
‘So Cruel and Unjustifiable a Revolution’: Bishop George Pretyman Tomline and Edward Kilvington 1794–6

William Gibson

This article examines the correspondence between Edward Kilvington and the leading evangelical Thomas Haweis in the former’s attempt to retain the curacy of Fenstanton, Huntingdonshire. Kilvington had been accused of being a Methodist by Bishop George Pretyman Tomline, who wanted to rid his diocese of evangelicals. Pretyman Tomline’s prejudice against evangelicals was not unique but it was distinctive in its strength. Using Kilvington’s accounts of his difficulties in his letters to Haweis it is possible to reconstruct the problems faced by an evangelical curate who was subject to examination by his bishop. The article suggests that such problems were not uncommon, though they have not been examined in detail.

George Pretyman Tomline, bishop of Lincoln from 1787 to 1820 (when he was translated to Winchester) is largely remembered for his association with William Pitt, whose tutor and later secretary he was, and whom he advised on financial matters when he was a young clergyman. Pretyman Tomline was born George Pretyman but in 1803 took the additional name of Tomline when he inherited an estate from Marmaduke Tomline. As he is known to history by his full name he is referred to here as Pretyman Tomline. Pretyman Tomline was elevated to the bench of bishops at the age of thirty six – ‘too young, too young’ said George III – but gave way when Pitt told the King that but for Pretyman Tomline’s advice he would not have remained prime minister. He seems to have been a conscientious diocesan bishop holding regular visitations of his diocese (Ditchfield 2004). On his death, his obituary in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* recorded that, having inherited a baronetcy as well as large sums of money from two large legacies, his sense of his own superiority was somewhat over-awing to his clergy (*Gentleman’s Magazine* 204, 1828). Of his theological opinions what is known is that he was determinedly anti-Calvinist. His principal theological publications, the *Elements of Christian Theology*, published in two volumes in 1800, and *A Refutation of Calvinism*, published in 1811, both made clear his strong detestation of Calvinism (Tomline 1800, 1811). Peter Nockles has identified Pretyman Tomline as an old fashioned High Churchman, influenced by Patristic scholarship and ‘eirenicism towards conti-

mental Protestantism.’ (Nockles 1994, 156) While that was the case, Pretyman Tomline was also fervently anti-Catholic, asserting that Protestantism was an essential element in the British constitution (Tomline 1812, 10). What is not known of Pretyman Tomline is that he was as firm in his dislike of evangelicals as he was of Catholics. This article recounts an example of his stern anti-evangelicalism from 1794 when he seemed to be implacable in his treatment of a young curate in his diocese.

The young curate was Edward Kilvington, the son of a Wakefield shopkeeper, who had graduated from Jesus College, Cambridge in 1788, and received his MA in 1790. Thereafter he seems to have briefly held a fellowship of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge. He was ordained deacon by Archbishop John Moore of Canterbury at a general ordination at Lambeth Palace in September 1788 and priest by James Yorke, bishop of Ely, in May 1790 on the title of the curacy of Mepal cum Sutton, Cambridgeshire, of which the evangelical George Gaskin was the rector. It was one of a series of curacies Kilvington was to hold including in turn Knockholt in Kent, Downe near Orpington, and Orlingbury, Northamptonshire. Kilvington was only to receive a secure living, the perpetual curacy of Ossett cum Gawthorpe in Yorkshire, in 1796 (Ossett History). In 1818 he was appointed domestic chaplain to Robert first Baron Carrington (CCD, ID No 100092).

Edward Kilvington fell foul of Bishop Pretyman Tomline while he was curate of Fenstanton in Huntingdonshire, which then lay in the diocese of Lincoln but today lies in Cambridgeshire. Kilvington’s curacy is not recorded in the Church of England Clergy Database, but it is clear that he served the curacy under the incapacitated vicar, John Cook, and presumably took charge of Hilton Chapel, which lay in the parish, as well as the parish church. The dispute is recorded in the correspondence of Thomas Haweis, the leading evangelical clergyman and incumbent of nearby Aldwinckle, Northamptonshire, to whom Kilvington turned for help and advice during the conflict. Unfortunately we only have Kilvington’s side of the correspondence. It is not known how Kilvington and Haweis came to know one another but as their parishes were fairly close and both were

evangelical clergymen it seems likely that they knew one another well before the problems with Pretymen Tomline began. It also seems from the correspondence that their wives knew each other well.

The first indication that Kilvington's relations with the Bishop had soured came on 2 July 1794 when he wrote to Haweis from Fenstanton. Kilvington indicated that he had already had a correspondence with Bishop Pretymen Tomline, who was determined to root out evangelicals from his diocese. Kilvington had been reported to the Bishop as an evangelical and Pretymen Tomline had decided to turn Kilvington out of his curacy. Kilvington told Haweis that he had asked the Bishop for the names of his accusers and the precise nature of their complaints. It is clear that the allegations made against Kilvington were serious as the Bishop had already acted to remove him from the curacy. The Bishop wrote on 30 June 1794 that in removing Kilvington from the curacy of Fenstanton he had acted from 'a sense of duty and upon the fullest testimony.' He told Kilvington: 'I can therefore only desire you that you will lose no time in looking out for some other situation, not in my diocese.'

Kilvington wrote to Haweis after the latter's offer of advice concerning the legality of the bishop's actions. Kilvington asked Haweis to send the Bishop's letter to London for a legal opinion. He told Haweis that if he retained the curacy, 'you may look forward ... with the joyful expectation of seeing much fruit of my ministry; if he should determine to counteract my endeavors, I shall trust that it will be for the good' (Haweis MSS, 2 July 1794). This certainly sounded as if Kilvington and Haweis shared the same evangelical views.

Two weeks later, Kilvington wrote again from Fenstanton to Haweis. He thanked Haweis for taking an interest in his affairs. Kilvington also reported that the vicar of Fenstanton, John Cook, had written to the Bishop, in a way that Kilvington thought would be helpful to him. Kilvington included a copy of Cook's letter to Pretymen Tomline, which read:

Since I was honored with your last favour, I have made further enquiries about Mr Kilvington, the parishioners in general greatly desire his continuance, are not offended by his manner of performing services, do not think it enthusiastic, but only grave and serious, and this are ready to testify; and who above all the rest made Mr Cowling so skillful a judge I wonder much; who in a list of proper persons for the office of churchwarden, after I had disapproved of him, pointed out to me this very Mr Cooper, whom he had before complained of to your Lordship as an improper person. The only offence ever given was Mr Kilvington's requesting to hire of him a Piece of Close for his house, which he thought belonged to the Glebe but did not, but this is not the first instance wherein I have found Mr Cowling false, a man whom none in the whole parish, but his dependents, I understand, will be concerned with. Nothing therefore is alleged against Mr Kilvington but what is fully answered. The grounds on which I consented to his removal being done away, I cannot, unless his character be too great a contrast for some of his neighboring brethren, conscientiously and with any comfort remove him. As my resi-

dence would be of no benefit to the parishes, being past 60, so crippled with the gout, incapable either to dress or undress myself, expecting every year to be my last. I am unable to do any duty Your Lordship then will not, I trust, call for it in my particular case, unless you require it generally from all your clergy. I humbly once more entreat, as your Lordship has condescended to give Mr Cowling a hearing, that in justice you will also admit Mr Kilvington to an audience, whereby you can discern if he is that enthusiast, he is by his enemies so basely and maliciously represented.

Pretymen Tomline meant the word 'enthusiast' to mean one who claimed direct inspiration from God; it was meant as a derogatory term in the sense of possession and over-emotionalism. Cook added the postscript:

It is very hard, after having with difficulty obtained a resident curate, one wicked implacable man should so disorder the whole parish.

The Bishop had not responded to Cook's letter, but Kilvington was optimistic that the matter would be dropped. He wrote:

... if Erskine's opinion should coincide with Mr Smith's, Dr Jowett advises that we consult Sir William Scott, as the bishop, if he proceeds at all, will in all probability proceed ecclesiastically, it seems quite necessary that we should have the opinion of a civilian and there are particular reasons why Sir William Wynne should not be the person applied to – should it be agreed on all hands, as I hope it will, that the bishop is unable to proceed against Mr Cook, I shall certainly stand my ground. I should think it indeed an unwarrantable desertion of my post to act otherwise – A friend has just undertaken to have the whole of the case laid before Mr Pitt and should all other means fail, I shall think it a duty to try what effect political influence may have ... (Haweis MSS, 17 July 1794)

The individuals referred to were significant: Thomas Erskine was brother of the evangelical Lady Anne Erskine and a prominent lawyer who later became Lord Chancellor. Joseph Jowett was Regius Professor of Civil Law at Cambridge and a strong evangelical; Sir William Scott, later Lord Stowell, was a prominent lawyer and Judge of the High Court of Admiralty. Sir William Wynne Kt was a prominent ecclesiastical lawyer and Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury. Kilvington concluded his letter saying that it was in God's hands but that he was encouraged by the revival of religion in England.

Kilvington's letter showed that Pretymen Tomline was not dealing with a curate without either mental or financial resources. Not only was Kilvington able to call on some of the best legal minds, the reference to Pitt is significant. Kilvington clearly knew that Pretymen Tomline was Pitt's client; the nature of patronage was that the client should bring credit and reputation to the patron, not inconvenience and aggravation. To find his old tutor causing problems with evangelical clergy in his diocese was not perhaps what Pitt had intended by the appointment. Moreover, although Pitt was not himself an evangelical, he had a number of prominent evangelical sup-

porters and in turn supported some of the reforming causes espoused by evangelicals.

Haweis replied to Kilvington two days later, but it was only on 29 August 1794 that Kilvington wrote again to Haweis. Kilvington wrote that Haweis's advice was the same as most of his friends – and presumably was to contest the bishop's actions. Although Thomas Erskine had not replied, legal opinions were coming from Sir William Scott and Haweis's nephew, who was a lawyer. Kilvington had also sent a statement of the case to Serjeant Le Blanc and was awaiting a reply (Sir Simon Le Blanc was a leading lawyer, advocate for the University of Cambridge and later a judge). Kilvington and Haweis had only a short time in which to decide on the approach to be taken with the Bishop who was not giving up his investigations into Kilvington. Nevertheless Kilvington also wondered whether or not he could continue as curate of the parish in the circumstances. In the end he had decided that if he had a good case, it would be wrong to abandon his position. Part of the issue was that the vicar, John Cook, was confined to his house through 'hereditary gout' and had only left it once in the last two years. He needed crutches to move around his bedchamber and never went downstairs. Cook could not therefore be moved, and a journey of eighty miles to see the bishop at Buckden would be out of the question. If Kilvington's case was lost, Cook might be compelled to reside in his parish, which Kilvington thought would be very harsh indeed 'and little consonant with the spirit of our Law, but this is one principle point upon which I wish to be advised.' Kilvington asked Haweis if his nephew could prepare an opinion which he would need before he received what he feared would be an ultimatum from the Bishop (Haweis MSS, 29 August 1794).

A fortnight later, Kilvington was able to write to Haweis with an account of his meeting with the Bishop, which had taken place in his palace at Buckden. The Bishop began the meeting by saying that he supposed Kilvington had come concerning the curacy at Fenstanton. He had received complaints that Kilvington performed 'divine service in an enthusiastic manner, not only by Mr Cowling, but by several others also, who were better judges than he.' In such a case, the Bishop said he could not allow the minister concerned to remain in this diocese, but he was prepared to hear Kilvington's defence.

Kilvington replied that he was sorry to have incurred the Bishop's displeasure but he did not believe that he had done anything that could justify dismissal. He said 'that there are, my Lord, undoubtedly, many pious and well-meaning persons, who have acted irregularly and may be enthusiastically inclined, but I believe that in general I have been thought of very differently, as being of a grave rather than an enthusiastic turn ...' Kilvington was willing to give Pretymen Tomline all the reassurances that were in his power, either by responding to questions on matters of doctrine or by presenting all his sermons before him. Kilvington also urged the Bishop to enquire about him from Bishop Richard Beadon

of Gloucester and reminded him of the testimonial from Dr Elliston (Dr William Elliston was vicar of Keystone, Huntingdonshire, in the diocese of Lincoln and one of the longest serving clergy in the diocese). Pretymen Tomline said that he had no doubt about Kilvington's moral character but he believed that he had acted in 'an enthusiastic manner.' Kilvington argued that sometimes people were misrepresented as enthusiasts. The Bishop said that he didn't know of anyone who was undeservedly given the label of enthusiast. He asked Kilvington directly whether there were families in the parish who stayed away from the church because of his conduct. Kilvington denied that there were, except for Mr Cowling who had always been very irregular in his attendance and had recently stayed away completely.

The Bishop asked if there were people from other parishes who attended Kilvington's services and he admitted that many from the parishes of Drayton and St Ives did attend, but not at his invitation or because he sought to attract outsiders. The Bishop then challenged Kilvington over a recent application to expand the seating capacity in the parish church. Kilvington accepted that this was the case, but said that the churchwarden (Cowling's colleague) had suggested bringing more benches into the chancel, which was 'separated from the rest by glass doors and windows.' Pretymen Tomline asked whether any parishioners had been deprived of their seats because of the influx of people from outside the parish and whether they had complained about this inconvenience. Kilvington answered that he had never heard of any pews owners being deprived of their places and had not received any complaint from anyone about it.

The Bishop then charged Kilvington with allowing other clergy to officiate in the parish, despite his strict injunction against the practice – which was a clear attempt to avoid invitations to itinerant or Methodist clergy. Kilvington denied the accusation and stated that he had even abandoned a planned journey to Yorkshire in order to abide by the Bishop's insistence on the issue. Consequently Kilvington had lost the opportunity of introducing his new wife to his relations. Despite Kilvington's denial, the Bishop asked whether he had intended to employ anyone during this absence? The Bishop said he had heard that Kilvington had a very 'enthusiastical' acquaintance – perhaps a reference to Haweis – and if such persons were allowed to officiate in churches, it would give offence. Kilvington replied that he would have avoided employing anyone that could cause such a problem. The Bishop then asked Kilvington if he conformed rigidly to the liturgy. He replied that he did and that he did so from principle. Was Kilvington in the habit of reading one of the collects before the sermon, as was the custom? He replied that he did sometimes, but more often varied the form – however Kilvington said that if that was something on which the Bishop felt strongly, he would abandon the practice. The Bishop said that Kilvington must follow the general custom in the diocese. Kilvington was then asked about singing. Kilvington recounted to Haweis

that:

I told him that it was our custom to sing always one psalm and one hymn; that I had brought with me in my pocket, the small collection of psalms and hymns in use amongst us (and which had been originally published by Mr Simeon for his own church in Cambridge) and that I submitted it very readily to his Lordship's perusal. He said that he objected *in toto* to the use of hymns as unauthorized and if he were to continue my continuance at Fenstanton ... he must insist upon them being laid aside. How often he said, are you in the habit of singing? I replied twice during the service and occasionally once more after sermon; to the custom of singing after sermon, he said, he should undoubtedly object, as only the practice of enthusiasts. He could allow nothing at Fenstanton, but which was usual in the neighboring churches and there was not a church in the county where such a custom obtained, except the minister was enthusiastic – who is that gives out psalms and hymns? I answered, the clerk.

Kilvington clearly wanted to be scrupulous in his replies to the Bishop, so when he had left the Bishop and thought more about the question of singing he wrote the Bishop a note saying:

My Lord,

I am sorry to find upon recollection ... that I may very possibly have led your Lordship into an error by the answer which I gave to one of your questions concerning the singing. You enquired who it was that gave out the psalms and hymns to the congregation and I remember that I gave without hesitation, the clerk. I forgot at the time to mention ... that I myself have been in the habit of giving out the hymn when we have sung one after the sermon, but at that time only, and that it was not our custom to sing at all after sermon but when the service was in the afternoon....

In the audience, the Bishop said that it was difficult to prove whether or not someone was an enthusiast, but in circumstances such as these, he needed to know if Kilvington would agree to the following conditions of his remaining in the parish: first the abandonment of the use of hymns altogether; secondly, confining the congregation to singing psalms twice.

Kilvington agreed to the Bishop's conditions as he considered these points to be non-essential. The Bishop also asked Kilvington about his manner of preaching, and in particular whether it was by memory with the help of notes, what was sometimes called a *memorita* sermon, or delivered from a prepared text. Kilvington responded that during the first part of his time in the parish, he had used written sermons, but had recently used notes only and showed him an example that he had preached on the text 'our conversation is in heaven' (a reference to Philippians 3:20). Pretyman Tomline examined the sermon notes with great care, and then said that he must object to Kilvington preaching in that manner because 'it might be possible even from some of these heads to speak enthusiastically and that it was a mode of preaching, which none but men of an enthusiastical nature adopted.' The Bishop asked

Kilvington to name one former student of Cambridge who preached in this manner who was not an enthusiast. It is clear that the Bishop was making a reference to the influence of Charles Simeon in Cambridge who made a point of encouraging evangelicals and ensuring that they practiced preaching and pastoral work while at the University. Kilvington argued that while it was the custom of 'enthusiasts' to preach extempore, it was still possible to preach that way and not be an enthusiast; he cited a relative as an example, Thomas Robinson of Leicester, who the Bishop would know to be a man of solid and judicious piety (Thomas Robinson was vicar of St Mary's, Leicester in the diocese of Lincoln, who had been a contemporary of Pretyman Tomline's at Cambridge). Pretyman Tomline accepted that Robinson was a pious, worthy and sensible man, but nevertheless he had the reputation of an enthusiast. The Bishop asked Kilvington to consent to preach only from a prepared text as a condition of him remaining in his parish. This was a sticking point as Kilvington replied that he found great comfort in preaching extempore, moreover he had suffered from an eye complaint that had resulted in very painful surgery and as a result had been advised to avoid writing wherever possible. But the Bishop said that he would be satisfied with nothing less than Kilvington's compliance in this matter; so Kilvington felt that he had no choice but to concede the point.

The Bishop said that he was hopeful that Kilvington could be recovered from enthusiasm, but that if he continued

... in the way you have set out, you may be followed and admired by people of a certain class, but you will lose the good opinion of all respectable persons and forfeit all hopes of advancement in your profession, which you may properly look forward to. As to preaching, you must there indeed be left to your own discretion but I hope you will not abuse it. I would wish you to preach with earnestness indeed, but take care that you avoid all rambling. You will remember that if I hear complaints in future (admitting that you are suffered to stay) I shall certainly then remove you; and that it is in my power not only to exclude you from this diocese, but by writing to all the rest of the bishops, every other also

The Bishop then dismissed Kilvington, saying that he would send his decision very soon after he had made further enquiries (Haweis MSS, 15 September 1794).

The concerns expressed by Pretyman Tomline are revealing. The issues he raised with Kilvington were, besides his general character: whether he conducted services in an 'enthusiastical manner', whether he had deterred any parishioners from coming to church or whether he attracted people from outside the parish to services. Whether any influx of people caused problems for pew owners; whether he had asked other people to officiate in the parish, whether hymns were sung and whether he preached extemporarily or read his sermons. Each of these was the opportunity for a clergyman to use the services to 'turn' a church to evangelicalism. Pretyman Tomline's comment about evangelicalism attracting 'a certain class'

was significant; but these were not the respectable people who the Bishop wanted clergy in his diocese to attract. Each of these issues for Pretymen Tomline would be the mark of an enthusiast or of an evangelical.

For a while it seemed as if the matter had been resolved and that Kilvington would keep his curacy. He heard this indirectly before Bishop Pretymen Tomline replied to him. On 15 October 1794 Kilvington wrote to Haweis that his remaining at Fenstanton might be 'considered certain'. Although he had still not heard the Bishop's final decision on the matter, he had discovered from Charles Simeon that Mr Bankes, who was to take his place as curate at Fenstanton, had received a note from the Bishop saying that he had decided to allow Kilvington to remain, as he had not gone quite as far as he had feared. Kilvington felt that the conditions the Bishop had imposed amounted to tyranny, but if he wished to remain at Fenstanton, he had to comply (Haweis MSS, 15 October 1794).

However towards the end of November 1794, things took a turn for the worse. Kilvington wrote to Haweis that the troublesome Mr Cowling had brought a suit against John Cook, the vicar, for non-residence. Kilvington hoped that some delay by Cowling meant that he would not proceed with the suit. Certificates from the doctor that attended on Cook, and from other people in the neighbourhood where he lived, had been sent to Kilvington. These stated that Cook could not be moved for reason of his health. Kilvington was sending them to Serjeant Le Blanc for his legal opinion. But Kilvington was not downcast, he wrote: 'I have just heard that a chaplaincy to a peer exempt from residence, if so, and such an appointment can be procured, I think it would be better to pay the penalty and costs of the present suit, than to quit an advantageous situation.' One of the reasons for Kilvington seeking to avoid the cure of souls was that his eyes were continuing to trouble him (Haweis MSS, 28 November 1794).

By 31 March 1795 Kilvington wrote to Thomas Haweis, now living at Bath, due to his wife's ill health. Kilvington reported that it seemed highly probable that he would remain at Fenstanton. Cowling had brought an action for non-residence against John Cook and the result was that Cook has decided to move to the parish, regardless of the effect on his health. But though Cook was resident in the parish, he could not take the service, so Kilvington would continue to do so. Kilvington allowed himself to assure Haweis 'that the gospel will continue to be preached in this parish' and indeed despite the difficulties 'the work is prospering.' He went on that 'the persecution against me; and not only against me, but all the exposed and defenceless part of the parish, in whom the image of Christ was discernible so far from quenching the rising flame, has only caused it to spread.' These comments suggest that Kilvington probably was an evangelical who was continuing to be 'enthusiastical' despite his encounter with the Bishop.

The main difficulty that Kilvington had was meet-

ing the cost of the legal expenses from the case which exceeded £130. Kilvington thanked Haweis for his offer of help but would not accept it. Kilvington said that he expected one day to inherit a considerable fortune even though his current income was small. (Kilvington's benefactor may have been a Madam Powley, who was the widow of the Vicar of Dewsbury and who lived with Kilvington's father. Kilvington was also the heir of Dr Kilvington of Ripon, who seems to have been a wealthy doctor who gave generously to philanthropic causes.) In total, Kilvington thought he would need more than £200 and a friend he hoped would help him had not come forward, so he had to think about how to pay the costs. Significantly Kilvington asked Haweis not reveal to anyone else that he had written to Henry Venn, the evangelical vicar of Huddersfield, to ask him to contact William Wilberforce on Kilvington's behalf. Wilberforce had offered his assistance at the onset of this business and asked to be kept informed (Haweis MSS, 31 March 1795).

On 29 January 1796 Kilvington wrote from Fenstanton to Haweis who was still at Bath. It was a disheartened letter, since Kilvington had been in a state of constant trouble and unease over the Fenstanton curacy. Kilvington had hoped that John Cook's return to the parish would not affect him too much and that he would retain a free hand in the parish. But, as Kilvington wrote, Cook's return to the parish, 'far from tending to the furtherance of the Gospel in this place, has had an effect directly contrary, has been the means of bringing forth the hidden enmity of his heart against God.' He found himself facing Cowling 'who has all along been my principal and most determined adversary.' Cook had shifted his position from supporting Kilvington to agreeing with Cowling, which had caused discord among the parishioners. Kilvington told Haweis of Cook: 'you know the rooted hostility of the carnal mind against God and godliness.' Cook had also caused problems over the tithes, Kilvington wrote 'he sometime since desired me to let his tithes for him in order to procure him an increase in income'; three local farmers 'out of love to me' agreed to raise their tithes to £165 – whereas the living had never brought in more than £75. But Cook feared that it was a ploy and that he might end up facing legal suits so he refused the increased tithes and said he would 'demand nothing but the old composition and to cast himself upon the mercy of the parishioners for any sum which might be raised in the way of voluntary contribution.' Kilvington wrote that 'the serious persons though poor, the richest of them in very moderate circumstances, met together and nine of them generously agreed to contribute £40 a year in addition to the former income of the Vicarage, provided I were continued in the curacy.' Cook expressed doubt about this arrangement, especially in the event of Kilvington moving on as a matter of free will. The parishioners therefore improved the offer by drawing up a bond promising to pay Cook forty pounds annually during his life, or so long as Kilvington continued as curate.

In the event of his moving on of his own volition, the arrangement would stand as long as Kilvington nominated his own successor – who would be, presumably another evangelical. Cook decided that opinion in the parish might be against Kilvington and he therefore decided to seek the majority opinion of the parishioners. Kilvington was absent in Cambridge one day and his enemies took this opportunity to canvass the parish with no advance warning given to the other side. Despite this subterfuge, only twelve householders could be persuaded to sign Cowling's petition to be rid of Kilvington, while one hundred and two householders signed the list drawn up by Kilvington's friends and a further twenty six, while they refused to sign either petition expressed themselves satisfied with his ministry. 'Thus did it please God to confound our enemies' Kilvington told Haweis.

Despite the majority of the village supporting Kilvington, the vicar had given him six months notice to quit the parish, with no reason given for the dismissal. Also, Cook had also written to Bishop Pretymen Tomline, who ordered Kilvington to quit not only the parish but the diocese also. The only basis for the Bishop's decision was that he was an 'enthusiast' and as Kilvington told Haweis, 'the only crime laid to my charge is that of Enthusiasm – or in other words Faithfulness to the Flock of Christ.' Kilvington told Haweis that 'nevertheless a flame has been lit here that cannot be extinguished.' His principal concern was for his elderly parents who lived with Kilvington who would be forced to move also. Kilvington's plaintive letter asked if Haweis knew if any permanent place could be procured for him, even at a small value. But he wrote that he 'would not welcome taking another curacy on the ground that this kind of thing might happen again' (Haweis MSS, 29 January 1796).

Kilvington's experience was not unique. In November 1795 Arthur Hepworth wrote to Haweis regarding his attempt to obtain orders. Hepworth commented that he had heard that bishops were starting to exclude clergymen who 'from their evangelical sentiments, they shall, at a venture, brand with the name of Methodists.' He referred to the bishops' behavior as 'unrestrained caprice of [a] prejudiced and unenlightened diocesan,' He was appalled that bishops have 'entered into so cruel and unjustifiable a revolution, as not to ordain such as heartily wish well to Zion, as it must preclude the usefulness and destroy the comfort of many ... the greatest enemy we have is within' (Haweis MSS, 21 September 1795). Hepworth's misfortune was that he had been promised succession to his father's living of Grafham by the patron, Sir Robert Bernard, but Hepworth was only in deacon's orders and was finding it difficult to obtain ordination as a priest. He was forced to act as curate to his father. To make matters worse the living was in Lincoln diocese and Bishop Pretymen Tomline would almost certainly exclude him in the way that he had forced out Kilvington – as Hepworth wrote 'the Bp is a man of exceeding power.' Hepworth received an offer of a curacy but it too was in Lincoln diocese and

he was prevented from taking it as Pretymen Tomline had ordered him to leave it (Haweis MSS, 2 November 1795). It took three more years for Hepworth to obtain priest's orders, from Archbishop William Markham of York, and to be appointed to a curacy in his diocese.

In November 1811 Haweis heard from a Mr Bull in Llandaff diocese who had experienced difficulties in obtaining ordination from the Bishop of Llandaff, Richard Watson. Haweis had offered Bull a title to the curacy of his parish for which he needed the proper clerical references. Bull was not a graduate and was therefore seeking ordination as a 'literate' which may have made his circumstances more difficult. When he asked the incumbent of his home parish he was told that, as he was a Methodist and had undertaken 'preachments', he would not sign his testimonial. Once Bull had obtained three other testimonials, he took them to the Bishop of Llandaff's chaplain. Watson's chaplain told Bull that the Bishop would never ordain a man who had testimonials from one of the people who had signed Bull's *si quis* because he had given a testimonial to a 'common field preacher and his Lordship could not forgive it' (Haweis MSS, 14 and 26 November 1811). In the end Bull obtained orders from Bishop Spencer Madan of Peterborough and was appointed curate to the evangelical Thomas Shuttleworth Grimshaw at Burton Latimer in 1812.

Edward Kilvington disappeared from view in 1796 but three years later he became perpetual curate of Ossett cum Gawthorpe in Yorkshire, where he was licensed by Archbishop William Markham (Borthwick Inst AB 17). Markham seems to have been one of the bishops in this period who did not harbour a desire to extirpate evangelicals, having accepted both Hepworth and Kilvington (Tennant 2013, 39). Perhaps Pretymen Tomline's threat to exclude Kilvington from his and other dioceses had worked for some time. It seems likely that Kilvington's expectations that he would inherit a fortune had come about, since he paid for the rebuilding of the church at Ossett. The history of Ossett records that the church was rebuilt under Kilvington's curacy:

A considerable part of the expense of the rebuilding was borne by the curate of Ossett who had large private funds and who, it is reputed, spent more money on the parish than he ever drew from it ... Kilvington was a very heavy man and was only 39 years of age at the time of the rebuilding of the Ossett Chapel. He ultimately became so heavy and so big that he could not mount the pulpit steps. This led to the installation of a three-decker pulpit, which was in reality, a primitive lift. Before the service, he got into his chair at the bottom of the pulpit steps and then the sexton, by hauling a rope, slowly wound him up to the top level. (*Ossett History*)

Kilvington left Ossett in 1827 to become the first incumbent of a new and much larger church in Ripon where he stayed until his death in 1835. The church at Ossett, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, was erected by Kilvington at the cost of £13,000, of which £10,000 had been bequeathed for the purpose by his uncle, Dr. Kilvington of Ripon. Kilvington died at Ripon aged

68 'after a short but severe illness' in January 1835 and was remembered there for his charity work on behalf of the poor (*Ossett History*).

Thomas Haweis must have been struck by the irony that, just as he was seeking through the London Missionary Society to encourage evangelical clergy to take up missionary posts in the colonies and South Seas, at home men of evangelical stamp were being rejected (Haweis 1795). The events of 1794–6 were not the only occasion on which Thomas Haweis encountered George Pretyman Tomline. In 1801 Haweis responded to Pretyman Tomline's *Elements of Christian Theology*, which attacked Calvinism and claimed that the Thirty Nine Articles were an attempt to exclude Calvinistic theology from the Church of England. Haweis accused the Bishop of misrepresentation and launched a tirade of attacks on his book. The dispute between Pretyman Tomline and Haweis went on without the bishop knowing how much Haweis knew of his attempt to exclude evangelicals from his diocese. John Hunt in the *British Critic*, a journal that rarely supported evangelicals, commenting on the dispute, wrote of Pretyman Tomline, 'his hatred of Calvinism is simply hatred' and compared his splenetic attacks on Calvinism to the more judicious behavior of Bishops Watson and Horsley (Hunt 1803). The *Gospel Magazine* was even more sympathetic to Haweis congratulating him on his defence of Calvinism and claimed that the Bishop's theology was 'justly exploded' (*Gospel Magazine* 1801, 466).

What emerges from the correspondence between Haweis and Kilvington over the dispute at Fenstanton in 1794–5 are a number of issues. First it is clear that evangelical clergy, and especially those who were curates rather than clerical freeholders, were prey to the prejudices and intolerance of bishops, and to a lesser extent their incumbents and churchwardens. An evangelical curate who, like Kilvington, may have been popular and welcomed by the majority of parishioners was still at risk if he flew in the face of churchwardens, incumbent or the bishop. This may explain why Kilvington held four curacies in succession. Secondly, the hostility of anti-Calvinist and anti-enthusiastic bishops like Pretyman Tomline was uncompromising. It is clear that Pretyman Tomline's tenure of Lincoln from 1786 to 1820 must have been lean years for evangelical clergy in the diocese. It is not clear how far Pretyman Tomline took his threat to write to other bishops to attempt to exclude evangelical clergy from other dioceses, or how many other bishops responded to it – Archbishop Markham certainly did not. But the suggestion was clearly intended to deter clergy from thinking that they could go elsewhere and continue to be enthusiastic.

It is also important to note that Kilvington had learned to be politically astute when he answered the Bishop. His comments to Haweis indicated he certainly was the sort of evangelical enthusiast that the Bishop loathed. But he sought to conceal this from Pretyman Tomline. In his interview with the Bishop, Kilvington played the role of an innocent young parson who did not know why he was accused

of being an evangelical. He dissembled when asked about some things, and while he was scrupulous in correcting his mistake about singing, this was not a matter that would have prevented him from continuing to promote evangelicalism in the parish. Finally it is interesting that the vicar, John Cook, polled the village about retaining Kilvington as curate – though he did not abide by the result. It may have been that Cook, and Cowling, thought that they could obtain the result they seem to have wanted – getting rid of Kilvington – by holding the poll on a day when Kilvington was away in Cambridge. But even the majority in favour of Kilvington did not save him from dismissal.

It was perhaps difficult to imagine even a decade later, when evangelical clergy were widely appointed throughout the Church of England that in the 1780s and 1790s there was a stigma that attached to evangelicals. Bishops like Pretyman Tomline regarded 'enthusiastic' clergy as a problem because they were thought to unsettle a neighbourhood, they might invite in Methodist preachers and upset the traditions of Anglican worship in favour of faddish and untried practices. Nevertheless Pretyman Tomline's reign at Lincoln was one during which appointment to the diocese relied on disguising your evangelicalism.

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Author: William Gibson, Professor of ecclesiastical history, Oxford Brookes University.

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