

THORNTON-IN-CRAVEN

BYGONE DAYS IN AN ANCIENT PARISH

[IV]

By A.H.CLEGG

Mr. A.H. Clegg, in the article published below, continues his survey of the history of the ancient parish of Thornton-in-Craven. Mr. Clegg deals with the church two centuries ago in Thornton and Barnoldswick and illuminates his article by the inclusion of two documents throwing light on parochial life in the two parishes on the middle of the eighteenth century. Mr. Clegg's previous articles appeared in the "Craven Herald" on April 26th, May 23rd, June 14th, June 21st, August 23rd and October 18th.

One may fittingly introduce this article by the announcement that Archbishop Herring became Archbishop of York on April 6th, 1743. In preparation for his primary visitation, he sent out a questionnaire consisting of eleven questions to each of the 903 parishes in his diocese which consisted at that time of almost the whole of Yorkshire. No less than 836 out of the 903 parishes made returns, and these are preserved among the muniments of the Archbishop of York at Bishopthorpe.

The returns give a detailed and valuable picture of Church life as it was in 1743. The information is valuable from a social, as well as ecclesiastical, point of view. There were 711 clergy apart from assistant curates ministering in 903 parishes.

Questions I and II required information regarding the population of the parish, the number and kind of dissenters in it, their meeting houses and teachers. At that time Halifax was larger than either Leeds or Bradford. Halifax had 6000 families, Leeds 4000, Sheffield 2000, Barnoldswick 200 and Thornton-in-Craven (Thornton, Earby and Kelbrook) 148 families. Estimating an average of five to a family, the population of Barnoldswick was 1000 and Thornton 740.

DISSENTERS

The dissenters mentioned in the returns were Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Independent Baptists, Society of Friends (Quakers), Moravians and Methodists. The Roman Catholics were mentioned in 262 returns, but in most cases they were few ; that is , only one or two families in a parish.

In only 59 parishes were there regular congregations and they had 36 chapels or places of worship. In only two cases is there evidence of open hostility on the part of the incumbent to his Roman Catholic parishioners and one of those was Broughton-in Craven. There was probably reticence on the part of the Roman Catholics, as penal laws could be invoked against them, while no penal laws could be invoked against dissenters.

Presbyterians were mentioned in 205 parishes. They had 70 chapels, four of which were in Haworth. Independents were rarer, being mentioned in only 24 returns, whilst Baptists were mentioned in 62 returns with 18 chapels, 2 being in Kildwick-in-Craven.

By far the most numerous of the dissenters were the Society of Friends, who are reported in 310 parishes. They had 107 meeting houses, one being in Barnoldswick and one in Salterforth. Moravians were very few, being reported in four parishes only. Methodists are mentioned in 22 returns, with 22 meeting houses. Methodist teachers mentioned include such well known names as John and Charles Wesley and John Nelson. It must be remembered,

however, that in 1743, Methodists were not strictly speaking, dissenters. Two interesting facts stand out clearly in the returns, the first being the begging of the Methodist Movement, and the second the prevalence of the Society of Friends, there was in 1743 little or no dissent in the country parishes.

SCHOOLS

Replies to question III, which sought information regarding public and charity schools, provided information of great interest to educationalists. In 266 parishes out of 645 in Yorkshire, there was apparently no school and no mention made of any secular teaching. There was a public school in Thornton-in-Craven and Barnoldswick. A large number of parishes had small endowments for the Parish Church or for the poor. Apparently, Thornton and Barnoldswick were unfortunate, for they had at that time neither almshouse, hospital nor charitable endowment.

PLURALISM AND NON-RESIDENCE.

Pluralism, that is, the holding of more than one benefice at a time, was one of the evils of church life at that time. As many as 393 out of 836 parishes mentioned had no resident parson, and the commonest reason for this lack was the possession of another benefice, although in some cases it was due to the smallness of the income. Out of 711 clergy, 335 were pluralists. The rector of Thornton possessed another benefice, and the vicar of Barnoldswick was also the vicar of Bracewell. Pluralism and non-residence necessitated the employment of assistant curates. In a few cases the curate was allowed £40 per annum, probably with the use of the parsonage house, but more commonly it was £20 per annum. The curate at Thornton received £35 per annum.

CHURCH SERVICES

Churches to the number of 383 had two services - Matins and Evensong - each Lord's Day throughout the year. Most of the others had only one - although some of these had two during the summer months. At Thornton public service was held twice every Sunday, and at Barnoldswick every other Sunday.

On the whole, the returns indicate strongly that the clergy as a body were "exemplary in their lives, diligent in study, kindly in nature and sensible in advice. They gave a willing and helpful hand to their parishioners over the stiles in the path of life." To them was due largely whatever was done in the way of elementary education, and they welcomed cordially the introduction of Sunday Schools. The clergy's failure lay in the fact that they were not superior to their times and they often lacked enthusiasm.

THORNTON AND BARNOLDSWICK RETURNS

I append exact copies of the returns of 1743 sent in from the Thornton and Barnoldswick parishes. The Thornton return is published for the first time, and I am indebted to a kindly East Riding rector for a copy of it.

Thornton.

Craven, 1743

- I. In the parish are 148 Families. Of these 16 are dissenters, viz., 8 Quakers and 8 Anabaptists.
 - II. In this parish there is no licenc'd or other meeting house, that I can find out. An Anabaptis'd Teacher formerly resorted hither, but has not been in the parish of late.
 - III. There is a publick school in our parish endow'd with Twenty Pounds p Annum, free to the parish at large ; in which care is taken to instruct children in the principles of the Xtian Religion according to the doctrine of the Church of England and to bring them duly to Church as the Canon requires.
 - IV. There is in our parish no Alms House, Hospitall or other Charitable endowment Neither have lands or Tenements been left for the repair of our Church, or to any other pious Use.
 - V. I reside chiefly in person upon my cure, and in my Parsonage-House ; and when absent from thence, I have the care of another Parish.
 - VI. In my absence I have a residing curate duly qualified who lives in my Parsonage-House, and I allow him above Thirty five Pounds p annum.
 - VII I know of none who come to Church, that are not baptiz'd : or, that being baptiz'd and of a competent age, are not confirmed.
 - VIII The publick service is read in our church twice every Lord's Day.
 - IX. Children are usually Catechis'd in our Church after Easter, and the parishioners send their children and servants to be instructed.
 - X. The Sacrement of the Lords Supper is administered in our Church Five Times in the year. There are 361 Communicants in the Parish of which few receive, particularly only 23 last Easter.
 - XI. Open and timely warning of the Sacrament is given before it is administered : But our Parishioners never send in their Names, as is requir'd, neither has it ever been usual here. The Sacrament has been refus'd to none.
- I have nothing Particular to give in Answer to the above Enqirys.

I am with due deference,

Your Grace's most Humble Servant,

H : Richardson

Rector a 'Thornton

Churhwardens.

Old :

John Brown

Robert Tasker

John Willian

New :
John Brown
Robert Tasker
John Willian

Barnoldswick.

Craven, 1743

- I. There may be two hundred families and many of them dissenters wholly, or some or more in a family. There no Papists but Quakers or Anabaptists commonly called. (none bury in separate places except Quakers) one fourth part nearly being dissenters.
- II. There is a meeting house at Barnoldswick and another of the Quakers at Salterforth in same parish. They of Barnoldswick refuse Infant Baptism and are called Baptists or by some Anabaptists and Antinomians are very numerous. Their Teacher is one who dwells in the meeting house, and they weekly assemble if not oftener except when he travels abroad.
- III. There is a school at Barnoldswick maintained by the goodwill of the parishioners and public for all the parish
The master teaches twenty or thirty children and is conformable and careful to bring them duly to church.
- IV. We have no alms house Hospitable [sic] &c in our parish.
- V. Barnoldswick peculiar is joynd with Bracewell contiguous unto it ; the Minister resides at Bracewell.
- VI. There is no curate besides myself.
- VII. There are some who come to church of whose baptism I am not well assured : but so many as are of competent age I exhort very frequently to be prepared for confirmation.
- VIII. The public Service is read every other Lord's Day and when it is not there , it is perform'd at Bracewell.
- IX. The children and servants are almost constantly [sic] (?accustom'd) to say their Catechism in the afternoon of each Lords day.
- X. The Sacrement of the Lords Supper is administered four times in the year for the most part, the number of communicants are generally near twenty or thirty and near twenty received at Easter last.
- XI. I constantly read the exhortation required in the Common book of prayer openly and timely before the administration.
And none have been refused from communicating.

I submit all to your judgment, and pray for your Grace's health and happiness and remain
Your obedient Servant,
Arthur Tempest.

Instituted : 5 Dec. 1717.

Churchwardens : Old : James Bullock
Richard Fort

Craven Herald Friday March 14th 1930