

ART. X.—*Richard Leake's plague sermons, 1599.* By
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SHREWSBURY, in his *History of the bubonic plague in the British Isles*,¹ outlined the known facts about the epidemics of the fifteen nineties in the Lake Counties. He consulted several papers in the Old Series of our *Transactions*, as well as more general histories; he collected records of disease and deaths from many places; but from the old barony of Kendal he referred only to Kendal itself, Kirkby Lonsdale and Heversham. He included the much quoted statement from Penrith church, which reported that the disease killed 2,500 persons in Kendal (presumably the barony, not merely the town) and quoted Barnes's figures from Kirkby Lonsdale, where the registers showed an average annual figure of less than fifty deaths, but in 1597 eighty-two were recorded.² Though other diseases (smallpox, typhus, influenza, dysentery, etc.) might have been responsible, Shrewsbury stated that "There seems to be no doubt . . . about the ravages of bubonic plague in a part of this region in 1598."³ Barnes stated that the number of Kendal deaths was repeated in the miscellany accounts of the diocese of Carlisle: "Pestis fuit anno 1598 unde moriebatur apud Kendal 2500 . . ."⁴ Even if the figure was exaggerated, there can be no doubt that the mortality in the barony was great. And in those theologically conscious days religious ministers might well draw in their sermons moral lessons about the human provocations of a divine visitation.⁵

Richard Leake, the author of the sermons I shall presently describe, was the son of Christopher Leake

of Dent. There is still in Dentdale a farm called "Leakeses" which probably belonged to the family.⁶ He was born in 1568, educated at Sedbergh School by Mr Mayer, and at the age of seventeen he was admitted sizar at Caius College (Cambridge) in 1585; he migrated — we do not know why — to Catharine's Hall and matriculated there in the same year. He took his B.A. in 1588/89 and his M.A. in 1593.⁷ The sermons, printed in London in 1599, give the author's name as "Richard Leake, Preacher of the word of God at Killington, within the Baronrie of Kendall, and in the Countie of Westmerland." They were preached either in 1598 or 1599; on 10 May 1597 a Richard Leake signed a feoffment deed concerning one John Baines of Killington, husbandman;⁸ presumably, then, he had been at that parish for at least two years before the sermons saw print.

On Wednesday, 9 September 1590, Richard Leake received deacon's orders at Rose Castle, in the thirteenth year of the episcopate of John, bishop of Carlisle. Leake was to undertake the charge of Halton (near Lancaster) which, like Killington, was then in the diocese of Chester: *In ecclesia de Halton cestrensis diocesis de quo reputavit se contentum*.⁹ John Mey (or Meye), the thirty-fourth bishop of Carlisle, who ordained Leake, matriculated from Queens' College in 1544 and became Master of Catharine's Hall in 1559; this was Leake's college, and that fact may account for his choice of Carlisle as the place in which to receive his first orders. Mey's tenure lasted from 1577 to his death — probably of the plague — in 1598.¹⁰ Perhaps the death of the former Master of his college, from whom he had received deacon's orders, was a contributory cause of Leake's preachings on the visitation of the pestilence in the North-Western counties. I do not know when Leake was priested; the later events in his life prove that he must have received priest's, as well as deacon's, orders.

Though Killington church has a medieval chancel and nave,¹¹ it was not licensed for full ecclesiastical use until William Chaderton, Bishop of Chester (1579-85), "on the petition of the inhabitants of Killington and Frithbank" (i.e. Firbank) in about 1585 granted them his faculty and licence, that "in the chapel situate in Killington and Frithbank, commonly called Killington chapel . . . divine service shall be performed, the sacraments and sacramental rites administered, matrimony solemnized, and the dead buried". There was to be "a minister or curate lawfully ordained, or sufficiently approved from time to time". And the services were to take place there "as freely and in as ample manner and form, as they were, or lately had been obliged to perform the same at the said parish church" at Kirkby Lonsdale.¹² Richard Leake was presumably a fully ordained clergyman of the Church of England before he undertook this cure of souls.

He was, then, a young man in a relatively young church. We know that he was at Killington from 1597 to 1599; we do not know when he went to that parish or when or why he left it. In 1612 Thomas Bousfield — later Rector of Windermere — may have been in charge there; Richard Benson certainly was from 1618 to 1625.¹³ Leake's later career is of some interest, but it will provide a subject for a later study. According to the Venns a Richard Leake was prebendary of York from 1617 (actually 1616) till the Civil War, and in 1618 he was a "Preacher of the word of God" at Lyeth [*sic*=Lythe] in Cleveland.¹⁴ This phrase knits together the loose ends; it occurs also, as I have already noted, on the title-page of the sermons.

The *Foure sermons* is a rare book. Only three copies (to my knowledge) are recorded: in Pollard and Redgrave's *Short title catalogue of books printed in England, Scotland, & Ireland and of English books*



SERMONS,
PREACHED AND PVB-
LIKELY TAUGHT BY RICHARD
LEAKE, Preacher of the word of God at *Kelling-
ton*, within the Baronie of *Kendall*, and
Countie of *Westmerland*: immediat-
ly after the great visitation of
the pestilence in the fore-
sayd Countie.

Ezechiel 24. vers. 13.

Thou remainest in thy filthines and wickednesse, be-
cause I would haue purged thee, and thou wast not pur-
ged: thou shalt not bee purged from thy filthines, till I
haue caused my wrath to fall vpon thee.



AT LONDON,
Imprinted by FELIX KINGSTON,
for *Thomas Man.*
1599.

cm
ins

PLATE I.—Title-page of Leake's sermons
— Peterborough Cathedral Library (Peterborough H. 2. 37^d), now
housed in the University Library, Cambridge.

printed abroad (London, 1948) only the copy in the Bodleian Library is noted: no. 15342; this was probably the copy seen by Herr.¹⁵ Since then another has been found among the books from Peterborough Cathedral Library, now housed in the University Library at Cambridge (Peterborough H. 2. 37⁴) — the source of my description and quotations. There is yet another in the Folger Shakespeare Library at Washington D.C. — it has a variant imprint. My description follows:

Title-page: see reproduction.

8°. A—H⁸ I⁴. Pages: [i-xvi] 1-80 77-116 = xvi + 120 pages. The wrong pagination occurs after fo. F8^v.

Verso of title-page blank.

A2^r: [Pattern of ornaments 5.9 by 2.8 cms] | TO THE
WOR-|SHIPFVLL, M. THOMAS STIKELAND [sic], AND
M. JAMES BEL-|LINGHAM, Esquires, and two of her Ma-
iesties Iuftices of the peace, within the Ba-|ronrie of
Kendall, and countie of Westmer-|land, RICHARD LEAKE
wifheth all graces | *needefull for this life, and the continuall*
en-|crease of all graces pertaining to eter-|nall life, to the
ende of their | dayes.

[Larger initial I displaces four lines of type at the beginning of the dedication; for text see below]

A6^r: [Similar pattern of ornaments to that on A2^r]
To the Chriftian | Reader. [Large initial T displaces six
lines of type; for text see below; text in italics] Page 1
[B1^r]: THE FIRST SERMON | OF THE DVTIE OF
OVR | deliuerance: drawne out of this | portion of the
word of God | following: viz. | Ioh. 5. verf. 14. *And after*
that Iefus found | him in the temple, and faid vnto him,
Behold, | thou art made wholle, finne no more, leaft a worfe |
thing come vnto thee.

[Large initial T—differs from that on A6^r—displaces five lines of type]

Page 35 [D2^r] THE SECOND SER-|MON OF THE
DVTIE OF | OVR DELIVERANCE.

[Initial T as on p. 1]

Page 71 [F4^r]: THE THIRD SER-MON OF THE DVTIE OF | OVR DELIVERANCE.

[Initial N displaces six lines of type]

Page 103 [wrongly numbered 99, H4^r] THE FOVRTH SER-MON OF THE DVTIE OF | our deliuerance: drawne out of the | laft words of the text, *Leaft | a worfe thing come | vnto thee.*

[Initial N as on p. 71. Ends on p. 120, wrongly numbered 116, I4^v]

The book is relatively free from misprints, except for the name of one of the dedicatees. Leake cannot have seen it through the press or he would never have allowed Thomas Strickland to appear as "Thomas Stikeland". Sir Thomas Strickland, K.B., was born in 1564 and lost his father in 1569. He came of age in 1585. He was knight of the shire for Westmorland in 1601-3, and 1604-11; he died in 1615.¹⁶ If he read these sermons one suspects that he must have resented their protestant, anti-catholic sentiments. In the early fifteen nineties he had had a dispute with Sir James Bellingham of Helsington. The latter was knighted by James I at Durham at the king's first entry into England in 1603. He married Agnes, daughter of Sir Henry Curwen of Workington. He died leaving issue in 1641.¹⁷

Felix Kingston the printer was the son of John Kingston, also a printer, whose works are dated from 1553 to 1585. Felix's first dated work (Thomas Gibson's *A discourse of the subtile practises of deuilles*) appeared in 1587. Then there is a gap of ten years. In 1597 he printed seven books, including a treatise on fortification and an edition of Virgil. The following year he produced fifteen (e.g., W. Broxup's *St Peter's path to the joyes of heauen*, G. de Vair's *Moral philosophie of the Stoicks*, George Gifford's *Fifteen sermons on the Song of Solomon*, and Christopher Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* — a surprise after so many works of edification). In 1599 he printed thirteen books, including

Leake's sermons. He lived long after that date; books continued to appear with his imprint until after 1650. Among them are several works by Richard Brathwait and *The fatall nuptiall*, the anonymous poem, attributed to Brathwait by W. G. Collingwood, about the disaster to the Windermere ferry in 1635.¹⁸

Leake's dedication to the two magistrates and his address to the Christian reader will provide an opportunity for the appreciation of the way he wrote. In both the construction is careful; the deliberation with which the latter ends, by introducing the text for the four sermons, is skilful. The two passages that fill the preliminary leaves follow.

TO THE WORSHIPFULL, M. THOMAS STIKELAND
[sic], AND M. IAMES BELLINGHAM, Esquires, and
two of her Maiesties Iustices of the peace, within the
Baronrie of Kendall, and countie of Westmerland,
RICHARD LEAKE *wisheth all graces needefull for this
life, and the continuall encrease of all graces pertaining
to eternall life, to the ende of their dayes.*

It is not vnknowne vnto your worships, and to vs all round about, what great and manifold dangers haue ouerspread all our countrie, by the space of these two last yeares and more, as well by dearth, as also by strange & fearfull diseases, and sicknesses. It is no lesse knowne vnto vs also, how little good, and small reliefe, all outward meanes of remedie and comfort brought vnto the distressed ones in their extremities, and who knoweth not how lamentable and wofull was the state of the afflicted one, (especially in such places as were infected with the pestilence) and what feare came vpon vs all thorough¹⁹ that their affliction; what mourning amongst them, and daily deuises amongst our selues, how to auoide & escape dangers? I wish from my heart, that the originall breeding, and first occasion of these lamentable times, were as well knowne, or hereafter may be knowne of vs all, *viz.* how that it was not infection of the ayre, distemperature in their bodies, much lesse the malicious and diuelish practises of witches, or yet blinde fortune, or any other such like imagined causes, which were breeders of these euils. But the masse and multitude of our sins, in rebelling against the holie one of *Israel*, these (I say) haue been the prouokers of the Almightye, to make vs drinke of

the cup of afflictions, these haue pulled vpon us al these plagues, and brought vpon us all these fearefull and afflicted times, wherein we haue lately been: which poynt, that it might appeare plaine to the sight & view of all my neighbours (whose hearts haue awaked at the beholding of the said calamities) I haue laboured in this little treatise following, to make knowne, what hath caused all these woes, and who hath wrought and brought vnto vs better dayes, as also what dutie we owe to the Lord, for our gracious and long desired deliuerance. Which I am bold to dedicate vnto your Worships, and that for two respects: first, for that I perswade my selfe, that you are both favourable and also forward to entertaine, and bid welcome all that bring the glad tidings of saluation: whereby I am resolu'd that you will not only your selues accept and take in good part, these my poore labours, but also patronize, countena[n]ce, and defend the[m] against al those, who shall deride and scoffe at them, as they doe at all good things, in my self or others, and secondly, for that you be Magistrates, and Iustices within those limits and precincts, most parts whereof haue bin infected most pitifully, and (I am perswaded) most iustly, for those great and capitall sinnes, which rule and raigne amongst vs: as grosse Poperie, and blinde superstition in very many places, in so much, that I am afraide, that that abhominable Idoll of indignation, the Masse, is vsed in diuerse places about vs, and that very boldy: adde hereunto, filthy drunkennesse, abhominable whoredomes, open profanation of the Sabbath, vnlawfull pastimes, with infinite many moe, which the further they bee ripped into, the more filthy stinch ariseth out of them. These and such like sinnes (I say) being so pregnant and rife amongst vs: I doubt not, but as you espied them, and heard them cryed against by worde and writing, you with the rest of your associats ioyning with you, will holde on in zeale of Gods glory, the peace of Gods children, and the discharge of your owne duties, that these sinnes may haue those lawes executed vpon them, which most christianly is prouided in this land, for restraining them: which (no doubt) shall so greatly tend to the glorie of God, the furthering of the course of the Gospell, and the flourishing estate of our christian commonwealth, that in short space, the excellent effects of this zealous gouernement, shall proue the trueth and vprightnes thereof. And thus briefly I cease: committing this little worke, and the issue thereof, for acceptance at your Worships hands, and all other that shall reade it, to the wisdome of him, who hath the disposing of the hearts, euen of Kings and rulers, euen one God, and three

persons, the Father, the Sonne, and the holy Spirit, to whom be glorie, maiestie, dominion and praise for euermore.

Your VVorships bounden,

Richard Leake.

To the Christian Reader.

The occasion (good reader) of my offering this poore mite into the Lords treasure, and of sending abroad this fruit, which the increase of my small talent bringeth forth unto the Lords familie, was this: It pleased God by the space of two yeares together, to giue our country (in the North parts of this land) a taste of his power in iudgement, being prouoked thereunto by our manifold enormous sinnes: he visited us with many and grievous sicknesses, as first with the hot feuer, after, with the bloodie issue, and lastly, most fearefully with the extreame disease of the pestilence, inflicted vpon many, and shaken at all in our whole countrie. And albeit neither I, nor any of the people vnder my charge, were infected therewith, yet had we all of vs, the cause thereof within our sinfull hearts, as well as any others: It had inuironed vs almost round about, we had scarcely any way to turne vs, but mourning might be heard; so that we expected no better than neighbours fare. Furthermore, in this time, and before (as it is well knowne) the Lord our God, did chasten and punish this whole land with dearth and famine of bread, and scarcitie of other victuals in diuers places, since which time of tribulation, it hath pleased him (who is God, blessed for euer amen) to make knowne his power in mercie, as he had before manifested the same in iudgement. For he gaue plentie and cheapnese of bread and all kinde of victuals in stead of scarcitie and dearth: hee extinguished the heate of sicknesses in those places where it was most feruent, & withheld it from those places vnto which it was most fearefully threatned, so that then might be heard amongst vs, mirth in stead of mourning, songs in stead of doleful sighings; gladsome salutations in meetings, in stead of diligent shunning each of others presence, for feare of infection. The boistrous stormes of afflictions now driuen away, and calme showers of comfort descending: the cloudes of his heauie displeasure now being dispersed, and the brightnes of his fauourable countenance shining vpon vs: sicknesse now ceased, and health restored: famine taken away, and plentie ministred; I thought it high time not onely to preach vnto the people of my owne charge, these sermons following (which teach plainely what use we are to make of these and such like workes of God, and what dutie they binde

vs vnto) but also to publish them for the benefite of all such as the doctrine doth pertaine vnto. This occasion and opportunitie offered (being well considered of all them who shall reade these Sermons) may serue sufficiently to excuse me of all such wants as shall be espyed in me: for the prouerbe is not more olde than true: a little betime is worth much too late. How good is a word in due season? (saith Salomon) Pro. 15. 25.²⁰ as if he had said, Oh who is able to declare how good a word is, which cometh in due season? He himselfe afterward sheweth whereunto it may bee compared: A worde (saith hee) spoken in his place, is like apples of golde with pictures of siluer, Chapter 25: verse 11. Now sure am I, that there is no wise bodie can denie, but these Sermons were spoken in season, and also published in season, except some shall say, that they had better haue come sooner, which I could not remedie: and yet I feare not their comming too late: for the dangers are lately passed, the deliuerance newly obteyned, the prints or markes of his correcting rods, are yet to be seene in many great townes, whose habitations are as yet scarcely replenished: the noyse of their mournings and gronings, which were sore chastened, are as yet sounding in our eares: his gracious blessings are as yet euen in our mouthes; so that neither his punishments vpon the wicked, his chastisements vpon his children, nor his severall blessings vpon them both, now againe multiplied, can possiblie be out of memorie. If any say that they (such as they are) be published ouer hastily, because peraduenture they may seeme to preuent the publishing of some more learned mans worke taken in hand vpon the like occasion: I answer, that euen for this purpose I stayed these my Sermons a whole season, gladly desiring, and earnestly expecting the publishing of some of their labours, vpon the same occasion, and to the same end, that I haue published these: yea, so long I stayed, till I feared, that if I should haue lingered any longer, the fitness of the time would haue stolen away; and yet could I heare of none which went about or intended any such matter. Wherefore thus long I stayed, looking for some mans labours to doe more good, and no longer would I deferre, least there should be no mans labours set forth vpon the same occasion, which might doe any good.

Now then (the premises considered) I pray thee Christian reader, to take in good part, this my labour, and then it shall be as an earnest pennie²¹ of some riper fruits out of my poore garden, when God shall minister a fit season to gather them, and to send them abroode. I ayme at nothing herein but the glorie of God, the benefiting of others, and the discharge of my owne dutie, if by any meanes I might attaine thereunto,

though but in some small measure: and though I misse thereof with men; yet not with God, who regardeth and accepteth the will and the desire. As for the malicious and enuious carpers and scornors, who haue Eagles eyes to see motes²² in godly mens labours, but blinde as Moales, to see beames of wickednes in their own liues; readie to censure others of all wants, but sooth themselues in their [ow]ne wayes, if they enuie me, it is but their propertie, if rashlie they censure, and iudge amisse of me it is their ignorance, if they with open mouth barke at me, I haue therein many to take part with me, whose bookes I scantly am worthie to beare after them: none whereof could euer write so learnedly, deliuer the trueth so zealously, or doe any worke so profitably, but either Atheist, Papist, sectarie, one wicked person or other, was readie at hand eyther priuily or openly, to labour by power and policie, perswasion or threatning to hinder the good successe of those their labours. I therefore account all their malicious carping and scornefull censuring, the fruit which their profane lips do daily bring forth. But vnto such as feare God, and haue need to be increased by the mutual helpe of their brethren (I say) reade these sermons diligently, & meditate vpon the[m], that ye may see the works of god, and the use yee ought to make of them, when God hath chastened you by sicknesses or any other way, humble your selues before God, repent and turne neerer vnto him, and againe when he hath mercie vpon you, and granteth vnto you ease & comfort, then beware, sinne no more least a worse thing come vnto you, which, that it may be fruitfull, God for Christ his sake grant through the mightie working of his holy spirit, vnto which one God, Father, Sonne and holy Ghost, be glory and praise for euer. Amen.

Thine in the Lord :

Richard Leake.

Readers will have noticed that the title-page of the sermons states that they were preached "immediatly after the great visitation of the pestilence in the foresayd Countie". In fact the running headlines in the main text of the book consist of the words: "The first [second, etc.] Sermon of the dutie of our deliuerance." Local historians will naturally be curious about details of the plague itself and about other details of local life that the sermons contain. The passage about how

the "hot feuer" preceded the "bloodie issue" "and lastly, most fearefully with the extreame disease of the pestilence" will already have been noted, as also the words about an earlier "dearth and famine of bread, and scarcitie of other victualls".²³ Touching too are the words in which the preacher describes how, now that the plague has ceased, the people enjoy "gladsome salutations in meetings, in stead of diligent shunning each of others presence, for feare of infection". Similar passages are repeated in the sermons themselves: urging the necessity of thanksgiving at the deliverance Leake goes on to say

As most of vs now living in the North parts of this land, haue most largely tasted the comfortable, and neuer stinting streame of his [God's] mercies. First, in preseruing vs in the pinching time of dearth. Next, in turning our pouertie into plentie. Thirdly, his miraculous sauing vs in the vehement & ouerspreading time of the pestilence. [pp. 3-4]

Later in the same sermon we find:

If wee had no warrant out of Gods word, for the co[n]firmation of this poynt: yet our owne experience these two yeeres by-past, in the most places of our countrie, is of sufficiencie to testifie and witnes how true a doctrine his is, seeing that no watching, no gouernme[n]t, great multitudes or carefull keeping could preuent his punishments, but they came vpon vs: no phisick could stint it, but it encreased and continued: yea when all mans remedies were administred, yet were the poore afflicted ones still remedillesse: so that great townes, many congregations, and infinit families espying all these hopes, now hopelesse: . . . haue in vtter despaire of them all [i.e. remedies], let goe the anchor, pulled downe the sayle, and committed the whole custodie of their poore tossed ship to him, who first raised vp the tempest against it, and he, euen that mightie God *Iehouah* . . . did in the end . . . heale that which before he had wounded, saued vs . . . and granted vs more then we expected, or our harts could desire. [pp. 20-21]

God's punishments of the Cities of the Plain, of Samaria and of Israel can be paralleled in the past plague:

Some with death and famine, as was Samaria and Ierusalem, and as this our nation of late: and some with the disease of the

pestilence, burning ague, and bloody issues, as this our owne land: first, not long since in the South parts: and now these two yeres last past in our Northerne parts [*Second sermon*, p. 64]

For other deliuerances corporall, as from famine, the pestilence, the running issues, and the burning feuer, whereof most parts of our land haue tasted, I spare to speake: because wee are so lately made whole, or deliuered from them.

[*Third sermon*, p. 87, wrongly numbered 83]

For the dangers are lately passed, the deliuerance newly obteyned, the prints or markes of his correcting rods, are yet to be seene in many great townes, whose habitations are as yet scarcely replenished. [Preface, fo. A7r.]

The remark in the preface "To the Christian Reader" about how neither he nor any of the other inhabitants of Killington had been infected is also, perhaps, of minor historical interest.

Shrewsbury warned his readers against the assumption that all early mentions of pestilence referred to bubonic plague. A layman must walk warily here. In a medical textbook I read that bubonic plague has these symptoms: "sudden onset, high temperature, rapid pulse, white coating of the tongue, nervous symptoms" that precede the buboes.²⁴ Leake's "high feuer" and "burning ague" seem to conform with these. His "bloody issues" or "running issues" may refer to the buboes themselves. Here are some examples of early medical references to issues which I have taken from the *New English Dictionary*. "The issue of blood in Matthew ix. 20 and Mark v. 25 was translated as "haemorrhages" in the New English Bible; the reading of the Authorised Version goes back to Tyndale (1526). The "runnyng yssue" of Coverdale's Leviticus, xv. 2 (followed by the Authorized Version) becomes merely a "discharge" in the N.E.B., though the Vulgate frankly reads "fluxum seminis". Pepys on 14 June 1662 said of Sir Henry Vane on the day of his execution that "he had a blister or issue upon his neck". There is nothing in these quotations

to exclude the identification of "issue" with "bubo". And though Leake's reference to "the printes or markes of his [God's] correcting rods" (taken with a passage about God as schoolmaster to be quoted a little later) may be merely a general metaphor for the social effects of the plague, they may have a more precise reference to the scars left on groins and arm-pits of those who suffered from it. The plague, then, was probably bubonic, not pneumonic.

We shall presently see that Leake attributed the causes of the plague exclusively to the sins of the people in the "North parts". In the first place he put "grosse Poperie, and blind superstition" and the fact that Masses were frequently and openly said in the neighbourhood. Many similar remarks occur in the sermons: England was formerly afflicted with "the brambles and bushes of Poperie and superstition" (p. 14), "the perilous poyson of poperie" (p. 16), "and ye poore soules whom Satan once ouerruled, keeping you in darknes, poperie & superstition, to you, to you I say is the Gospell preached . . ." (*Third sermon*, p. 86, wrongly numbered 82), and he argues at some length against the Roman Catholic notion, embodied in Canon 18 of the Sixth Session of the Council of Trent, that an "absolute obedience to the law of God, & a totall puritie from sinne" can be found "amongest the godly in this life" (p. 96, wrongly numbered 92).²⁵ The reiteration of such sentiments — not all of which have been quoted — may be evidence of a good deal of recusancy in late sixteenth-century Westmorland.

In a long passage in the second sermon he inveighs against the abuse and profanation of the Sacrament both by some clergymen and by the people. The clergy who do not enquire into the fitness of those who partake, who do not bar "the dogs and the swine" from so doing, are either "careles guides and vnsauorie salt", "men-pleasers" or "sillie, simple, ignorant

sots''. His description of the people's profaning the sacrament deserves a full quotation:

For the peoples prophaning this holy Sacrament, I my selfe haue bin oft an eye witnesse (God is my record) to my grieve, when I haue seene great multitudes of people in the house of the Lord, with striuing, thronging, & pressing forward, contend who should first receiue the outward elements at the hands of their minister, making no better then²⁶ a common banket of it, or as though they were in extreame haste. Againe, the Parsons proctor to be reckoning for his fees²⁷ in the very time of administring the Supper, and that within the Lords house, not farre from the minister, as great a noise of brauling about him, as of singing Psalmes, amongst the Communicants: yea farre greater, for the one is often vsed, the other very seldome or neuer. I might bee large in laying downe such manifold abuses as these, which I haue seene with mine eyes, as euery one after they haue gotten their rightings²⁸ (for so our sillie ignorant people call it) to hasten out of the congregation, neuer reuerently abiding till all be partakers, that they might all depart with a ioynt thanksgiuing . . . After the receiuing of this holy Sacrament and seale of the true Christians saluation, they hold on *à malo in peius*, they then goe for good fellowship to the tauerne or alehouse altogether, and thence they come not till they are inflamed and made drunke with strong drinke, and then out they must, but otherwise then they came in: for now they run out to purge themselues and their heauie stomackes, by belchings and beastly vomiting; others to brawle and fight: so as it would wound a Christians hart, to see how the senselesse soules, worse then brute beasts, doe in receiuing the bread and wine at the Supper of the Lord, eate and drinke their owne condemnation.

[pp. 45-47]

Then, too, there are the hypocrites ("carnall gospellers, and lip-professors") who, "though they crie, Lord, Lord, *voce*: yet they deny to doe the will of their heavenly father *vita*". [*ibid.*]

Besides the local immoralities quoted already in the preface, he inveighs against other kinds of sinful conduct:

What shall wee thinke of them, that in sicknesse counsell with witches and sorcerers, in troubles raise vp spirits, for things lost vse enchauntment, for to haue their sutes goe forward vse briberie, for their benefices vse symonie, for preferment vse

flatterie, with the Herodians?²⁹ Yea to conclude, what shall we think of all such, as make gaine wrongfully gotten, their god, and wicked and vngodly practises the whole course of their life: but that even the heaue iudgement of God hangeth ouer their heads . . . ?

[pp. 30-31]

He appeals to "all of you my Countriemen" to examine themselves for such sins as:

Murther, contempt of Gods word, persecution of Gods children, couetousnes, oppression, killing, pride, despairing of Gods power: Idolatrie, lying against ones owne conscience, despairing of Gods mercies, which sinnes flourishing in the reprobates, haue been fearefully plagued as you haue heard before. Search further for wicked and vnlawfull mariages: for whoredome, murmuring against Gods faithfull magistrates or ministers . . . and many other most abhominable sinnes; as your horrible Atheisme, affected ignorance, grosse Poperie: and in most places mocking, and contemning the Lords ordinarie meanes of your saluation . . .

[*Second sermon*, pp. 62-63]

And at the end of the last sermon he urges his hearers to praise God. But he adds:

Your meetings haue bin, and are, to shake hands with your former sins, and to bid them welcome among you: hauing for a time been taken from you, by reason of your affliction. Your songs haue not been to praise God, but rather (as I haue heard) in place thereof, profane Enterludes . . .

[pp. 117-118, wrongly numbered 113-114]

If only some of these profane interludes had been preserved . . .

We must now consider the sermons as sermons and as works of literature. I think that they deserve a modest place in the description of English pulpit oratory. First we must remember that probably they were considerably written up after delivery; a recent scholar reminds us "that it was not the normal custom to preach from a carefully prepared manuscript, but more often from notes and schemes, or even *extempore*. Some preachers went so far as to declare that they would rather preach ten sermons than write one. To write out a sermon meant not only the labour

of composition and transcription, but it involved first of all the recalling and ordering of what had already been said".³⁰ As delivered, Leake's four sermons were probably less elaborate and more homely than is the published text; even so, most of what he says is clearly stated and in terms that his rural congregation would have understood. He translates clearly all his Latin quotations, and they are not excessive in number. And some of the directness of conversational speech comes out in the published version of them.

When we read them we must not be put off by the conventions of sixteenth-century preaching.³¹ The four sermons have one text, which, divided up, serves for all of them. There are many subdivisions, each of them reasonably complete in itself, which seem at first sight strangely schematic. We must try to accept them and see what he did with them. And there is running through each sermon and through them all a construction that has been carefully thought out. A brief statement of the scheme may help the reader.

The first sermon (pages 1-35) deals with the first part of the text: "And after that Iesus found him in the temple, and said vnto him, Behold, thou art made whole." The preacher deals first with "And after that" (pages 1-6), then with "in the temple" (6-9) and finally with "Behold, thou art made whole". Three pages are devoted to how the word "Behold" is used in Scripture, then the benefit of the miracle occupies the remaining 24 pages of it. The benefit consists of four subsections: what the man's sickness was, the 38 years he had endured it, how no one could help him, and — finally — how he was healed. Each subsection is paralleled with other places in scripture: his sickness was caused by sin, which God punishes often by a long time of suffering, man is helpless in himself, but God can save him. The suffering can produce good effects in man: humility, obedience, he can learn the

Law, be corrected on his way, become faithful and turn aside from sin. Both the next two sermons derive from the words "sinne no more": the second, after showing how Adam's sin affects all mankind, goes on to consider the sinful reception of the Sacrament (as already described), God's judgements on various sinners, how His punishments may be a remedy to the godly, who must rejoice in the damnation of the wicked; the third urges men to thanksgiving and repentance (which consists in the killing of evil impulses and the quickening to virtue), advises precautions to be used to counter daily sins, and warns of the monstrous perils of claiming to be sinless. The fourth final sermon eloquently, if uncomfortably, proclaims the lesson contained in the words "least [i.e. lest] a worse thing come unto thee". He talks generally in the first four pages, spends another five on the word "least" and devotes the remainder to "a worse thing come unto thee".

Many of the margins are covered with scriptural references and with such sign-posts as "Note well all the prophane and graceless Atheists" (p. 30). He also refers in them to theologians he respects: Augustine (once), Cyprian (once), Jerome (once), Chrysostom (once), Bucer (once), and Calvin (fourteen times). The text on the title-page and that of his sermon come from the Geneva Bible, and he mentions Choree (= Korah), Helisua (= Elisha), Gehesi (= Gehazi), Achitophel and Esay (= Isaiah). He was obviously a Calvinist member of the Church of England, and the full rigour of calvinism comes out fairly frequently in these pages. I quote a few examples from the fourth sermon:

Least a worse thing come unto you, &c. These words may be the speech of a master to his seruant thus: I haue taken the[e] napping twise or thrise, nay often, and haue louingly admonished thee of it, but if thou plaiest the like again thou shalt smart for all: or of a schoolmaister to his scholler, whose waggish

trickes and great negligence he hath often pardoned: but now threatneth the next time shall pay for all. Euen so God from time to time seemed to winke at the sins of this man, yea euen at the sinnes of vs all, and like a louing schoolemaster beares a while with our offences: but either now cease from sinne, learne to do well, and be a good scholler in Christes Schoole, or else looke thy lord and master, the lord *Iehouah* will take an account for all, and in the ende pay thee home.

[p. 109, wrongly numbered 105]

Hereafter, vnles our Lord & maister finde vs more carefull schollers, in learning of his will, and more obedient sonnes in doing his commandements: as sure as we breathe, so to looke, that ere it be long, a heauier lode shalbe laid vpon vs, which we shall hardly disburthe[n] vs off. If before this, yea euen of late, the Lord hath beaten vs blacke and pale, by his seure punishments of dearth and pestilence: and yet being now healed thereof, presently forget our punishments, and God, that inflicted the[m] vpon vs: tremble and feare, for certainly then God will not forget our sinnes: but if they hale him on to come against vs yet againe, take heede that with his third whip he scourge vs not, till blood run down from top to toe: when there shall be nothing heard, but a fearefull noise and lamentation, alas, alas: in which distresse, (which is most fearfull) the wicked carelesse contemnors of his mercies, shall then seeke vnto him earely and late for helpe. But I make a question whether they shall finde him or no: they shall call vpon him, but I am afraid hee will answere in thunder . . .

[pp. 116-117, wrongly numbered 112-113]

A simile that starts rather charmingly — God is like an indulgent schoolmaster — becomes a terrifying metaphor a few pages later. There is also in these and in other passages some relish in his thoughts about the fate of the damned. But I suppose that he was preaching for the good of his fellow men; in the first sermon he says:

Here by the muddy water in this pond was many a man healed: whereas naturally a cleere and christalline water is more apt for mans health. The like course the Lord vseth in spirituall things, he worketh life by death, ioy by sorrow, exaltation by humiliation, comforts by the crosse, peace by warre: yea those that hee bringeth to heauen he first maketh them saile by hell.

[pp. 27-28]

From the extracts quoted we can see that he was skilled in the use of sixteenth-century rhetoric. He uses doublets like those to be found all over the *Book of Common Prayer*: remedie and comfort; lamentable and wofull; auoide & escape; originall breeding and first occasion; sight & view; fauorable, and also forward to entertaine, and bid welcome: deride and scoffe; Magistrates, and Iustices within those limits and precincts — all these are to be found in *The Epistle Dedicatorie*. Alliteration is also frequent: to labour by power and policie, perswasion or threatning; fined him in the furnace of adversity; gaue them power to repayre the breaches of the temple, and to build vp the broken walles of Ierusalem; the perilous poyson of poperie planted. It would be self-defeating to enumerate all such devices used by our preacher. I select only an example of anaphora (the deliberate repetition of the same word) which seems to me moving as well as skilful:

The Lord grant for his infinit mercies sake, that the long and late afflictions laid vpon vs and our countrie, may worke these aforesayd effects in vs, euen to pull downe our proude hearts, to mollifie our hard hearts, to instruct and teach our ignorant hearts, to direct aright our vnstable and wandring hearts, to make chaste and pure our vnchaste and whorish harts, and to redresse and amend our wicked and transgressing hearts: that so our pride being turned into humilitie, stiffneckednes into circumcision, instabilitie into certaintie, dishonestie against our husba[n]d Christ, into loyalty of a co[n]science vnspotted: and to conclude, our daily sinning into a continual godly sorowing for the same: we may then say with *David*, (as many I meane as haue these aforesaid effects wrought in them by their afflictions) glad are wee, and good hath it been for vs, that long, largely, and yet most louingly, the Lord hath afflicted vs, seeing they haue taught vs the miserie of our daies, the danger of our sinnes, the loathing of this wretched world, and a loue of the life to come. [First sermon, p. 19]

Leake's skill as a writer derives in part from the consistency and liveliness of his metaphors, the

surprising adjectives he sometimes uses and the down-to earth vocabulary, as well as to his oratorical cleverness in keeping together the components of his long paragraphs. In *The Epistle Dedicatorie* he diagnoses among his fellow Northcountrymen their:

filthy drunkennesse, abhominable whoredomes, open profanation of the Sabbath, vnlawfull pastimes, with infinite many moe, which the further they bee *ripped* into, the more filthy *stinch* ariseth out of them. [A4^v]

(Here the italics are my own.) Sometimes the words of the Bible are brought into the ordinary man's range by the use of a popular or country word:

His loue to vs for our saluatio[n], is as large as the East is from the West, and the North from the South, as great and greater then the loue the father hath to his sonne, or the mother to the babe sucking her breasts: for that hee euen spreadeth out both his armes of mercie, readie to embrace euery sinner, truly turning vnto him: and *clocketh* vs vnto him by his liberall mercies, euen as the hen gathereth her chickens vnder her wings.

[*First sermon*, pp. 23-24]

(Again my italics; see Matthew 23. 27.) On the page before this one he talks of the miraculous power and powerful miracle of "the raising vp of a sinner from his snorting in iniquitie, to walke and runne the race of a Christian". A little later he addresses "all bold hardy men . . . who enterprise many actions without either prayer to the Lord, or warrant of his word". [p. 31] "Bold" and "hardy" are words that as a rule describe praise-worthy qualities; Leake's irony turns them into a censure. Another telling metaphor occurs in the following passage:

Sinne no more in your loose liues, as you haue done, by dispensing with iustice, daubing vp the Lords wall with vntempered mortar, rising vp earely, or sitting vp late to drinke strong drinke, defiling your bodies by the vncleannes of whoredome, blaspheming God by swearing, or prophaning the Sabbath of the Lord, by following your worldly businesses.

[*Third sermon*, p. 88, wrongly numbered 84]

And I cannot resist another extract, also from the third sermon:

After thy deliuerances bestowed vpon thee by God, *Sinne no more: Viz.* suffer not sinne to make thee his slaue no more, to make thee his carthorse, to rule and raigne in thee, to obey his lustes, to giue eare to his inchantements: but hauing the vncleane spirit driuen out of thee, entertaine him no more, being escaped from the filthinesse of thy sins, fall not into thy old wont and vomit of sinne againe, but striue and straine to be lead forward to perfection.

[*Third sermon*, p. 95, wrongly numbered 91]

H. S. Bennett tells us "it has been estimated that over one thousand sermons in more than five hundred separate publications were on the market during the reign of Elizabeth, and that this figure does not include sermons preached in Latin, even though these were later translated into English. Nor does it include the large number of translations of the sermons of the great foreign preachers, such as Beza, Bullinger, Calvin or Hemmingsen . . . To omit such preachers from any survey of what was made available by the booksellers is to give a very incomplete picture . . . It would therefore be possible, I believe, to double the figure of one thousand, and still be on the safe side in an estimate of the number of sermons from all sources printed in English in England during Elizabeth's reign."³² Richard Leake's sermons do not seem to have been noticed or commented on, then or since — except by the bibliographers. But they have — as I hope that I have showed — some value, at least to the Northcountrymen — in their allusions to a plague, about which we know too little, and about the local vices that provoked his eloquence. His theology was not remarkable for a preacher of the late sixteenth century, but his expression of it in both the organization and construction of his sermons and in their vigorous sentences shows that he was a skilful writer who felt strongly and could convey his strong feelings to those

who heard or read him. These are probably the first sermons preached in Westmorland ever to be printed. Their rarity and their prose make them worthy of a second edition.

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proctor" and the "rightings" mentioned in the second sermon; they all agreed with the purport of what I have put, but my formulation owes most to the first mentioned.

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Notes and References.

- ¹ J. F. D. Shrewsbury, *A history of bubonic plague in the British Isles* (Cambridge, 1970), 251-254.
- ² H. Barnes, "Visitations of the plague in Cumberland and Westmorland", CWI x and xi (1890, 1891).
- ³ Shrewsbury, *op. cit.*, 252.
- ⁴ Barnes, *op. cit.*, xi 173.
- ⁵ E.g., this extract from Stow's *memoranda*: Coale, Archdeacon of Essex, preached on Wednesday, 26 January 1564, at Paul's Cross, and "The sayd ye cawsse ther of [i.e. of the plague] was ye superstysyows relygyon of Rome, which was (as he sayd) much favoryd of ye sytysyns..." Quoted by Alan Fager Herr, *The Elizabethan sermon — a survey and a bibliography* (Philadelphia, 1940), 42-43.
- ⁶ Ordnance Survey, 6-inch: SD 68 NE, SD 676896.
- ⁷ J. & J. A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, part 1, vol. III (1926), 60.
- ⁸ County Record Office, Kendal: WPR/34, Appendix II, no. 1.
- ⁹ Ordination Register, Carlisle: DRC/1/3/f. 171.

- ¹⁰ J. Nicolson & R. Burn, *The history and antiquities of the counties of Westmorland and Cumberland* (London, 1777), II, 283-284.
- ¹¹ *An inventory of the historical monuments in Westmorland* (1936), 131b; N. Pevsner, *Cumberland and Westmorland* (Harmondsworth, 1967), 259; the Revd. Canon Simpson, "Killington, Kirkby Lonsdale: its chapel salary", *CW* i viii (1886) 109-119. Killington is now (1974) in the Sedburgh parish in the Diocese of Bradford.
- ¹² Nicolson & Burn, *op. cit.*, i 264.
- ¹³ Benjamin Nightingale, *The ejected of 1662 in Cumberland and Westmorland* (Manchester, 1911), II, 1004-1008.
- ¹⁴ J. & J. A. Venn, *loc. cit.* The loss of the prebend of Grindal at York is attested by John Walker, *An attempt towards recovering an account of the numbers and suffering of the clergy* (London, 1714), part 2, 85b: "Richard Leak, A.M.: Prebend of Grendale [sic]."
- ¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, 147.
- ¹⁶ Daniel Scott, *The Stricklands of Sizergh Castle*, Kendal (1908), 116-132; Henry Hornoyold [-Strickland], *Genealogical memoirs of the family of Strickland of Sizergh*, (Kendal, 1928), 102-107; there is a portrait of Sir Thomas Strickland facing p. 102. Nicolson & Burn, *op. cit.*, I, 100-101.
- ¹⁷ Nicolson & Burn, *op. cit.*, I, 205.
- ¹⁸ Henry R. Plomer, *A dictionary of the booksellers and printers who were at work in England, Scotland and Ireland from 1641-1667* (London, 1907); Paul G. Morrison, *Index of printers, publishers and booksellers in A. W. Pollard & G. R. Redgrave's short title catalogue . . .*, Charlottesville, Virginia, 1950. See also W. G. Collingwood, "The Fatal Nuptial, a tract (by Richard Brathwaite?) on the Windermere Ferry Accident of 1635", *CW* 2 xiii 147-159.
- ¹⁹ thorough=through.
- ²⁰ Wrong reference; read Proverbs 15. 23.
- ²¹ 'earnest pennie'—a part-payment for the binding of a bargain or for employment, sometimes known as "arles-penny" or "arles"; in Westmorland "erls".
- ²² Besides Matthew 7. 3. and similar passage in Luke, Leake refers to the belief that the eagle's sharp eye can gaze into the bright sun. Cf. Spenser, "As eagles eye that can behold the sun."
- ²³ Shrewsbury refers to the famine in *op. cit.*, 254.
- ²⁴ Shrewsbury, *op. cit.*, i. K. F. Meyer, "Pasteurella", in René J. Dubos's *Bacterial and mycotic infections of man* (Philadelphia & Montreal, 1958), 415b.
- ²⁵ Sessio sexta. Canon 18. Si quis dixerit, Dei praecepta homini etiam iustificato, & sub gratia constituto esse ad observandum impossibilia: anathema sit. *Canones et decreta sacrosancti oecumenici et generalis Concilij . . .* (Lovanii, 1567), 39a.
- ²⁶ then=than, here and elsewhere.
- ²⁷ "the Parsons proctor to be reckoning for his fees . . ." i.e. the "tithe-proctor" who possibly was collecting tithes or fees for baptisms, churchings or funerals, etc., as well as rents and other church dues.
- ²⁸ "rightings"—? writings; i.e. receipts given by the tithe-proctor.
- ²⁹ Herodians—see Matthew 22. 16, Mark 3. 6. They were presumably partisans or retainers of Herod's family.
- ³⁰ H. S. Bennett, *English books and readers—1558-1603* (Cambridge, 1965), 148-156. The quotation is taken from p. 150.
- ³¹ There is much information about the construction of Elizabethan sermons and about their use of rhetoric in J. W. Blench, *Preaching in England in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—A study of English sermons 1450-c. 1600* (Oxford, 1964). See especially chapters II and III.
- ³² H. S. Bennett, *op. cit.*, 148-149.