist Clergy of Lincolnshire’. This manuscript contains the evidence presented to the Earl of Manchester’s Committee for removing scandalous ministers. It shows how inadequate Nelson’s abstract was.

Making use of these and other sources, A. G. Matthews produced his great Walker Revised, being a revision of J. Walker’s Sufferings of the Clergy during the Grand Rebellion (Oxford, 1948). In the words of I. M. Green, he ‘qualifed Walker’s more extravagant claims, but added over a thousand names’. Under Lincolnshire, Matthews gives 91 names, and two-fifths of these are not in Walker. Both Walker and Matthews include not only men ejected from benefices but also those ejected from university posts, curates, and those who suffered imprisonment or plundering without being deprived. Yet Matthews’s figure of 2245 for the parishes which lost their incumbents is about a thousand more than Walker’s.4

Writing in The Puritans in Power in 1913, G. B. Tatham said about evictions, ‘It is of course impossible to arrive at anything like an approximate figure. The sources from which an accurate list might have been compiled are no longer forthcoming…. Without these valuable records the field of investigation becomes so vast that the collection of such details as have survived must be left to the patient research of local historians.’ Matthews has almost achieved the impossible, and yet the investigation of a small part of the vast field may enable the local historian to modify a few of the details of Matthews’s wide canvas.5

There are, firstly, a few corrections of some importance that can be made to the list in Walker Revised.

(a) Henry Cook (Walker Revised p. 249). The rector of Stamford St George was certainly ordered to be deprived, but, if the order was ever carried out, it was soon rescinded. The son of Henry Cook, clerk, was buried at St George’s in 1650, George Anton of Stamford left him £3 for preaching his funeral sermon in 1654, and Cook was buried as rector in 1655. When George Cawthorne was admitted in November 1655 it would not be as an interim minister but as a successor.6

(b) Matthews gives Thomas Ketelwell (p. 253) as still rector of Saltfleetby St Clement in 1643, but he had moved to Cuxwold in 1631. It is true that a news sheet gives a ‘Master Kerlewle’ as taken a prisoner when Gainsborough fell in July 1643, but he is more easily identified with Laurence Carlisle of Bishop Norton, which is geographically nearer.7

(c) Hugh Maplesden (p. 254) had left Winceby by 1639 when Patrick Mateland was admitted. The latter was, therefore, the man who yielded to Thomas Upchurch before 17 August 1647. Mateland was living at Horncastle on 13 March 1645-6 when his son John was baptised there. He subscribed in 1662.8

Secondly, there are a few major additions:

(a) The parish register for Eagle has an entry made by John Cook saying that his ‘first coming again to live at Eagle’ was on 5 December 1660. He was at Eagle in 1638 and subscribed in 1662.9

(b) In Algekirk church there is a memorial to Basil Berridge who was ‘ob fidelitatem Regi et Ecclesiae Anglicanae a rebellibus diu cruciatus’.10

(c) John Watson succeeded Ketelwell at Saltfleetby St Clement in 1631. Edmund Gibson’s edition of Camden’s Britannia (1695, p. 479) says that Watson was imprisoned for forty weeks while a militia drummer officiated in the parish.

Thirdly, there is a number of less important corrections or additions to be made to the information Matthews gives:

(a) Abraham Allen, deprived in 1648, was not incumbent of North Witham, which was ministered to by Barnabas Smith from 1610 to 1654. Allen was presented to Witham-on-the-Hill in 1641 (Bishop’s Certificate), and it was there that Edward Clarke was admitted in 1648 (Lords’ Journal, X, 350).

(b) Matthews points out that there is no evidence that William Bardon of Osbournby was sequestered. It might be added that the Liber Cleri of 1662 (fol. 23d) states that he was ordained deacon and priest in 1627. The man ejected from Felixkirk, Yorks., in 1656 was not this man, but the son of a former incumbent of that place. (See J. C. A. Venn, Alumni Cantabrigiensis for the various Bardons.)

(c) Henry Bates held the benefice of South Kelsey St Mary. (Bishop’s Certificate 1637). John Garthinge was not an interim minister, as he was presented to South Kelsey St Nicholas on the death of Thomas Atkinson in 1656 (Lambeth, Comm. III.5.28).

(d) Richard Bollas of Asgarby, Sleaford. Richard Goddard was an interim minister here in 1655 (LAO Archivist’s Report XIV, p. 44). He moved to Normanby 1660.

(e) Dame Anne, wife of Edward Bullen of Sutterton, was a daughter of the Earl of Argyll (H.M.C., House of Lords’ Papers IV, App. p. 34).

(f) William Clerk of North Scarle. The intruder ‘Feux’ was probably the William Foulkes who was at Carlton Moorland in 1653 (Will of John Pregin. L.N.Q., XXII, app. 315). He was admitted there 1662.

(g) William Fetherston of North Cockerington and Alvingham may have been sequestered before 24 April 1645 when Henry Huddleston was referred to the Assembly for Cockerington St Mary’s (B. L. Add. MS. 15669, 59,61). As Francis Barkwith was admitted to Alvingham in 1647 (Add. MS. 15671.103d) the two parishes may for a time have been held separately.

(h) Thomas Forster of South Witham was almost certainly the man who went to Gayton-le-Wold in 1657, as the incumbent of North Witham was one of those who testified to his suitability (Comm. III.6.104).

(i) Edward Greathead of Great Sturton did not later hold Leveton, Notts, but the north mediety of Leveton, Lincoln. He was presented to that benefice in 1660 (46th Report of the Deputy Keeper of Public Records, 1856, App. I, p. 57), but was actually there in 1658 (LAO, Quaker Book of Sufferings) and perhaps as early as 1652 when Edmund Pinchebeck died. John Oliver was at Great Sturton in December 1646 (P.R.O., S.P., 22/1. 151d).

(j) Anthony Harwood of Barnoldby-le-Beck. The interim Edward Smith moved to Beelsby in 1648 (Lords’ Journal, X,613) and was succeeded by Tristram Sugar. The Liber Cleri of 1662, fol. 43, says that Sugar was instituted by act of Parliament.

(k) Robert Hastings of East Keal. William Johnson was an interim here before Drake (P.R.O., S.P. 18/183, 136. C.S.P.D. 1658-9, p. 194 called the place ‘Hart’ Keal).

(l) Robert Holder of Claxby and Normanby-le-Wold. It is possible that Thomas Wharfe should be counted as an
interim minister here. He was not presented to both benefices until 1660, but according to the Grimsby parish register he was at Normandy about 1655 and his son Richard was baptised there about 1653 (Alumi Cantabrigiense).

(m) Richard Hollingsworth was still at Fillingham in 1658 (LAIQ, Quaker Book of Sufferings).

(n) Charles Hoole of Great Ponton. Interim ministers were (1) Thomas Rastell, who may have arrived as early as 1647 and died there in 1655 (P.C.C. Wills 1655, 83) and (2) James Twist who subscribed here in 1662, but may have come here as early as 1655.

(o) William Howson of Bigby and Somery. Add the name of Samuel Male as an interim minister, perhaps from 1652 when Willsby moved. He was son of Lot Male of Folkingham (LAIQ, Aswarby Deeds 13.2(3)) and was ejected 1660 (A. G. Matthews, Calamy Revised, Oxford, 1934, p. 334).

(p) Anthony Peniston of Stickney was perhaps the man who was appointed ‘register’ at Stow in 1653 (Parish register). William Strawson was probably here from 1651 when Obadiah Howe departed to Horncastle. His name last appears in the Thorpe St Peter’s Vestry Book in 1649. In 1655 Strawson’s name headed a list of Stickney inhabitants (Archivists Report VIII.13). He moved to East Kirby 1660.

(q) Robert Sharp of Heckington. According to E. Trollope’s A History of Sleaford and of the Wapentakes of Flaxwell and Aswardshul, 1872, p. 386, John Ducklins was here as an intruder 1646-60. He was here in 1652 (will of Robert Howett, L.N.Q. XIX app.) and went to Helpringham in 1661.

(r) Christopher Smith was at Deeping St James.

(s) Raphal Throckmorton of Swaby and South Ormsby. The interim minister at the latter place was Thomas West, not Weston.

(t) William Underwood of Hareby. Thomas Palfreyman may not have been here as an interim minister. A mistake between Hareby and Haceby is easily made and he was at the latter place in 1662.

Fourthly, there are a few doubtful matters which may be worth mentioning:

(a) Walker described those who lost one of two benefices as ‘half sufferers’. Among such men were Robert Hazellwood (p. 251) who lost Fleet but retained Kirkby Underwood, and Robert Meres (p. 254) who lost Washington but kept Hougham-on-the-Hill. Thomas Hirst of Ludborough and Branston appears to have been such a man, although the evidence is indirect. That there were two Thomas Hirst or Hirsts is clear from the fact that two such men lent horses to the king, and Maddison says that the Barrowby and Leadenham man was married to Anne Somersall of Grantham while the other married Hester, daughter of William Farmery, rector of Aspacham and Springthorpe and widow of Edward Hilles, one time rector of Ludborough. In July 1627 a Thomas Hurst was appointed to Ludborough. Two months later Farmery was presented, but it is Hurst who was rector in 1638 with John Lawson as his curate. If this Hurst or Hirst acquired Branston in 1638 and moved there, he would have needed a curate at Ludborough. In 1647 Robert Alford, who had fled from Sleaford, gained the benefice of Ludborough by way of compensation, but there is no evidence of his admission formally until 1653. It would seem that Hurst lost the benefice of Ludborough, while retaining that of Branston. In 1653 John Sackett was admitted to Branston, the benefice being void. In the same year Alford was presented to Ludborough which was vacant by death. When a man gained possession of a sequestered benefice there could be no formal presentation until the dispossessed incumbent was dead.

(b) The case for regarding Thomas Bradley of Swithby as one of the dispossessed is weaker. He had articles exhibited against him in June 1647, and George Campion who was vicar in 1662 was described as instituted by act of Parliament.

(c) Similar uncertainty arises over Henry Barrett, who had gone to Orby in 1638. One might have thought that he had remained there until he was presented to Castle Bytham in March 1660-1, but in December 1646 the Committee for Plundered Ministers referred a Thomas Barrett to the Assembly as minister for Orby, and in 1650 Robert Dennis of Orby left money to Jasper Justice, minister of that place. Justice moved to Edington in 1655. In 1660 he was presented to Leasingsham South by an Orby patroness.

It may have been noticed that wills sometimes supply useful information about incumbents. There is a good illustration of this in the case of Laurence Carlisle (p. 248). Matthews treats him as a ‘half sufferer’, but the fact that William Stapylton signed transcripts from 1645 might lead one to think that Carlisle lost Bishop Norton as well as Heaning. The will of Robert Emmerson of Bishop Norton, however, makes it clear that Carlisle was still minister there is 1651. The probability is that Stapylton was signing records of events that happened before his time, and it is worth noting that the registrar appointed in 1653 also signed these earlier records. Stapylton’s will is probated in 1660 and it is almost certainly the Kirtum-in-Holland man who entered St John’s, Cambridge in 1650 and became a B.D. in 1661. He was presented to Bishop Norton in 1656, and it seems likely that Carlisle died in that year.

This article suggests a few changes in the details provided by Matthews, and it in turn may be subject to revision. That is how historical research proceeds. But it is improbable that in the future much will emerge from Lincolnshire radically to change the picture presented by Matthews, Green and Tatham.

Two men were ejected from the one parish of Uffington at one time, and three men were said to have been removed from Scotter at different times. Such facts, along with the variation in sufferings, led Matthews to use benefices rather than individuals as a basis for statistics. He calculated that 80 Lincolnshire benefices lost their incumbents through the intervention of Parliament or its agents. The present writer has added and subtracted from Matthews’s list, but reached the same conclusion. Matthews observed that the number of ejections is important mainly because it enables us to calculate the number of the uneducated, upon whom the religious life of England at that time depended to a great extent. ‘There were probably enough old incumbents left to put the brake on the Puritan wheel.’ What mattered was that about seven-eighths of the Lincolnshire incumbents remained at their posts.

In the majority of cases we are not told in detail what the charges were against the accused, but Green has suggested that the university college which a man attended and the years when he did so, the period he spent in parish life before the introduction of Laudian ceremonies and his readiness or otherwise to accept preferment elsewhere under the new regime are guides to the man’s churchmanship. Using these criteria, an examination has been made of the Lincolnshire men whose benefices were sequestered before 1650. It appears that only a few were rigid High Churchmen. Most were ejected because they were either royalists or insufficiently enthusiastic for Parliament’s cause. Parliament could not afford to leave a great means of propaganda, the pulpit, in the hands of its enemies. As Tatham said, ‘the reasons for which the clergy were deprived were so frequently other than religious that they merely serve to indicate the strength
of the upheaval engendered by the war.\textsuperscript{16}

The ejections which took place in the 1650s were usually due to lack of zeal for the new Zion. Over the country as a whole the numbers do not seem to have been numerous, and a possible figure of twelve for Lincolnshire would seem to be proportionately high. If this is so, and the national records are fragmentary, the drive came not from the commissioners appointed in 1654 and 1657 but from the sectarian zeal of Major General Whalley.\textsuperscript{17}

It is interesting to notice the extent to which men who lost a benefice were either allowed to keep one far from the scene of trouble or were given another similarly remote. Thomas Holt of Stamford All Saints' and John Chappell of Innham were allowed to keep benefices outside the county for a long time, and John Tirenne, who lost St. Mary Woolchurch, London, retained Swayfield until 1658. At least six ejected Lincolnshire incumbents found fresh fields for ministry outside the county, and the churchwardens' accounts for St John's, Stamford, show that Thomas Pickard, ejected from Stamford St Mary's, was officiating in their parish in 1652. At least five of the ejected found new parishes in Lincolnshire, and when John Ouseley of Claypole lost his appeal against deprivation the Triers were told that he might have another living if he were presented to one. At least five men ejected from benefices elsewhere became interim ministers in Lincolnshire. Matthews did not include in their number Thomas Pennyman, ejected from Stotesley in Yorkshire, but the name of the patron shows that the living to which he was presented early in 1658 was the Lincolnshire Roxby. He could not be presented until Adeodatus Forman had died, but he may have officiated from 1647. At least nine outsiders ejected from college fellowships or benefices found refuge in Lincolnshire parishes.\textsuperscript{18}

These notes began with a reference to religious upheavals, but mention has been made of the continuity of incumbents. Much might also be said about the continuity of parochial organisation and life, but that is another subject. Let it be enough to say that the Restoration settlement would not have been so acceptable to the majority of the nation unless there had been such continuity.\textsuperscript{19}

\textbf{NOTES}

1 Bodleian MSS. C.1., pp. 400-3.
3 For a review of Foster's book, Lincolnshire Notes and Queries, VI, 96.
6 A number in brackets after a name refers to a page in Walker Revised; Lincoln MS pp. 258-60; L.N.O. XXI, app. p. 326; Lambeth, Comm. III, 4.371.
8 Liber Institutionum as printed in A.A.S.R., XXXIX, pt 2, p. 216; Horncastle Parish Register; B.L. Add. MS. 15671, 178.
10 L.N.O., III, appendix, p.1
12 B.L. Add. MS 15671, 68d; The Liber Clerii of 1662 is LAO, Lin. Dioc. Rec. L.C. V. For Campion f. 56d.
13 A.A.S.R., XXXIX, pt 2, pp. 204, 207; Bodl. MS 324, 162; LAO, Lincoln Wills, 1650-1624; Lambeth, Comm. III, 1, iii, 201.
15 Walker Revised, p. xvii.
17 Walker Revised, pp. xvi-xviii; T. Birch (ed.), A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurtell, 1724, IV, pp. 211, 411.
18 Walker Revised, passim; P.R.O., S.P., 18/181, 48 (Ouseley); Lambeth, Comm. III, 6.164 (Pennyman). Nine outsiders taking unequivalenced livings were: E. Bagshaw (Stoke South), W. Barwick (Bassingthorpe),