X.—PURITANISM IN NEWCASTLE BEFORE THE SUMMONING OF THE LONG PARLIAMENT

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The religious condition of the North of England was a source of frequent and adverse comment in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. All reports seemed to indicate that the area was not only religiously conservative, but, in fact, Roman Catholic in its sympathies.[1] There were obvious general features of the situation in the North which greatly influenced its religious complexion. Its geographical location was of considerable importance. The country clergy were remote from the centre of religious control in London, almost equally remote from their archiepiscopal centre, and with the lack of good communications north of the Tyne, many were in practice remote from their episcopal centre of Durham. This produced a situation in which, in many localities, the power of the bishop was negligible while that of the local gentry was profound. In general, moreover, the squires were no less hostile to the control of the central government than the clergy were to control by their diocesan. The general conservatism of the squirearchy of the North had been amply demonstrated on several occasions in the reign of Elizabeth, notably in the 1569 rebellion. A second significant factor was the apathy and indifference to the recusant danger which characterized the early part of the Elizabethan period. One should also note the steadfastness

[1] For a general discussion of religious conditions in the North see P. Tyler, *The Ecclesiastical Commission and Catholicism in the North* (Leeds, 1960); D. L. W. Tough, *The Last Years of a Frontier: A History of the Border during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* (Oxford, 1928); Rev. C. S. Collingwood, *Memoir of Bernard Gilpin Parson of Houghton-le-Spring and Apostle of the North* (London, 1884).

of the non-conforming priests and the lay recusants. Perhaps of greatest significance, however, outside of the strictly geographical factors, was the poor quality of the Anglican alternative offered in return for abandoning the older faith. Despite the work of several devoted clergymen such as Bernard Gilpin, the general impression of the religious life of the North is not one of concerted spiritual activity. Sir Ralph Sadler in 1569 summed the general situation up by suggesting that "there be not in all this countrye ten gentilmen that do favour and allowe of her Majesties proceedings in the cause of religion"; the people, he added, were ignorant, superstitious, and blinded with "olde popish doctrine".[2]

Several factors were at work in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries to make the religious picture in the North so uninviting. Parishes generally were too few and too large. A list made in 1675 of all the vicarages and rectories in the county of Northumberland, excluding Newcastle, revealed there were only 14 rectories and 36 vicarages in the entire area.[3] Newcastle itself was plainly underprovided. It was technically one parish, although there were in practice four parish churches, St. Nicholas, All Saints, St. John's, and St. Andrew's,[4] but even with the addition of the lecturers, there was probably about one clergyman to every 1,500 inhabitants. When Bernard Gilpin went to Houghton parish, it was a vast tract of land, extending six or seven miles east and west and seven to eight miles north and south; it comprised at least 16 villages and perhaps more, and he was faced with the incredible task of ministering to a parochial population of between 2,000 and 3,000.[5]

Pluralism was rife in the northern diocese. Although there is as yet no adequate study of this problem for the

[2] Cited in Collingwood, *Memoir of Gilpin*, p. 150.

[3] Bodleian Library, Rawlinson MS. B250 fols. 22-23. "A note of all the rectories and vicaridges in the diocese of Durham, with the present incumbents and patrons," 18 Sept., 1675. Printed PSAN, 3rd S., iv, p. 18.

[4] The incumbent of St. Nicholas was the vicar of Newcastle; the other town churches were considered dependent curacies or parochial chapelries in the patronage of the vicar. MSS. Duke of Northumberland 187A/136, f. 14.

[5] Collingwood, *Memoir of Gilpin*, p. 101.

Durham diocese, so that one is unable to say with confidence whether or not pluralism was increasing, there are clear cases of considerable abuse. Even so reputable a cleric as Dr. Cosin, who was at the Restoration to become the Bishop of Durham, had a record in this respect which could not bear too close scrutiny. He was one of the King's Chaplains in ordinary, the Master of Peterhouse College, Cambridge, and Vice-Chancellor of the University, while at the same time he held four great livings in the North; he retained a benefice at Brancepeth worth about £300 a year, a benefice at Elswick worth about £200 a year, his prebendal stall at Durham worth about £300 a year, and an archdeaconry of York which was "very commodious without doubt".[6] Marmaduke Blakiston, who was Cosin's father-in-law, had been rector of Sedgefield, archdeacon of the East Riding, prebendary of Wistow in York, and prebendary of Durham.[7] This sort of situation had obvious repercussions on the local parishes. Mugglesswick and ten to twelve parishes adjoining claimed in 1642 to be destitute of a preaching minister. The man whom Durham tried to force on them at that time they rejected "because wee knew him to bee no Preacher and his life and conversation scandalous and [he] had two places already".[8] Impropriations, too, were a considerable problem, as they were elsewhere in the kingdom. Too often the value of a living was drained away into the hands of the impropriator, who was frequently a layman, and the incumbent was left to fend for himself with a totally inadequate provision. At the Restoration, the impropriations of the four chapels dependent on Bamburgh were valued by Archdeacon Basire at £573, while the values of the impropriations of Bamburgh itself were £323 13s. 4d.; the share which the incumbent minister had out of all this was £13 6s. 8d.[9]

[6] Commonplace Book of Peter Smart, cited in G. Ornsby, ed., *The Correspondence of John Cosin*, Surtees Soc., vols. 52, 55 (Durham, 1869-72), 1:185n.
[7] *Ibid.*, 1:82n.; 1:160n.
[8] *A Most Lamentable Information of Part of the Grievances of Mugleswick Lordship . . . sent up by Master George Lilburne* (1642), Bod. Wood 373/49.
[9] A.A.[2], XVII, p. 257.

One could easily multiply the examples of this sort which serve to indicate the religious situation of the North. In general, the picture was bleak. The established church made little provision; many of the population were untouched. A speaker in the 1628 Parliament summed up his view of the North by stating, "That there were some places in England which were scarce in Christendom where God was little better known than amongst the Indians, I exampled it in the utmost skirts of the North where the Prayers of the common people are more like spells and Charms than Devotions."[10] To this dreary situation, there were two possible responses. One was a renewal of Catholicism, of reinvigorated, post-Reformation Catholicism. There is no doubt that this was an important element in the religious life of the North and the Tyne Valley in particular in the first half of the seventeenth century. It is to the second possibility, however, that attention is to be turned in this paper, the growth of Puritanism and Puritan ideas.

It seems clear that the Puritan movement in the North, and in Newcastle in particular, was of far more significance than previously has been suspected.[11] So much was made by the Parliamentarians and the Scottish during the Civil War of the malignant nature of Newcastle and the Earl of Newcastle's army, that there has been a strong inclination for later writers to forget that Newcastle had a Puritan tradition stretching back to John Knox. Dr. Jackson, the Arminian vicar of Newcastle in the 1620's, referred clearly to the undercurrent of Puritanism in Newcastle which he found when he was instituted to the vicarage there. He commented on the dissemination of false doctrines in the area, especially concerning the doctrine of election, by one "that had been a great rabbi in some private conventicles in and about that

[10] J. A. Manning, ed., *Memoirs of Sir Benjamin Rudyard* (London, 1841), pp. 135-6.

[11] The only general surveys of the Puritan movement in Newcastle are both unsatisfactory and occasionally inaccurate. T. G. Bell, *Historical Memorials of Presbyterianism in Newcastle upon Tyne* (London, 1847); R. S. Robson, "Presbytery in Newcastle upon Tyne from the Reformation to the Revolution," *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England*, vii (1940-2), pp. 3-23,

town ".[12] He was upset particularly by the towns of Newcastle and Berwick " wherein Knox, Mackbray and Udal had sown their tares ".[13] His list helps to establish some of the early history of the Puritan movement in the Newcastle area. To what extent Knox himself influenced the religious structure of Newcastle is uncertain. He wrote that " what was said in Newcastle and Berwick . . . I trust some in these parts yet bear in mind ".[14] Beyond this, there is little in the way of definite information about the immediate effect of his ministry. At Berwick there is mention of a reformation of morals among the soldiers of the garrison who listened to his sermons; at Newcastle, as his letters indicate, there seem to have been a number of individuals who were converted.[15]

Knox, in any case, appears to mark the beginning of the small Puritan movement in Newcastle. The spread of Puritanism in the Durham diocese received considerable impetus through the collation of the Puritan William Whittingham to the deanery of Durham in 1563.[16] As early as 1564, Whittingham was writing to Cecil complaining against " old popish apparele " and in 1566, proceedings were taken against him for refusing to wear the surplice and cope. The diocese of Durham soon became known as a centre of extreme Protestantism; in addition to Whittingham, Bishop Pilkington inclined to the Puritan views as did a number of the prebends of the cathedral, including his brothers Leonard and John Pilkington, Thomas and Ralph Lever, Adam Halliday, Thomas Horton, and John Fox. It is surely of considerable significance that from the period of Whittingham's stay at Durham, Puritan preachers are traceable in Newcastle in increasing numbers.

On 28 November, 1568, John Macbray, the second of

[12] T. Jackson, *A Treatise on the Primeval Estate of the First Man* in *Works* (Oxford, 1884), 9:370-1.

[13] *Ibid.*, 9:550-1.

[14] J. Knox, *A Godly Letter unto the faithfull in London, Newcastle, and Berwick*, cited in Bell, *Presbyterianism in Newcastle*, p. 8.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[16] DNB; see also " The Life and Death of Mr. William Whittingham, Deane of Durham," *Camden Miscellany* vi (London, 1870).

Dr. Jackson's trio of Puritan sowers, was instituted to St. Nicholas.[17] He had been an eminent exile in the Marian period. He held the principal cure of souls in Newcastle until his death in 1584, and apparently carried on the traditions of Knox, of whom he was reported to be a personal friend. Within five years of his death, he was followed by John Udall, the third member of Jackson's evil triumvirate.[18] Udall had been silenced at Kingston upon Thames for his expression of Presbyterian views. To the biographer of the Puritan Ambrose Barnes, Udall was "an active Nonconformist [who] when in danger of his life hid himself amongst the good people in Newcastle; he was another Benaiah, a strong, lively man".[19] This does not appear, however, to be strictly accurate. He seems to have been sent to preach in Newcastle by Lord Huntingdon, the President of the Council of the North.[20] It now seems reasonably clear that Huntingdon was using his official position to place his candidates in the church. Richard Holdsworth, who followed Macbray directly at St. Nicholas, was Huntingdon's own chaplain, and the President did not hesitate to bring pressure on Newcastle to see that his stipend was properly paid.

Richard Holdsworth's son-in-law, William Pierson, was in many ways the first significant Puritan lecturer in the town.[21] He was paid a quarterly stipend by the town authorities for preaching once a day, and although confirmation of his lectureship was required from the Bishop of Durham, the corporation successfully maintained the right to nominate candidates in the event of a vacancy.[22] From the beginning of the seventeenth century, there are fairly continuous traces of Puritan lecturers in Newcastle, although it is not always

[17] R. Welford, *Men of Mark 'twixt Tyne and Tweed* (London and Newcastle, 1895) 3:130-33.

[18] DNB; W. Pierce, *An Historical Introduction to the Marprelate Tracts* (London, 1908), *passim*.

[19] W. H. D. Longstaffe, ed., *Memoirs of the life of Mr. Ambrose Barnes*, Surtees Soc. vol. 50 (Durham, 1867), p. 127.

[20] Pierce, *Marprelate Tracts*, p. 213; M. C. Cross, "Noble Patronage in the Elizabethan Church," *Historical Journal* iii (1960), pp. 9, 12.

[21] Robson, "Presbytery in Newcastle," p. 8.

[22] Longstaffe, *Memoirs of Barnes*, p. 300.

possible to identify the church to which they were affiliated. James Bamford appears in 1600; he was specifically mentioned by the Presbyterian Colonel Fenwick as one of the Puritan witnesses expelled by Newcastle; "witness reverend Balmford, whom in like manner thou expulsed; though thou couldst not touch his life, thou pricked his sides (as well as Christ's) in his hearers, with the reproach of Balmfordian faction and schism."[23] In 1610, Alexander Leighton, who is identified as a dissenter, appears in the All Saints' register, and in 1612, he appears in that of St. Nicholas.[24] There are further references to three other preachers, all labelled dissenters, between 1604-1628: John Knaresdayle at All Saints (d. 1604), William Swan at All Saints (d. 1623), and Robert Slingsby at St. Nicholas (d. 1628).[25]

Although the rise to power nationally of the high church party made matters infinitely more difficult for the Puritan group in Newcastle, it does not appear to have ever caused them to disappear. The appearance first of Dr. Jackson and then of Yeldard Alvey at St. Nicholas meant at least the partial closing of this pulpit to the Puritans; they were, according to Prynne, both extreme Arminians.[26] Even without Prynne's testimony, it is not difficult to see their close association with the Laud-Neile group in the church. One factor had, however, somewhat aided the Puritans. The elevation of Neile had removed that particular Arminian from Durham. Morton, who was translated from Chester to Durham in June, 1632, while orthodox in his views, was not a member of the Arminian group. He was a sincere, but not a bigoted episcopalian, and there is ample Puritan comment about this. Prynne referred to him as "the Reverend and

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 299; J. Fenwick, *Christ Ruling in the Midst of his Enemies* [London, 1643] ed. M. A. Richardson, *Historical Reprints* (Newcastle, 1847-9), p. 10.

[24] Longstaffe, *Memoirs of Barnes*, pp. 302-3.

[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 300, 308, 313.

[26] W. Prynne, *Canterburies Doome or the First Part of a Compleat History of the Commitment, Charge, Tryall, Condemnation, Execution of William Laud* (London, 1646), pp. 166-7, 356, 359; *Hidden Workes of Darkenes Brought to Publike Light* (London, 1645), p. 188.

Learned Dr. Morton".[27] Baxter thought he belonged to "that class of episcopal divines who differ in nothing considerable from the rest of the reformation churches except in church government". He was not overstrict in exacting conformity. Calamy noted favourably his liberal treatment of Puritans like John Hieron, Richard Mather, and John Shaw.[28] Morton conscientiously tried to solve some of the pressing problems of the Northern diocese; the need to find preachers and his own feelings against the Arminian position, which he had made clear as early as 1609,[29] may help to explain his leniency towards the Puritans. His early biographers noted that he tried to recruit an educated clergy for the North, either university graduates or men otherwise qualified in good learning.[30] Mr. Hill has observed that he made some attempt to augment the clergy's livings in the diocese, increasing one vicarage from £16 to £80 a year and a chapel from £6 to £30.[31] He had other augmentations in view, but his efforts were broken off by the advance of the Scots in 1640.

His partial success in attacking the problems of the church was matched by his only partial success in opposing the Arminians. This was most evidently true in Newcastle where Jackson and Alvey, the devoted members of the Laud-Neile faction, held the cure of souls. This meant that, practically speaking, the Puritan movement which had been growing slowly but steadily in the infertile soil of Newcastle faced for the first time a determined clerical opposition within the town itself. It was, it would seem, the need to face that opposition that gave to the Puritan movement its real cohesion and organization. The impression that one has

[27] W. Prynne, *Anti-Arminianisme* (London, 1630), p. 98 cited in Rev. J. E. B. Mayor, "Materials for the Life of Thomas Morton, Bishop of Durham" in *Cambridge Antiquarian Society: Reports and Communications* iii (1864-76), p. 14.

[28] DNB.

[29] *The Life of Dr. Thomas Morton Late Bishop of Durham* (York, 1669), p. 33.

[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 95-7.

[31] C. Hill, *Economic Problems of the Church from Archbishop Whitgift to the Long Parliament* (Oxford, 1956), p. 327.

of Puritanism in Newcastle from Knox to Slingsby is one of unconnected activity, of a number of individuals preaching the word, and then disappearing, leaving the bulk of the population untouched. It is not possible to trace any continuing leadership; the nearest thing to continuity was provided by two family relationships, John Udall and his son Ephraim, who laboured in the town at the same time, Richard Holdsworth and his son-in-law, William Pierson. By the 1630's, however, a definite Puritan leadership was emerging, centring first around one clergyman and three laymen, and expanding from that small beginning.

The ministry of Dr. Robert Jenison in Newcastle marks the actual beginning of what emerged as the Puritan leadership of the town in the period of the Civil War. The Newcastle-born and Cambridge-trained Jenison, who by 1620 was lecturer at All Saints, joined with three merchants to form the nucleus of this Puritan group. They were merchants of very different degrees of achievement. Sir Lionel Maddison came from a family prominent in local affairs and had himself risen far in the town oligarchy, having been sheriff in 1624 and Mayor in 1632.[32] John Blakiston, the second member of the group, lacked the parental background in Newcastle which Maddison had.[33] The son of Marmaduke Blakiston, one of the noted pluralists of the Durham diocese, he was, despite his lack of commercial connections, successful in business and in establishing himself among the town oligarchs by gaining a foothold on the bottom rung of town office holding. The third member of this Puritan trio, Henry Dawson, is more obscure.[34] He appears to have been a merchant in Newcastle but had not entered into the town government at all before the outbreak of the Civil War. He was, however, frequently cited as the ringleader of the

[32] Welford, *Men of Mark*, 3:124-130.

[33] DNB; M. F. Keeler, *The Long Parliament 1640-1641: A Biographical Study of Its Members* (Philadelphia, 1954), p. 109; Welford, *Men of Mark*, 1:334-9.

[34] Welford, *Men of Mark*, 2:31-7; Dawson appears selling groceries and soap in G. Ornsby, ed., *Selections from the Household Books of the Lord William Howard*, Surtees Soc. vol. 68 (Durham, 1878), p. 329.

Puritans in Newcastle, and it was certainly in his house that the Puritans established an unofficial lectureship and held meetings, presumably of a devotional nature.[35]

That anything at all can be learned of the unofficial lectureship at Newcastle maintained by the leaders of the Puritan party there is due to the survival of 39 letters and scraps of notes to and from the unofficial lecturer William Morton and his family[36] and to the fact that Morton was investigated shortly before the Civil War when the central government began to feel concern about the degree of Covenanting interest in Newcastle. Beyond the bits of information that can be gathered from these sources, biographical information about Morton appears to be totally lacking. He appears to have had some connection with Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, a fact that would fit in well with Dr. Jenison's contacts with the Master of that college, Samuel Ward, but Morton does not appear to have left any records indicating his residence there.[37] His religious views seem to have been Presbyterian in nature; his identifiable contacts, such as those with Jenison and with Colonel Robert Fenwick, are for the most part with people of that persuasion. There is very little in the letters to afford one much of a personal glimpse of Morton. In one scrap, he recounts a dream in which he sheltered a murderer because "we are bound out of love to our brethren to not onely hazard our lives but even to lay them down to save our brethren's lives",[38] but beyond the suggestion that the

[35] *C.S.P.Dom.*, 1638-9, p. 358.

[36] PRO, SP 16/540/446 (1-39). Morton Papers: Letters, etc. of the Morton Family April, 1625-August, 1638.

[37] There is no trace of Morton in Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*. The two William Mortons who are mentioned are clearly not the correct person. There is a strong possibility that he was related to the William Morton who was vicar in Newcastle. Morton's overwhelmingly Cambridge contacts (there is only one identifiable Oxford man in the correspondence, John Billers, and he incorporated at Cambridge) and the contents of the letter of Francis Churchman and Thomas Gilbert to Morton which is concerned partially with college affairs at Sidney Sussex (PRO SP 16/540/446 no. 1) both argue for some sort of a Cambridge connection.

[38] PRO SP 16/540/446 no. 2.

murderer stabbed a villain as Felton did the Duke of Buckingham, the note does not tell us much.

It is possible, on the other hand, to say rather more about how Morton came to Newcastle and how he was supported while he was there. As early as 1631, he was looking for a place that might promise something in the church. A chance for him came in 1632 when the lecturer at Newcastle, Yeldard Alvey, was made vicar of the town and the lectureship consequently vacated. Henry Dawson appears to have taken the first steps to secure the appointment of Morton to the vacant lectureship. On 24 November, 1632, he wrote to Thomas Gilbert about Alvey's appointment and added that the townspeople thought of offering the position to Morton.[39] It is relatively certain that this letter was passed on to Morton since it has become included in his correspondence. Three days later, John Blakiston wrote to Morton, whom he addressed as his cousin, to the same effect, cautioning that it would be well to get a letter from Bishop Morton to support his cause.[40] No immediate action appears to have been taken. Several months later, in February, Blakiston again wrote to Morton.[41] In this letter, he commented that the third member of the Puritan triumvirate, Lionel Maddison, hoped that Morton would be in readiness to come whenever he was wanted. What Morton was apparently lacking was the firm support of Bishop Morton.

By the summer of 1634, it had become clear to all concerned that Morton would not get the lectureship. This, however, did not discourage Blakiston. He again wrote to Morton, urging him to " hasten to us heere at Newcastle wth what speed you can ".[42] Blakiston implies that Morton had already visited the town and been denied the lectureship, but still he asked him to come into these " bad and barren parts ". Towards the end of August, yet another letter from Blakiston

[39] *Ibid.*, no. 4.
[40] *Ibid.*, no. 5.
[41] *Ibid.*, no. 6.
[42] *Ibid.*, no. 10.

reached Morton,[43] this time pressing him to take some decision about coming to Newcastle. Morton was, however, having domestic difficulties, and these may have been the cause of his failure to respond promptly to the Newcastle overtures, but by October, he had made another journey to the North and had resolved his mind. On 24 October, he wrote to a friend who was attempting to attract him to Leicester that he was engaged to return to the North with all possible speed; "Newcastle and I have resolved upon such action."[44]

He was certainly in Newcastle by 5 January, 1635.[45] While there, he maintained a frequent correspondence with Blakiston, who appears, from the headings of his letters, to have spent some time at least in London. Blakiston wrote a revealing letter to Morton in May, 1635, which illustrates well the dissatisfaction of the Northern Puritan leader with the state of affairs in England. Harping on the theme of these evil days, he commented on the feeling found in the hearts of the best in all places that New England was the place to go. "It is in all the best mens opinion a place likeliest for the people of God to escape unto, whom he gives liberty to remove."[46] Towards the end of the letter, Blakiston indicated the extent to which he had come under the spiritual care of Morton; he expressed considerable longing to be refreshed with Morton's fellowship and to receive some spiritual good from him. Morton was, moreover, attracting the venom of the Anglicans in Newcastle by the conscientious performance of his duties. The royalist schoolmaster, Amor Oxley, wrote a bitter letter to him, accusing him of nourishing a snake in his bosom.[47] To the Puritans, his ministry was a blessing. The long and curious letter of Thomas Ledgard to Morton in May, 1638, a depressing and soul-searching analysis by a man of deep religious sincerity who felt that he

[43] *Ibid.*, no. 11.
[44] *Ibid.*, no. 16.
[45] *Ibid.*, no. 23.
[46] *Ibid.*, no. 24.
[47] *Ibid.*, no. 28.

was possessed with " a spirituall lethargie " is a clear example of the extent to which the Newcastle Puritans had made Morton their intercessor with their God.[48] Ledgard's supreme trust in and respect for Morton is obvious in every line of the letter.

For the rest of Morton's career at Newcastle, one must look to scattered references in the State Papers. When the religious situation at Newcastle came under the view of Secretary Windebank, the presence of Morton was one of the first things remarked upon. In the interchange of letters in 1639 between Alexander Davison, mayor of Newcastle, and Secretary Windebank, the name of Morton is prominently mentioned.[49] What emerged from the investigation was that Morton was living at Henry Dawson's house and that on every Sunday evening a congregation resorted to him to hear a discussion of the sermon which he had preached earlier in the day. All the people who attended were thought by Davison to be suspect in regard to their affection to the church government, since none of them ordinarily resorted to their parish church. Davison confessed that he had been unable to discover very much about the nature of Morton's employment in Newcastle. " Mr. Morton the preacher, though his residence is there and has been so for divers years, yet he has never had any allowance from the vicar or the town so what maintenance he gets there is from private persons whose names they know not."[50] Morton stoutly maintained that there was nothing sinister in his activities,[51] but the suspicions of the central government were aroused.

Their suspicions were aroused in part because they, like the modern historian, were aware that the Puritan movement in Newcastle could not have grown in a void. Surrounded by a largely conservative countryside, Newcastle held a small pocket of Puritanism in a predominantly Catholic area. The trading contacts with London and the continent, while of

[48] *Ibid.*, no. 33.
[49] *C.S.P.Dom.*, 1638-9, p. 358.
[50] *Ibid.*, p. 358.
[51] *Ibid.*, p. 360.

some importance in fostering the growth of Puritan ideas, were not sufficient in themselves to keep the growth alive. What was needed was a firmer touch with the outside Puritans, and that was provided by contact with the Scots. On the surface, this would seem a most unlikely union, for the traditional hostility of the Newcastle merchants to the Scots was marked. Many of the ordinaries of the town companies contained specifically anti-Scottish clauses.[52] In practice, however, the hostility of Northumberland to the Scots appears to have been considerably modified in the Elizabethan period and in the seventeenth century.[53] As early as 1603, Sir John Carey was complaining that there was too great a familiarity and intercourse between the English and the Scots; the gentry, he wrote, feasted together and the thieves planned robberies in unison.[54] What was true of Northumberland generally was even more true of Newcastle. The rise of the coal industry in the Tyne Valley provided the basis for an extensive Scottish settlement in the area of Newcastle. For at least a century, the border country became the principal recruiting ground for the pit workers.[55] In 1637-8, the coal owners made a rough survey of the men employed in the industry near Newcastle; they put the number of workers in the Tyne Valley at 5,800, of whom the majority were Scots and borderers.[56] In 1640, Viscount Conway assessed the situation more conservatively in letters to Laud and Strafford, but he too drew attention to the large numbers.[57] He stated that there were 300 Scots who worked in the coal mines near Newcastle, as well as " divers families " who lived in the town; the numbers, he cautioned, might be of " dangerous consequence " since they were all " as much Covenanters as my Lord Rothes ". Others made similar comments. Edward Norgate wrote that in Newcastle there

[52] MSS. Masons Company, Newcastle, Box I, typescript of ordinary, 1 Sept., 1581; MSS. Plumbers Company, Newcastle, MS. 4, Ordinary, 1 Sept., 1536.
[53] Tough, *Last Years of a Frontier*, pp. 179-180.
[54] *Cal. Border Papers*, 2:819.
[55] J. Nef, *The Rise of the British Coal Industry* (London, 1932), 2:148.
[56] PRO SP 16/408 no. 57.
[57] *C.S.P.Dom.*, 1640, p. 82.

was a considerable "confluence of Scots and Covenanters who come and go at pleasure and are so mixed as hardly to be distinguishable".[58] At Durham, he commented, Scottish Covenanters were reported to have drunk openly a health to the Covenant in a public house.[59]

The closeness of Scotland was a considerable boon to the Northumberland Puritans. Scottish Covenanters appear to have used Newcastle as a convenient port of entry,[60] and they quickly struck up ties with the growing body of Puritans in the town. There is some indication that preachers for the Northumberland Puritans were supplied on occasion from across the border. Sir Jacob Astley reported to Windebank in January, 1639, that some Scottish preachers had come into the county "preaching strange doctrine, inveighing against the bishops, and praying for the good cause of the Covenanters".[61] He further noted that some of the English were in frequent correspondence with them. That these contacts involved Newcastle men can be amply demonstrated from the State Papers. The activities of John Fenwick were brought to the attention of Windebank by Sir John Marley, who was to emerge as the royalist leader of Newcastle. Fenwick and a tanner named Bittleston had been to Scotland and subscribed the Covenant; it was suspected that they had carried with them a list of Newcastle men who would subscribe also.[62] Furthermore, prominent Covenanters such as Sir John Buchanan had visited Newcastle, were openly entertained by Newcastle citizens, and had surveyed the fortifications of the town when they were there.[63]

Extensive government inquiries into these connections

[58] *C.S.P.Dom.*, 1639, p. 162.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 145.

[60] This is suggested by information given by Sir John Lambe, 6 August, 1640, about the passage of Covenanters by water to Newcastle where they changed over to post horses which were arranged in advance. *C.S.P.Dom.*, 1640, p. 563.

[61] *C.S.P.Dom.*, 1638-9, p. 385.

[62] *Ibid.*, pp. 316-17.

[63] *Ibid.*, p. 324. This investigation also revealed that Mr. Middleton of Belsay had a private chapel where Puritans preached and to which a number of Newcastle people resorted in preference to their parish churches.

were undertaken in 1639-1640. Alarming facts emerged. The investigation of Fenwick led to the uncovering and eventual expulsion of the unofficial lecturer, William Morton, but it also turned up another Puritan meeting of a similar nature. The brother of the tanner Bittleston who had accompanied Fenwick to Scotland was holding meetings at his house on Sunday afternoons after the regular sermons.[64] People met there to hear what he termed "a repetition of sermons" but he refused to reveal either who came to the meetings or whose sermons he was repeating. It is clear that they were not those of Vicar Alvey. The investigation also uncovered some correspondence that revealed Bittleston, like Blakiston and Morton, to be in contact with Puritans in London and New England. One of the letters was almost entirely devoted to a Puritan criticism of innovations in religious practices, referring to the demand to have ministers preach in a surplice as "this hellish plot of anti-Christ" and concluding, "Truly God is not pleased with a sinful nation."[65]

The investigation in the following year of the visit of Sir John Buchanan to Newcastle brought the name of Sir Lionel Maddison more prominently into the picture than had been true before. Marley called him one of the greatest favourers of the Puritan faction in Newcastle, and added that "all the Puritans in our town are labouring to make Sir Lionell a parliament man".[66] Marley also drew attention to the significant fact of the close family relationship between the leaders of the Puritan movement, a factor which no doubt contributed to their solidarity. Ralph Grey, who had had close contacts with Buchanan, was Maddison's brother-in-law; the Mayor Robert Bewick and Dr. Jenison were his uncles. Moreover, by 1640, Marley had come across a third Puritan meeting in Newcastle. This was at Robert Bewick's house; "there has not been any unconformable minister about us but they have resorted to his house".[67] He men-

[64] *Ibid.*, p. 418.
[65] *Ibid.*, p. 418.
[66] *Ibid.*, p. 402.
[67] *Ibid.*, p. 402.

tioned in particular Anthony Lapthorne. The latter was a Puritan preacher who had attracted considerable note in North Durham and had finally been summoned before the local High Commission. He also appears to have been connected with the Puritan meeting at Barnard Castle at the home of Matthew Stoddart. Stoddart had close Newcastle connections, and it is not without interest that one of the frequent attenders at his meetings were the younger Sir Henry Vane, with whose family Sir Lionel Maddison had close contacts.[68] The picture which was emerging from all these investigations was of a series of small but active Puritan cells, many in Newcastle, but others stretching over Northumberland and North Durham, sharing preachers and providing a chain of contact stretching to the Borders and to the Covenanters in Scotland.

All the evidence also pointed to the fact that in the years immediately prior to the Civil War, the Newcastle Puritans were becoming a larger and more confident group. This is not to suggest that they were not pressed hard by the government after the investigations began to reveal the extent of their growth. Morton was forced out of Newcastle, and Dr. Jenison was subjected to an extensive investigation of his ecclesiastical practices which eventually resulted in his being deprived of his lectureship. But the Puritans in Newcastle reacted to these pressures by making their first active movements in the political world and by attacking vigorously in the matter of the town lectureship. Political action took two forms, first an effort to control the town mayoralty and second an attempt to influence parliamentary politics. The faithful Marley reported the plans that were afoot in connection with the elections for mayor in August, 1639:[69]

> Unless it be prevented and that speedily, the Puritan faction in our town which has much troubled us is like to multiply. . . . There is an intention to make Robert Bewick mayor at Michael-

[68] W. H. D. Longstaffe, *The Acts of the High Commission Court within the Diocese of Durham*, Surtees Soc. vol. 34 (Durham, 1858), p. 193, note a.
[69] *C.S.P.Dom.*, 1639, pp. 450-1.

> mas next who is the Doctor's [i.e., Dr. Jenison's] half-brother and strong for that faction, and I am sure most who know him think him good for little else, for I protest, as I have told his best friends, he is not fit for government, for if any occasion of moment should be, he may prejudice both his Majesty's service and the good of that town.

Windebank followed the suggestion of Marley and wrote to the mayor and aldermen before the election, mentioning the special care of the King for that town and urging that a "discreet" choice of a mayor would be the principal means for keeping it in order. The King, he wrote, had commanded him "to signify his express pleasure to you that you be very careful in choosing the mayor of that town for this next succeeding year and that by no means you admit of any factious or seditiously affected person to that place".[70] Government interference was to no avail, and Bewick was elected. There is no trace of any local discontent about this election, and the suspicion that the Puritan Bewick was a widely desired choice is strengthened by the simultaneous election of another Puritan, John Emerson, as sheriff.[71]

Political efforts were not, however, restricted to the local scene. When the agitation for a parliament finally produced an election, some Newcastle Puritans made a determined if somewhat amateurish effort to influence their members who were to sit in the Short Parliament. They appear to have made some tentative proposals to send Sir Lionel Maddison to Westminster, but there is no indication that this plan ever got beyond the stage of discussion. The first of the two members actually elected was Sir Peter Riddell, a powerful Hostman and a former governor of the company.[72] He had served as both mayor and sheriff of the town and had previous experience at Westminster in 1624. The second was Thomas Liddell, also a former sheriff and mayor.[73] Neither appears to have had any direct connection with the Puritan cause.

[70] *Ibid.*, p. 480.
[71] A.A.[4], xviii, p. 66.
[72] A.A.[4], xxiii, p. 138.
[73] *Ibid.*, p. 138.

Liddell was one of the principal defenders of Newcastle against Parliament and the Scots in 1644; Riddell died in 1641, so his political views on the developing conflict are not ascertainable, but there is little in his background to link him with the Maddison-Blakiston-Dawson group, except for his connection with Dr. Jenison through the vestry at All Saints Church.[74] The actual business of the drafting of the Puritan petition to the members is not entirely clear. Certainly Riddell himself expressed a desire for instructions for his behaviour at Westminster.[75] The initial moves seem to have been made by Anthony Errington, a Puritan warden of the Merchant Adventurers; he requested the mayor to form a committee to draft instructions for the two members.[76] The mayor, however, indicated a preference to work through the Common Council and suggested that Errington put his demands there. Errington then appears to have joined with Edward Man and two others in drafting two petitions, similar in content, one to be presented to the Common Council and the other to be presented directly to the members.[77] The instructions which the petitions embodied were reduced to two main points, a demand that the members "be careful to maintain the orthodox faith of our church and wholly to oppose any innovation both in doctrine and discipline" and a second demand that "they stand out for the liberties and freedom of the subjects which is principally in the maintenance of Magna Carta and other fundamental parliamentary laws".[78] What became of the petition is not certain. There is no trace of the Common Council meeting to discuss instructions for the burgesses in the extant records of the Newcastle corporation. Presumably the matter came under the view of Secretary Windebank who was keeping such a close eye on the affairs of the town, for the only evidences

[74] H. Hornby, *An Attempt Towards Some Account of the Ancient and Present State of the Town of Newcastle upon Tyne* (1774-98), 4 vols. MS., MSS. Duke of Northumberland, 187A/200 f. 163.

[75] *C.S.P.Dom.*, 1639-40, p. 603.

[76] *Ibid.*, pp. 600-601.

[77] *Ibid.*, pp. 601-602.

[78] *Ibid.*, pp. 601-602.

relating to the petition are to be found among the State Papers and apparently had been sent up to London for inspection. The effect that Errington and Man had produced on the Newcastle members appears to have been negligible. There is no record in the Commons Journals that either Liddell or Riddell spoke, much less that they presented any firm statement of grievances from the North.

In one other way, the Newcastle Puritans came more into the open just before the summoning of the Long Parliament. The removal of Dr. Jenison and the placing of an Arminian, Dr. Wishart, in his place deprived the Puritans of legal preaching,[79] but they almost at once succeeded in forcing out the other loyal lecturer, Thomas Stephenson, and in installing a Puritan temporarily in his place. Vicar Alvey reported the affair directly to Archbishop Laud on 19 December, 1639.[80] Stephenson had been forced from his place because of the "harsh carriage" of the Puritans towards him, and then "the mayor with the consent of some aldermen picked out a Common Council for the purpose and presently proceeded to the election of a new lecturer" without consulting with Alvey. They had picked "one Mr. Bewick, a townsman born who is a near kinsman to our mayor and Dr. Jenison, merely to keep faction on foot and still to maintain opposition and siding in the town as may more than probably be supposed". The matter was quickly investigated, but it was apparent that Stephenson wished to retire from the scene; he wrote to Bishop Morton, "I have withdrawn myself to my poor country cure where I desire to live in quiet and have leave to look on such as are more able for the public service of the church and have shoulders and disposition to bustle in this tumultuous age."[81]

In some ways, these victories of the Puritans were illusory. The case of the lectureship shows this most clearly, for it was purely a local and a limited victory. Final confirmation

[79] M. H. Dodds, ed., *Extracts from the Newcastle upon Tyne Council Minute Book, 1639-1656* (Newcastle, 1920), p. 2.
[80] *C.S.P.Dom.*, 1639-40, pp. 169-170.
[81] *Ibid.*, p. 385.

lay with the Bishop of Durham and he would not grant it. It is certain that Bewick did not hold the lectureship for any great length of time, but that Vicar Alvey himself took it over very soon after.[82] The Puritans were an increasingly vocal minority in the life of Newcastle. They had organized considerably in the previous ten years, and there is no doubt that their following had increased greatly, as witnessed in the municipal elections of 1639. But they were not yet in a powerful enough position to force their way on the country or even on the surrounding countryside. Moreover, the opposition of the central government had caused the removal of their two main preachers, William Morton and Robert Jenison. Their emergence into politics had been slow and almost reluctant, but this was to be the only method in which they would gain their way. For those of them who realized that there were political issues at stake as well as religious ones, the arrival of the Scots in 1640 was a mixed blessing. Long their allies from across the border, they were now their political and religious masters. Some doubted the wisdom of the course they were taking (or possibly of the course history was taking them).[83] Others like John Blakiston returned to the fight with renewed vigour. It was indicative of the feelings of the latter group that Blakiston, so long associated with the Puritan cause in Newcastle, should be one of those selected by the town to represent them in the Long Parliament.

[82] Dodds, *Common Council Book*, p. 20. The order of Common Council of 19 Sept., 1642, states Alvey supplied the place from the time of Stephenson's surrender. Not enough is known about the movements of Bewick to afford much aid. He next appears as the rector of Stanhope, co. Durham, on 24 October, 1644, to which he was appointed by order of both houses of Parliament to fill a vacancy caused by the death of the incumbent. *Commons Journals*, 3:675; *Lords Journals*, 7:53.

[83] PRO SP 16/466 no. 89, "A Letter from an Alderman in Newcastle to a Friend in London." This has been printed in Richardson, *Historical Reprints*. There is also a MS. version of this in the Bodleian Library, Tanner MS. 65, fols. 110-111v, and one in the William Trumbull MSS., XX, f. 48, in the Berkshire Record Office. I am indebted for the last reference to M. J. Havran, *The Catholics in Caroline England* (London, 1962), p. 186. Cf. also Tanner MS. 65, fols. 37-38v, a MS. protest to the leaders of the Scottish Army, 1640, "found in Newcastle Streets".