

Revisiting the Records: Donne at St. Dunstan's

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John Donne's interaction with the parish of St. Dunstan's in the West has been examined in detail by Baird Whitlock and subsequently by R. C. Bald.¹ Their work surveyed the majority of direct references to Donne's activities in the parish. They make, however, a number of errors, and there remain in the extensive parish records and related materials a considerable number of unreported details which shed additional light upon Donne's relationships and activities within the parish, particularly at the beginning of his tenure as Vicar.

As Whitlock and Bald note, Donne's formal interactions with the parish began many months before his appointment as Vicar of St. Dunstan's.² The particular circumstance was a substantial bequest to the parish poor from Nicholas Hare, a member of the Inner Temple, Clerk of the Court of Wards, and a recently deceased acquaintance of the Dean of St. Paul's.³ The task of securing the legacy from Hare's executor, John

¹Whitlock, "Donne at St. Dunstan's—I," *The Times Literary Supplement*, 16 September 1955, p. 548; Whitlock, "Donne at St. Dunstan's—II," *The Times Literary Supplement*, 23 September 1955, p. 564; and Bald, *John Donne: A Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

²I say "formal" interaction because as Preacher at Lincoln's Inn from 1615 to 1622, Donne unquestionably made the acquaintance of members of his future parish who lived along Fleet Street and Chancery Lane. Parishioners were doubtless still alive, moreover, who may have known Donne from his student days at Lincoln's Inn.

³On Hare himself, see Bald, *A Life*, p. 457; and, more particularly, John Carey, "The Poems of Nicholas Hare," *RES* n. s. 11 (1960): 365–383. That Donne's friendship with Hare was substantial is further suggested by the fact

Harvey, a future Governor of the Virginia Colony, bedeviled the Vestry of St. Dunstan's throughout Donne's tenure as Vicar and for many years thereafter. Hare was buried in St. Dunstan's early in 1622, and by 1623 the Vestrymen were thoroughly annoyed by Harvey's recalcitrance.⁴ Since Hare had named Donne in his will as one to be consulted about the legacy, the Vestry late in July 1623 ordered the Churchwardens "to attende the Deane of Paules and the Lo: Keeper" to initiate legal action against "Captaine Harvye for the more security of recouery" of Hare's bequest of £200.⁵ More than half-a-year later, the Churchwardens visited Donne yet again: "Item the iii^jth of March 1623[4] paid for wine when wee went to visitt the Deane of S^t. Pauls church xiiij^d." ⁶

This gift-bearing visit may have involved some talk about Hare's legacy, but was almost certainly to cordially welcome Donne as the new Vicar of St. Dunstan's. Full details are not available, but Donne's predecessor, Dr. Thomas White, had died on 1 March.⁷ Donne was still

that Hare made a gift of £20 to "my lovinge freinde Doctor Fox," Donne's physician and close friend, who tended Donne during his near-fatal illness in 1623 (PCC, 1 Savile; Bald, *A Life*, pp. 452, 478, 510, 517, 525–526, 533; and Kate Frost, "John Donne's *Devotions*: An Early Record of Epidemic Typhus," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 31 [1976]: 423).

⁴Bald gives the date of Hare's death as 13 January 1621/2 (*A Life*, p. 457); but the exact date is obscure. He had been ill since at least mid-December 1621, when he made his will, which was probated on 7 January 1621/2. Three days later, "Nicholas Hare gent" was buried, as he requested, in St. Anne's Chapel within St. Dunstan's church. The ambiguous parish records suggest that he died shortly after 4 January (PCC, 1 Savile; London, Guildhall Library, St. Dunstan's in the West, *Parish Registers*, MS. 10, 342; and *Churchwardens' Accounts*, MS. 2968, II, 193b (hereafter referred to as SDW, *PR* and *ChA*, respectively). Unless otherwise noted, all manuscripts pertaining to St. Dunstan's in the West are in the Guildhall Library.

⁵SDW, *Vestry Minutes*, MS. 3016, I, 100 (hereafter referred to as *VM*). For details about Hare's legacy, see Bald, *A Life*, pp. 457–458, 572–573. For the "very faire Monument" Harvey erected in the church at some point in Hare's honor, see John Stow, *The Survey of London* (1633), p. 880.

⁶SDW, *ChA*, II, 228b.

⁷Bald, *A Life*, pp. 455, 458. White was buried in the chancel of St. Dunstan's on 11 March 1623/4 (SDW, *PR*, MS. 10, 342; Whitlock, "St. Dunstan's—I"; and John Russell, comp., *Sion College, Founded by Thomas White, D. D.* [London: Richard Clay, 1859], p. 7).

probably weak at the time from the illness which had almost killed him at the end of 1623, but negotiations for the living with its patron, Donne's friend Sir Richard Sackville, the Earl of Dorset, had likely been ongoing for some time.⁸ The Earl had apparently promised the living to Donne some time before, and Donne must have been informed in February of White's rapidly declining health, since White was Donne's neighbor and also one of the residentiaries of St. Paul's.⁹ There was in truth some urgency. The Earl would himself die by the end of the month, and Donne probably knew of the Earl's determination to advance his own chaplain.¹⁰ Consequently, Donne marshalled his resources and acted quickly. By 9 March, the royal dispensation for him to hold the living had been rushed through by the Duke of Buckingham, and Donne was inducted into the living by the Archdeacon of London on 15 March.¹¹ Three days later he compounded for the living, little more than a week before his patron's death.¹²

⁸The Earl drove a hard bargain (Bald, *A Life*, p. 462). For Donne's illness, see Clara Lander, "A Dangerous Sickness Which Turned to a Spotted Fever," *SEL* 11 (1971): esp. 96–102; and Frost, pp. 421–430. Donne may have prepared for his upcoming appointment in February by sending presentation copies of his newly published *Devotions* to the Duke of Buckingham and quite possibly to the Earl of Dorset as well (Bald, *A Life*, pp. 450–455).

⁹Izaak Walton, *The Lives of John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Richard Hooker, George Herbert, and Robert Sanderson*, ed. George Saintsbury (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 55; Bald, *A Life*, p. 391; and *The Sermons of John Donne*, ed. George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson, 10 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953–1962), 6:9 (hereafter cited as *Sermons*). For White's residence, see n. 43 below.

¹⁰The Earl died on 28 March, Easter Day, 1624 (Bald, *A Life*, p. 455). In his will, sealed that day, he instructed his executors "that M^r Dupper [Duppa] his Chaplaine should be presented to the two first of . . . fowre livings which shall fall voyd" in his presentation (PCC, 27 Byrde).

¹¹Bald, *A Life*, pp. 455–458; and LMA, Archdeaconry Court of London, Probate and Administration Act Books, MS. 9050/5. Whitlock ("St. Dunstan's—I") recovered the date Donne paid the first fruits of the living but not the date of his induction; hence his claim, as elaborated by Bald (*A Life*, p. 455), that Donne "was formally appointed by the patron on 18 March" is inaccurate. Donne had to have been formally presented earlier to the Bishop of London, who was then charged to determine his suitability for the cure, prior to his induction. For the full procedure, see R. H. Helmholz, *The Oxford History of*

Returning to the Churchwardens, it is useful to recognize that Donne was dealing with the same men on both occasions. Churchwardens at St. Dunstan's served from Easter to Easter, so the men who met with Donne were William Adams and William Hyde, the Senior and Junior Churchwardens, respectively.¹³ Both are strongly linked to Donne's activities at St. Dunstan's. Hyde, for example, served with Donne on the Vestry throughout the Dean's tenure as Vicar; so did his brother in the later years.¹⁴

The cordial tone captured in the entry of 4 March continues in the entry shortly after Donne became Vicar concerning Donne's salary:

xxv^{to} Die Junij 1624. . . . This Day the parishioners of thys
parish of S^t: Dunstanes beinge assembled have lovingly

the Lawes of England, vol. 1: *The Canon Law and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction from 597 to the 1640s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 100, 477–491; and G. W. O. Addleshaw, *Rectors, Vicars and Patrons in Twelfth and early Thirteenth Century Canon Law* (London and York: St. Anthony's Press, 1956), pp. 19–22. Induction characteristically involved leading ("inductio") the cleric to his new church, ringing a church bell to signal the occasion, and finally delivering the keys to the church to the new incumbent (Daniel Greenberg, ed., *Stroud's Judicial Dictionary of Words and Phrases*, 7th ed., vol. 2 [London: Sweet & Maxwell, 2006], p. 1331). For the legal importance of the induction, which alone gave Donne formal legal possession of the benefice, see F. T. Madge, *Hampshire Inductions* (Winchester, England: Warren and Son, 1918), pp. xi–xiii. Everything suggests that Donne had secured the formal presentation by the end of the first week in March (hence the visit by the Churchwardens), and that he then rushed to meet every legal formality.

¹²Bald, *A Life*, pp. 456–458, citing PRO, E.334/17, f. 7b. Donne's associates at St. Paul's, Robert Christmas and Thomas Roper ("Rooper"), both of St. Gregory's, acted as sureties. Donne remembered both men in his will, which Christmas also witnessed (Bald, *A Life*, pp. 306 n. 3, 564, 567).

¹³SDW, *ChA*, II, 217a, 230a. That both men were present on the second occasion is established by the entry: "paid for wine when *wee* went to visitt" (SDW, *ChA*, II, f. 228b, emphasis mine).

¹⁴For Hyde's presence on the Vestry, see SDW, *VM*, I, 103 (26 October 1624); 114 (12 July 1626), and 135 (21 April 1630), the last two with his brother Thomas; and *ChA*, III, 361a (20 May 1629), also with his brother.

condiscended to give Two hundred poundes per Annum vnto the Vicar and Par [cut off] for the tithes of the parish.¹⁵

The unusually warm tone of the entry is strikingly similar to that of Walton in his biography of Donne, and no such passage is found concerning his successor.¹⁶ It suggests that by June Donne had already begun to win the affections of influential members of the parish. For some, that affection had a much earlier date. Particularly striking in this regard is the unprecedented appearance and prominence of Thomas Ravenscroft, an old acquaintance, who brings to light a cluster of friendships stretching back to Donne's student days at Lincoln's Inn.

Ravenscroft had been connected to St. Dunstan's as early as 1595.¹⁷ Over the following decades, he became a substantial member of the parish.¹⁸ At the time of Donne's arrival, he genuinely ranked as one of the influential "ancients" of the parish. However, he never participated in any official capacity until he suddenly appears twice shortly following Donne's appointment as Vicar. On 7 July, we find him in a list of those assembled in the Questhouse to select scavengers for the following year, at which time he became one of those appointed "to consider how the Rent of Two hundred pounds per Annum may be well and conveniently rated and gathered to the reasonable contentment and quyet of the parishioners."¹⁹ That entry refers to his presence at the meeting on 25

¹⁵SDW, *VM*, I, 103; and Whitlock, "St. Dunstan's—I."

¹⁶Compare Walton, *Lives*, pp. 52–53. Bald fails to remark on the striking tone of the entry (*A Life*, pp. 461–462).

¹⁷On 22 December 1595, Thomas, of "Dunstan in the West, London, Gent.," applied for a license to marry Thomazine Smithe, the daughter of James Smithe of London, "Gent." (Geo. J. Armytage, ed., *Allegations for Marriage Licences Issued by the Bishop of London, 1520–1610*, Harleian Society 25 [1887]: 227); and *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica* 5th s., 1 [1916]: 224). Three children of "Thomas Rainscroft" ("Ravenscroft" or "Ravenscrofte"), "gent" were subsequently baptized there: Elizabeth (29 September 1600); Thomasine (24 July 1602); and John (26 February 1606/7) (SDW, *PR*, MS. 10, 342).

¹⁸In the 1615 assessment for improvements to the church, Ravenscroft is one of those paying the highest amount in his region of the parish (SDW, *ChA*, II, 82a). In 1621 he is listed as one of the parish's substantial landholders (TNA, E.179.147/498, f. 6a).

¹⁹SDW, *VM*, I, 102.

June, where he appears first in the list of fifteen men nominated to be “sessors” of the parishioners for their contributions to Donne’s salary.²⁰ Ravenscroft’s position on this list doubtless bears witness to his stature in the community, within which he remained active throughout Donne’s pastorate, and also testifies to his “loving” and concerted solicitations during this meeting on Donne’s behalf.²¹

Donne had, in fact, been friends with members of the Ravenscroft family since the 1590s, and the sudden and unexpected engagement of Thomas to support Donne’s cause brings a nexus of relationships to the fore reaching deep into his past.²² Thomas’s kinsman, William Ravenscroft, had entered Lincoln’s Inn in 1580 and maintained relations with the Inn until his death in 1628.²³ A Clerk of the Petty Bag, he had served with Donne in the Parliaments of 1601 and 1614; in 1621 he served as Treasurer of the Inn.²⁴ Equally important, he was related to Donne’s patron, Sir Thomas Egerton, and Christopher Brooke was one of the “loueing friends” to whom he left a bequest in his will, which he signed as “of Lyncolns Inn.”²⁵ We cannot doubt, then, that William was

²⁰SDW, *VM*, I, 103. Ravenscroft’s position, before Thomas Johnson and Andrew Feild, suggests that he may have been acting as the Alderman’s Deputy. Of the remaining fourteen men, eleven were members of the Vestry currently serving with Donne, including Johnson and Feild, the Common Councilmen. William Hyde, now Senior Churchwarden, is listed third after the Councilmen (SDW, *VM*, I, 103; and *ChA*, II, 234a, 251a). Apart from Ravenscroft, only the final three (John Jorden, William Goshawke, and Jarvis Steynrod) were not serving on the Vestry.

²¹For records of Ravenscroft’s activities in 1627 and January 1629/30, see SDW, *ChA*, II, 317b; and III, 379a).

²²For Donne’s long involvement with the Ravenscroft family, see especially Bald, *A Life*, pp. 105–106, 132, 334, 336 n., 337; and Clayton D. Lein, “Donne, Thomas Muriell, and the Musicians of St. Paul’s,” *John Donne Journal* 23 (2004): 233–235.

²³Bald, *A Life*, p. 337. William was called to the Bar in 1598, admitted an “Associate of the Bench” in 1604, and made Bencher in 1621 (Lincoln’s Inn, Mary S. Thorpe and Charlotte Thorpe, “Biographical Sketches of Lincoln’s Inn Men (Readers, Treasurers, and Benefactors), 1600–1917,” unpublished mss., ff. 59–60).

²⁴Thorpe and Thorpe, f. 59; and Bald, *A Life*, pp. 114–115, 284–289.

²⁵PCC, 99 Barrington. His aunt was Elizabeth Ravenscroft, the first wife of Donne’s patron, Sir Thomas Egerton, and in his will William left a bequest to

a man Donne met regularly in Brooke's company, was a man with whom he had worked at Lincoln's Inn, and was a man with whose family Donne was widely acquainted.²⁶ It seems reasonable to suppose that Brooke and clusters of Ravenscrofts were regularly to be found in his congregation to enjoy his preaching, and that Thomas uncharacteristically stepped forward in 1624 to enhance the fortunes of a family friend, one he himself had probably known since the 1590s.²⁷

That the parishioners of St. Dunstan's "lovingly condescended" to award Donne a generous salary is almost certainly also owing in part to Donne's eager participation in parish affairs upon becoming Vicar. Donne does not appear to have resumed preaching following his illness until 28 March, when he delivered his customary sermon at St. Paul's on Easter Day.²⁸ During the following month, however, he devoted as much time as possible to his new parish, and he carefully set about in his

the Lord Keeper's son, John Egerton, the first Earl of Bridgewater, and his wife, likewise Donne's friends and patrons. Christopher Brooke enjoyed the affection of both men, leaving legacies of pictures in his own will to both "*my good neighbour and Friend*, Wm. Ravenscroft, of Lincoln's Inn, Esquire" and "to my dear ancient and worthy Friend, Docr. Dunne, the Dean of Paules" (PCC, 112 Barrington, emphasis mine). In 1624, William's coat of arms was included along with those of Brooke and others in "the great west window" of Lincoln's Inn Chapel (The Records of the Honorable Society of Lincoln's Inn, *The Black Books*, vol. 2 (1586–1660) [Lincoln's Inn, 1898], p. 450).

²⁶Three of William's brothers (Anthony, Thomas, and Ralph) had participated with Donne (and possibly Brooke) in the funeral of the Lord Keeper's son in 1599 (Bald, *A Life*, pp. 105–106; and *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica*, pp. 214–216), and Donne and William both offered testimony in 1618 and 1619 in a case concerning the Egerton family (Bald, *A Life*, pp. 332–337).

²⁷We should note, in this connection, that Robert and Thomas Ravenscroft, sons of William's brother Thomas, also entered Lincoln's Inn, the latter shortly before Donne's appointment as Divinity Reader there. Both may have been under his pastoral care (The Records of the Honorable Society of Lincoln's Inn, vol. 1: *Admissions from A. D. 1420 to A. D. 1799* [Lincoln's Inn, 1896], pp. 152, 172; *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica*, pp. 214–215; and Bald, *A Life*, p. 318).

²⁸Donne does not seem to have preached from the end of October 1623 until 28 March 1624 (Bald, *A Life*, pp. 542, 448–455). Illness prevented him from delivering his required sermon as Dean on Christmas Day and also his customary sermon at Court at the beginning of Lent (Bald, *A Life*, p. 455).

sermons and activities to establish the character and tone for his desired interaction with his new congregation. Izaak Walton, a decidedly appreciative member of the congregation, elegantly conveyed his admiration for Donne's affective preaching:

A Preacher in earnest; weeping sometimes for his Auditory, sometimes with them: alwayes preaching to himself, like an Angel from a cloud, but in none; carrying some, as St. *Paul* was, to Heaven in holy raptures, and inticing others by a sacred Art and Courtship to amend their lives.²⁹

Walton may well be recollecting the rich metaphoric patterns of Donne's initial sermon at St. Dunstan's on 11 April, where he boldly assumed the role of a suitor courting a widowed congregation and insisted upon loving relationships: "*love* being the *root* of all, the *fruit* of all may be *peace*."³⁰ But Walton's poetic account, as Bald's later one, misses the complex energies of Donne's intricately nuanced performance on that "emergent occasion."

Donne assumed the pulpit at St. Dunstan's at an exceptionally volatile moment in the nation's history. The king's concerted attempts, stretching from 1618 to 1623, to negotiate a European peace by wedding his son to a Spanish Catholic princess, despite the horrifying collapse after 1620 of the Protestant cause in the Palatinate and Germany, had led to passionate, frequently vitriolic outbursts of anti-Catholic sentiment, often from the pulpit.³¹ The outbursts revealed profound distrust of the king's motives and a rampant fear that Catholics were once again working to regain control of the Church and the kingdom.³²

James's severe reaction to criticism of his policies in the pulpit with the *Directions concerning Preaching* in 1622, coupled with the prompt

²⁹Walton, *Lives*, p. 49.

³⁰*Sermons*, 6:94. For this opening sermon, also see *Sermons*, 6:9; and Bald, *A Life*, pp. 460–461.

³¹For detailed accounts of events in this period, see Thomas Cogswell, *The Blessed Revolution: English Politics and the Coming of War, 1621–1624* (1989; rpt., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); and W. B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (1997; rpt., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), esp. pp. 293–364.

³²Cogswell, esp. pp. 19–20, 24–31, 51–52.

imprisonment of clerics who dared to address matters of state, effectively quashed public discussion in the short term. But the King utterly failed to relieve popular anxieties, particularly in light of the noticeable Catholic “resurgence.” James had suspended the penal laws against recusants in August 1622, conversions to Catholicism were mounting alarmingly, and contemporary observers agreed that never had Catholics been so prominent and daring in public. In 1621, Archbishop Abbot had been deeply shocked at the effrontery of Catholics at Easter in Westminster. In 1624, Sir Ferdinando Gorges affirmed that Catholics had “growne to that hedd in every quarter that they are not onely become insolent and unsufferable as to particulars, but most dangerous to the publique peace.”³³

The return of Charles from his daring courtship of the Spanish Infanta in October 1623 greatly relieved the English populace, deeply afraid for the Prince’s safety, yet it failed to quell anti-Papist feeling. Open violence against Catholics had erupted in the streets of London more than once late in 1623, including the brutal beating to death of a girl in October at the collapse of the Catholic chapel at the French embassy. Anti-Catholic fervor dominated Parliamentary elections early in 1624, and once Parliament assembled the Spanish ambassador wrote of his fear of confrontation with the “rage” and “fury” of the anti-Catholic, anti-Spanish London crowds.³⁴

Religious feeling was thus decidedly “inflamed” in early 1624, and MPs that February “brought to Westminster profound anxieties about the Catholic problem.”³⁵ They spent the early weeks of the new Parliament, in fact, largely “venting their Catholic fears” and demanding increased action against recusants. Particularly prominent were fears of a recusant rebellion. On 8 March, one MP introduced alarm over another

³³I borrow the term “Catholic resurgence” from Cogswell, pp. 32–33, 37–38, 47, 138, 176, 288.

³⁴Conrad Russell, *Parliament and English Politics, 1621–1629* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp. 152–154; and Cogswell, pp. 48–49, 139–141.

³⁵Cogswell, pp. 52, 180. Conrad Russell notes that attacks on recusants began on 25 February (p. 160). English Protestants were particularly angered by the “rumours, in large part well-founded,” that one result of the Spanish Match was to be a universal Declaration of Indulgence to recusants, a very real feature of the marriage articles (Conrad Russell, pp. 153–155; and Patterson, pp. 329–330).

Gunpowder Plot, and further rumors of a Catholic uprising surfaced in May.³⁶ Many feared a Catholic fifth column: “we nourish the wolf in our bosom” pronounced another MP at the beginning of March.³⁷

Donne’s first appearance before his congregation on 11 April was carefully crafted to respond directly to these and other concerns. Bald notes that certain passages in Donne’s initial sermons at St. Dunstan’s suggest that there may have been some “initial dissatisfaction” with the Dean.³⁸ Donne’s notorious personal history as a Catholic convert may indeed have rendered him suspect to some members of the congregation, and the fact that his recusant mother was residing with him in the Deanery of St. Paul’s may well have rendered him even more suspicious in the “inflamed” environment of early 1624.³⁹ Fully aware of these factors, Donne “performed” his conversion in a manner intended to satisfy his congregation.⁴⁰

For his text, Donne chose an unusual (and surely unexpected) passage from scripture (Deuteronomy 25:5) which permitted him to depict the relationship between minister and congregation in marital terms and in terms which stressed family continuity—“If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no childe, the wife of the dead shall not marry

³⁶Cogswell, pp. 139, 168–170, 180. For Parliamentary anti-Catholic concerns throughout these early months, see, too, Robert E. Ruigh, *The Parliament of 1624: Politics and Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 158–160, 162, 168–170, 181, 238–240, 244–248, 250.

³⁷Cogswell, pp. 168–169, 176, 180; and Conrad Russell, pp. 154–155, 158, 160–161, 183. For the widespread fear of Catholic subversion from within, also see A. A. Bromham and Zara Bruzzi, *The Changeling and the Years of Crisis, 1619–1624: A Hieroglyph of Britain* (London and New York: Printer Publishers Limited, 1990), esp. pp. 42–47.

³⁸Bald, *A Life*, pp. 460–461; and Jeanne Shami, *John Donne and Conformity in Crisis in the Late Jacobean Pulpit* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003), pp. 212–229, for Donne’s initial sermons at St. Dunstan’s and their larger contexts.

³⁹Shami, pp. 107, 266 n. 21. For the culture of conversion in Donne’s England and for the particular wariness concerning converted clergy, see especially James Doelman, *King James I and the Religious Culture of England* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000), pp. 102–134, esp. p. 117.

⁴⁰I borrow the notion of “performance of conversion” from Shami, p. 23. See, too, Molly Murray, *The Poetics of Conversion in Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 1–35.

without, unto a stranger; . . . her husbands brother shall goe in unto her, and take her to him to wife" (*Sermons*, 6:81). Donne chose this text to parade his Protestant credentials. The text insists, he informed his congregation, that the new minister-husband "must bee a *brother*, a *spirituall brother*, a *professor* of the *same faith*, that succeeds in this mariage, in this possession, and this government of that widow Church" (*Sermons*, 6:83, lines 72–75).⁴¹ "That to which, the application of this law, leads us," Donne affirmed, "is, That *predecessor*, and *successor*, bee brethren of the same faith, and the same profession of faith" (*Sermons*, 6:89, lines 299–301). Lest any doubts remain, Donne continued later, the new minister-husband "must be a brother, and *Frater Cohabitans*, a *brother dwelling with the former brother*. As he is a brother, we consider the *unity of faith*: As he dwels in the same house, we consider the *unity of discipline*; That as he beleeves, and professes the same articles of faith, so by his own obedience, and by his instructing of others, hee establish the same government" (*Sermons*, 6:90, lines 332–337).⁴² Thus did Donne declare his full acceptance of the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, using theological expansions and a clever allusion to the Thirty-Nine Articles. Those acquainted with the Dean, moreover, including the Churchwardens, would also have savored Donne's sly wit, for Donne was indeed his predecessor's "*Frater Cohabitans*." He and his predecessor, Dr. Thomas White, were fellow prebends of St. Paul's Cathedral, and both lived within the precincts of the cathedral.⁴³

Further proof of his Protestant credentials came in Donne's barbed commentary on the Roman Church. The chosen text allowed Donne to foreground how "the *Romane Church* in the exercise of their *Tyranny*, have forbidden Church-men to mary," a practice against scripture, for "God is pleased here, to afford us, some intimation . . . of the lawfulnessse

⁴¹The term "possession" has striking meaning in light of Donne's recent ritual of induction.

⁴²Also see *Sermons*, 6:83, lines 75–81.

⁴³White was one of the four canons residentiary of St. Paul's Cathedral, those residing in the precinct and charged with attending to the daily business of the cathedral. As Bald properly remarks, "Donne was thrown into closest relations with the . . . residentiaries" (*A Life*, pp. 389, 391–392). White had been living in the "Mansion house" belonging to the prebend of Cadington Major, in Paul's Churchyard, in the Cathedral Close since at least 1602 (GL, Dean's Registers, MS. 25, 630/5, ff. 8b–9a).

of such mariages" (*Sermons*, 6:83, lines 61–66). At a later point he professed, "*we* [the ministers of the Church of England] have *no new* doctrine to present, no new opinion to infuse, or *miracles* to amaze, as in the Romane Church, they are full of all these" (*Sermons*, 6:91, lines 378–380). And his sermon featured a sharp attack on the Jesuits, the *bêtes noires* of the current Parliament, and their allegiance to "a forain father, an imaginary universall father," who "prostrate themselves to all the corruptions of a prostitute Church" (*Sermons*, 6:90, lines 318–326).⁴⁴

But the most potent demonstration of his religion came in Donne's arrangement of the occasion. In Stuart England, priest and congregant alike demonstrated confessional allegiance to the Church of England by publicly receiving communion. Prince Charles had quickly settled apprehensions concerning his religion following his return from Madrid by publicly taking communion at St. Paul's late in October 1623, a service at which Donne doubtless officiated.⁴⁵ Parliament men,

⁴⁴For further anti-Catholic comments, see *Sermons*, 6:88, lines 240–263; 6:92, lines 386–389. Donne continued this anti-Catholic rhetoric in his next sermon on 25 April at St. Dunstan's (*Sermons*, 6:98, lines 109–126). For the intense popular hatred of Jesuits at this time, see Cogswell, esp. pp. 30, 168, 253, 261; and Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600–1640* (1995; rpt., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 43–44, 52, 193, 220–221, 237, 242. On 23 April, King James agreed to issue a Proclamation banishing Jesuits from the kingdom (Cogswell, pp. 245–246; and Ruigh, pp. 250–252).

⁴⁵Charles thus took communion within a few weeks of his return (Cogswell, pp. 6–9, 91). Since correspondents remark on the event in letters dated 31 October and 1 November 1623, and one of them, Beaulieu, did not comment on it in his previous weekly letter of 24 October, Charles must have taken communion on Sunday, 26 October (Cogswell, p. 91, n. 49 and n. 50; and p. 85, n. 28). For the importance of taking communion in establishing one's religious allegiance, see Sir Simonds D'Ewes's comment: "On Sunday, February 11, in the forenoon, Katherine, sole daughter and heir apparent of Francis Manners, Earl of Rutland, and the now wife of the beloved Marquis of Buckingham, received the sacrament in Westminster Church, at the hands of Dr. Williams, Dean of Westminster, *as an assured testimony of her conversion from Popery to the true religion*" (*The Autobiography and Correspondence of Sir Simonds D'Ewes, Bart.*, 2 vols. [1845; rpt., Lexington, KY: Elibron Classics, 2010], 1:175, italics mine); Arthur F. Marotti, *Religious Ideology and Cultural Fantasy* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), pp. 95–96; Michael C. Questier,

distraught over dangers posed by a treacherous fifth column, insisted upon receiving communion together as “a requirement for admission to the House,” and took communion publicly on 29 February, so, in Sir Simonds D’Ewes’s words, “noe popish hand or poisonous bugg might come neare it, as I suppose.”⁴⁶ Donne followed in the steps of the Prince and Parliament.

Communion at St. Dunstan’s in the West was diligently held on the first Sunday of the month. But in April 1624, for the only time in years, communion was deferred a week, surely at Donne’s request, so that he could introduce himself to his new congregation through his preaching and also by taking the sacrament and administering it to his new flock.⁴⁷ Donne’s action firmly established his conformity and simultaneously

Conversion, Politics and Religion in England, 1580–1625 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 105 and p. 105, n. 26 and n. 27; Doelman, pp. 112–115, 122; and *The Sermons of Henry King (1592–1669), Bishop of Chichester*, ed. Mary Hobbs (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1992), p. 79.

⁴⁶Ruigh, pp. 160 and 177, n. 37; and *The Diary of Sir Simonds D’Ewes (1622–1624)*, ed. Elisabeth Bourcier, Publications de la Sorbonne, Littératures 5 (Paris: Didier, 1974), p. 183.

⁴⁷SDW, *ChA*, II, 252a. There remain unexplained anomalies in Donne’s preaching schedule in April. The surviving sermons from the period immediately following his recovery from his illness are spaced at two-week intervals (28 March, 11 April, 25 April). Was Donne returning to preaching gradually? On the other hand, April was Donne’s ordinary month of service at Court as royal chaplain, where he would be expected to deliver two or three sermons during the month (Peter E. McCullough, “Donne as Preacher at Court: Precarious ‘Inthronization,’” in *John Donne’s Professional Lives*, ed. David Colcough [Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003], pp. 182, 184). Did Donne accordingly alternate sermons at Court with sermons at St. Dunstan’s throughout the month? Yet Bald notes that we have “no surviving sermons preached at Whitehall in April this year” (*A Life*, p. 455), though we have two from St. Dunstan’s. Had Donne rearranged his service at Court, as he apparently did in 1619 (Bald, *A Life*, p. 341), or had he been excused from his service at Court this year? Or, given Walton’s statement that Donne had not “for almost twenty years omitted his personal attendance on His Majesty in that month in which he was to attend and preach to him” (*Lives*, p. 73), had Donne attended the King, but been excused from giving sermons? On the ability of royal chaplains to change their appointed times, see Shami on John Preston (p. 39).

enacted his concept of the proper functions of the church in leading parishioners to salvation. He refused to introduce himself simply by preaching. He entered into his new ministry by insisting in word and deed upon the equal importance of the Word and the sacraments.⁴⁸ “It is a meer *mercy* in God,” he informed his congregation, “to send us to you, but it is a *duty* in us, to doe that which we are sent for, by his *Word*, and his *Sacraments*, to establish you in his holy obedience, and his rich and honourable service” (*Sermons*, 6:84, lines 93–96). Throughout the sermon, Donne stressed the importance of community and unity, and his carefully chosen trope of marriage permitted him to weave sermon and sacrament into a larger whole. The occasion itself enacted the marriage of minister and congregation, but the act of communion enacted another:

In our *Baptisme* we make our contract with *God*, that we will believe all those *Articles* there recited; there’s our contract with him; and then, pursuing this contract, in the other *Sacrament*, when we take his body and his blood, we are *married* to him.

(*Sermons*, 6:85, lines 128–131)

The entire event thus became a symbolic fusion of two sacred occasions, each leading to broader implications and relationships, to greater intimacy with God and each other.⁴⁹

Equally significant, Donne repeatedly assured the congregation that he had a sincere interest in their salvation and that he did not intend to serve through substitutes, calming those who may have feared that he was yet another absentee pluralist. He assured them that he wished to undertake a direct, personal ministry. The minister-husband “must, says our text, *performe the duty of a husbands brother. He must*, it is a *personall* service, not to be done always by *Proxy* and *Delegates*” (*Sermons*, 6:83–84,

⁴⁸On Donne’s insistence upon the importance of both preaching and the sacraments, see Jeffrey Johnson, *The Theology of John Donne* (1999; rpt., Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001), pp. 87, 93, 120, 122, 143, and esp. pp. 131–132.

⁴⁹See the full paragraph (*Sermons* 6:84–85, lines 108–142), where Donne also extends the trope to argue that “every man is bound to marry himselfe to a profession, to a calling.” Previous critics have been unaware of the importance of the sermon as a communion sermon. As a result, Bald stressed the importance of the first “marriage,” but not the second (*A Life*, p. 460).

lines 88–90). “[I]t is a *personall office*,” he reaffirmed later, “he must doe it *himself*” (*Sermons*, 6:92, lines 408–409), and Donne’s actions in his early months demonstrate that he devoted considerable time to his new parish. Fourteen days later we find him in the pulpit there again, and the following day, 26 April, he signed the Senior Churchwarden’s Accounts with members of the Vestry.⁵⁰ The following month he met with members of the congregation on 11 May, and he returned to the pulpit at St. Dunstan’s again on 23 May, Trinity Sunday.⁵¹ Since, as we shall see, we find him preaching there again at the end of June and at the beginning of January the following year, it seems quite possible that, apart from the summer vacation, Donne may have preached at least monthly at St. Dunstan’s during this initial period.⁵²

Donne also seems to have acted quickly to socialize with the congregation and to establish warmer relationships with members of the Vestry. He may well have attended the Vestry meeting on 5 April; no record was kept of those attending.⁵³ Nor were records kept of those attending the Vestry meetings on 12 May and 5 July in 1625; so although we know that Donne did not attend meetings of the Vestry in October 1624 and some others early in 1625, we cannot be certain of the precise level of his participation.⁵⁴

⁵⁰*Sermons*, 6:95; and Bald, *A Life*, p. 461. The date of the signing is clearly written out in full in the Senior Churchwarden’s Accounts (SDW, *ChA*, II, 229a, 233b). Bald worried that although Donne signed these accounts, he did not sign the Junior Churchwarden’s accounts, failing to mention that no one signed them (SDW, *ChA*, II, 233b). For a similar situation the following year, see n. 54 below.

⁵¹Bald, *A Life*, p. 461; he provides the date for the sermon.

⁵²Such a schedule is not unreasonable. Walton reports that in the “latter part of his life” Donne “usually preached once a week, if not oftner” (*Lives*, p. 67).

⁵³SDW, *VM*, I, 102. This was a meeting to choose Churchwardens and Overseers for the poor.

⁵⁴SDW, *VM*, I, 102; 103–110. Whitlock’s comment that “[a]fter a two-year period Donne began attending vestry meetings” on 13 April 1626 should be treated with extreme caution (“St. Dunstan’s—I”). For example, although no names are provided in the Vestry Minutes for the meeting on 12 May 1625, Donne did sign the Senior Churchwarden’s accounts that day, suggesting that he may well have been present for much of the meeting (SDW, *ChA*, II, 249b). The two groups are also significantly different. Thomas Johnson, Andrew Feild,

We do, however, possess abundant indications of Donne's early presence in other affairs of the parish. On 17 April, the Saturday following his first sermon at St. Dunstan's, Donne attended a commemorative dinner for William Crowche.⁵⁵ A prominent member of the Mercers' Company, Crowche (or "Crouche") had served both as Vestryman and as Common Councilman for the parish. When he died in 1606, he left a bequest of ten shillings for an annual sermon on his funeral day and another of forty shillings for a dinner the same day for the Common Councilmen, the Churchwardens, and twelve freemen of the parish.⁵⁶ The sermon was one of nine commemorative sermons delivered annually at St. Dunstan's in Donne's time, and since Donne's presence is clearly noted at the dinner and no record was made of payment to another cleric for the sermon, the possibility exists that Donne may have delivered the sermon himself. If not, Donne was clearly invited and elected to attend the first substantial parish event upon becoming Vicar. He was fulfilling the promise made in his first sermon, for we thus find him involved in parish activities during each of the three weekends initiating his tenure. Equally important, Crowche had been a close friend of Thomas Johnson and Andrew Feild, Vestrymen currently serving as Common Councilmen attending the dinner, and the two men

and Thomas Benyon, three of the most senior members of the Vestry, also did not sign the Junior Churchwarden's accounts (SDW, *ChA*, II, 254a), which were examined by a much larger group. One wonders if Donne and these three focused on the larger set of accounts and then broke off to deal with other parish issues. (Johnson was also the "Alderman's Deputy" [SDW, *VM*, I, 111].)

⁵⁵"Item the xvijth Day paid at the Kings head Taverne more then was allowed for M^r Crouches Dinner because M^r Deane was there as appeareth by bill" "iij^{li}" (SDW, *ChA*, II, 246a). Whitlock and Bald both overlooked this event. As Whitlock notes, "Mr. Deane" invariably designates Donne in these records ("St. Dunstan's—I").

⁵⁶PCC, 28 Stafford, dated 12 April 1606; probated 24 May 1606. John Stow printed Crowche's "small Table-Monument" in the church, which listed these bequests and a further charity of £10 to go annually to 36 "poore people of honest life, dwelling in this parish" (*The Survey of London* [1633], p. 434). The will itself contains further charity to the parish.

nominated immediately following Ravenscroft at the parish meeting concerning Donne's salary in June.⁵⁷

Equally informative is Donne's service for the parish at the end of June. Four days after the general meeting of parishioners to determine his income, Donne delivered the next major commemorative sermon in the parish rotation. Printed as "An Anniversary Sermon preached at St. Dunstons, upon the commemoration of a Parishioner, a Benefactor to that Parish," the sermon was one established by Henry Adams, a wealthy Cutler and, like Crowche, a former Vestryman.⁵⁸ In his will dated 27 June 1618, Adams bequeathed major annual payments to the parish poor and at the same time established a perpetual cycle of five sermons. Four of these sermons were to be given in the afternoon of the first Sunday of every law term. The fifth sermon in the cycle was to be delivered on the

⁵⁷See, for example, the records of Crowche serving as Common Councilman with Thomas Johnson at the end of the sixteenth century (SDW, *VM*, I, 28, 31). That Donne had been invited is made clear by the terms of Crowche's will. The dinner was a select one involving only the Common Councilmen, the Churchwardens (the group administering one of Crowche's charities), and twelve other "freemen" of the parish "at the election and discretyon of my saide executors" (PCC, 28 Stafford). Two of the Common Councilmen elected in December 1623 were Crowche's "lovinge frendes" Andrew Feild (whom he appointed one of his executors) and Thomas Johnson, whom he made one of the two overseers of the will. If everyone specifically designated attended, Donne shared the dinner with Johnson, Feild, and Henry Best, the Common Councilmen; and with William Hyde and Robert Greene, the Churchwardens elected on 5 April (SDW, *Wardmote Inquest Books*, MS. 3018, I, 108a; *VM*, I, 102; and PCC, 28 Stafford). One wonders if Feild and Johnson used the occasion to invite other leading members of the parish and Vestry (including Richard Jenkinson, the son of another of Crowche's overseers and "lovinge frendes"). Hyde, of course, was by this time well acquainted with Donne from his earlier visits.

⁵⁸*Sermons*, 10:178. Whitlock is unquestionably correct in arguing that the printed sermon is the first of those that Donne delivered in Adams's gift: there is a record of payment to Donne for the annual commemorative sermon this year; Donne insists upon the precise day ("yearly upon this day"); and he continues in this sermon the imagery of brotherhood which he initiated in his first sermon in April (*Sermons*, 10:25, 190, lines 450–451).

day of his death, St. Peter's Day, 29 June.⁵⁹ It was a major occasion: by the terms of the will, there was to be a full "Divine service" as well as a sermon, and every year the Vicar, the Churchwardens, and the Common Councilmen were to be in attendance. The service, moreover, was to be followed by a dinner for these men and "suche other Anncients of the same parishe as [the Churchwardens and Common Councilmen] shall in their Discretion thinke fitt to be there."⁶⁰ Adams had also provided a special gift for the ceremonial occasion:

"Item I do giue will and bequeathe that there be a fayer quishion of blacke velvett boughte and made up and to be layed uppon the pulpet for the preacher to leane vppon on the Daye of my ffunerall; And that the same quishion shall remayne to the Churche for euer."⁶¹

In larger terms, the details of Adams's will indicate that, in the absence of conflicting evidence, we should consider that Donne may generally have been present at Adams's annual commemorative service throughout his tenure as Vicar. In more immediate terms, it seems clear, considering his initial choices of a communion service, Trinity Sunday, the following New Year's Day, and the Crowche and Adams events, that Donne was especially attentive to join his congregation on major ceremonial occasions.

Donne's participation in the annual cycle of memorial sermons warrants further comment. Of the nine annual commemorative events, Donne is known to have participated at various times at occasions concerning three former members of the parish. During his first few months as Vicar, we find him at events commemorating William Crowche and Henry Adams. Later, on 2 December 1627, he delivered a

⁵⁹"Henry Adams one of the Comon counsell of this Citty was buried" at St. Dunstan's on 30 June 1618 (SDW, *PR*, MS. 10, 342). No personal information on Adams is provided in earlier accounts.

⁶⁰PCC, 71 Meade. We thus have the same men as involved with the Crowche commemoration. All three Common Councilmen, in fact, were involved in Adams's will: Andrew Feild and Henry Best were witnesses to the will; Adams regarded Johnson and his wife as "my welbeloued freindes"; and Johnson was made executor to the will.

⁶¹PCC, 71 Meade.

memorial sermon for Robert Jenkinson. Bald confessed that “we do not know why Donne preached on some of these occasions,” but the special contexts at St. Dunstan’s provide compelling clues regarding Donne’s decisions.⁶²

Particularly striking is the nature of these events and the connection of these commemorations to men on the Vestry. Each of these three men had been the personal acquaintance of the most influential men actively serving on the Vestry. This is perhaps most pertinent regarding the sermon for Jenkinson. Whitlock was openly puzzled by the engagement: “Why [Donne],” he reports, “should have preached this particular memorial service is not at all clear.”⁶³ The leading reason lies in a network of friendships. Jenkinson, a wealthy Merchant Taylor who died in 1617, had served as early as 1598 as Vestryman and Common Councilman with Thomas Johnson and later also with Andrew Feild and several others on the Vestry.⁶⁴ Also relevant is the connection with Josias Harris, elected to the Vestry in October 1624.⁶⁵ Harris conducted his business on Fleet Street not far from Jenkinson. When he acted as surety for his clerical brother compounding for first fruits for a rectory early in 1622, he was joined by Richard Jenkinson “of St Dunstan’s in the West,” one of Robert’s sons.⁶⁶ Donne was thus motivated to participate in events particularly meaningful to influential members of his parish and for members with whom he felt a special connection, such as Henry Adams, the most generous benefactor to the parish.⁶⁷ Equally important, however, is the specific stature of these three men. All of the memorial occasions at St. Dunstan’s were established by substantial members of the parish and precinct, but only the occasions chosen by Donne commemorated men who had served both as Vestrymen and as members

⁶²Bald, *A Life*, pp. 499–500.

⁶³Whitlock, “St. Dunstan’s—II.”

⁶⁴SDW, *VM*, I, 28, 29, 31, 35, 63, 68–69; and *ChA*, II, 126a.

⁶⁵SDW, *VM*, I, 103.

⁶⁶TNA, E.334/16, f. 105a.

⁶⁷Donne preached memorial sermons for Henry Adams in 1624, 1626, and 1628 (Bald, *A Life*, pp. 461, 486, 504). This means that Donne regularly preached on the date of Adams’s death during his early years in the parish. For 1625, see n. 104 below; for 1627, see n. 128 below. He also preached sermons in Adams’s gift at the beginning of Michaelmas Term and Easter Term in 1627 and 1628, respectively (Bald, *A Life*, pp. 499, 504).

of the Common Council for the precinct of Farringdon Without. By his attendance and preaching, Donne was pointedly honoring the Vestry and its most powerful members.

Some additional confusion about these sermons can also be settled. Whitlock and Bald note that these sermons were customarily delivered by the curate of St. Dunstan's.⁶⁸ But the very year before Donne's arrival, Dr. White himself delivered both the Hillary and the Easter Term sermons in Adams' gift.⁶⁹ Thus the Vicar of St. Dunstan's must have had first option to deliver any of these sermons, and Donne chose to do so on more than one occasion.⁷⁰

The occasions chosen by Donne also possess another notable feature. The wills of Crowche, Adams, and Jenkinson all prescribed a parish dinner following the memorial sermon, for which they provided stipulated amounts. Crowche allowed any twelve parishioners and freemen to dine with the Common Councilmen and Churchwardens, towards which he provided forty shillings annually. Jenkinson's interests were more limited. He likewise provided forty shillings for the dinner, but besides the preacher, Churchwardens, and Common Councilmen, he allowed only ten "Auncients" of the parish to attend. Henry Adams was more of Crowche's disposition and even more generous financially. In addition to the Churchwardens and the Common Councilmen, he allowed all "suche other Auncients" as they "thincke fitt to be there" and provided £4 towards the annual feast.⁷¹ Donne accepted memorial engagements in the parish, consequently, which also allowed him to interact more broadly with his congregation. This is especially true of his early engagements. The Crowche memorial in April 1624 and the Adams event roughly two months later were both more comprehensive. They allowed him to intermingle not only with Vestrymen, such as

⁶⁸Whitlock, "St. Dunstan's—II"; and Bald, *A Life*, esp. pp. 499–500. See the record of Robert Gray, Donne's first curate, preaching the sermons for Adams in the period before Donne's arrival (SDW, *ChA*, II, 183b, 184b, 195a, 195b).

⁶⁹SDW, *ChA*, II, 209a, 226b.

⁷⁰The phrasing of Adams's will highlights the issue: "Item I do giue to some learned preacher for a Sermon on the Daye of my funerall the somme of twentie shillings: And I desire yt may be M^r Doctor White (yf he be in London)" (PCC, 71 Meade). Adams's preference for White lay the grounds for the Vicar of St. Dunstan's to have the option of delivering the sermons.

⁷¹PCC, 28 Stafford; 118 Weldon; and 71 Meade.

Johnson, Feild, Hyde, and the stationer John Smethwick, but also with prominent “ancients” of the parish, men such as Thomas Ravenscroft, who doubtless provided introductions to many others in the parish.⁷²

Yet another occasion at which Donne might have mixed with his congregation occurred on 5 May, between the two commemorative affairs and little more than a week after he signed the Churchwardens’ Accounts. This was Perambulation Day, a ritualistic event in which the parish priest together with the churchwardens and substantial members of the parish, among them some of the parish “ancients,” were to “beat the bounds” of the parish, reminding all concerned of the official limits of the territory for which the parish was legally responsible and the boundaries establishing to which parish inhabitants should pay tythes.⁷³ At St. Dunstan’s this affair, which took place annually on Ascension Day, involved many children and the officers of Clifford’s Inn as well. The churchwardens duly recorded expenses for the event, which included a dinner. In 1624 the dinner took place at the Horne Tavern, but there is no mention of the participating cleric.⁷⁴ Had Donne been curious about the legal bounds of the parish, this would have been a natural event for him to attend.

Donne’s predecessor, Dr. White, had interacted very little in this way with his congregation. No record is found during his final decade of his attendance on such occasions, and his name never appears in that period

⁷²Smethwick, who owned one of the seven shops within St. Dunstan’s Churchyard, was well known to Donne. He had served in various parish offices and was a member of the Vestry before Donne’s arrival, subsequently serving as Junior, then Senior Churchwarden in 1627 and 1628, respectively (Bald, “Dr. Donne and the Booksellers,” *Studies in Bibliography* 18 [1965]: 69–80; and SDW, *VM*, I, 74, 89, 90 [1619], 94–95 [July 1621], 119, 123).

⁷³For the importance of this event in Donne’s London, politically and socially, see J. F. Merritt, *The Social World of Early Modern Westminster: Abbey, Court, and Community, 1525–1640* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), pp. 208–212, esp. 209, n. 141.

⁷⁴SDW, *ChA*, II, 246a. The record for 1611, among others, specifically mentions “the auncyentes and others” at the dinner (SDW, *ChA*, II, 37a). For typical expenses for “pippins” for the children and “pointes” for the officers of Clifford’s Inn in Donne’s period, see SDW, *ChA*, II, 70a, 142b, 155a, 226b, 328a; and III, 352a. No cleric is ever mentioned in the accounts, although the parish priest is expected to participate in seventeenth-century records.

as attending Vestry meetings with their dinners following.⁷⁵ Donne's sociability stands in stark contrast. As we have seen, we cannot determine his interaction with the Vestry with absolute certainty; but in the months immediately following his induction, he clearly sought occasions to mingle with his parishioners, and from 1626 on, we have a steady record of his conscientious attendance at Vestry events.

Additional entries in the parish records provide further, indirect evidence of his early interactions. Two entries, for example, document Donne's early involvement in parish charities, though we do not learn of the first until many years later. On 19 April 1631, the Junior Churchwarden, by order of the Vestry, paid Edward Tirrell £13.10s. "for bread lefte vnpaid by M^r Doctor Dunne w^{ch} by his appoyntem^t was Deliuered in the firste 3 yeres of his being Viccar here."⁷⁶ The matter concerned a weekly distribution of bread to the value of two shillings per week to poor men and women in the parish (presumably, as elsewhere, after their attendance at Sunday service). The charity had been established by Dr. White. Donne obviously learned of it and elected to continue it early on. When Mrs. Tirrell approached the Vestry about the matter early in March 1630/1, she must have provided precise records from her baker husband, for the total for a full three years would have amounted to £15.12s.⁷⁷ Donne, it would seem, made the decision sometime in May or early June, upon learning of the charity from the Churchwardens.

The second record relates to Donne's personal interests. At the Vestry meeting on 26 October 1624, Josias Harris delivered to the Senior Churchwarden forty shillings "which was remaining in his hands of a Colleccion or contribucion made in the parish for sending children into Virginia."⁷⁸ No prior entry in the Vestry Minutes or the Churchwardens' Accounts reveals any interest in the Virginia Company, hence the entry may well record an activity undertaken at Donne's instigation. Donne had become a member of the Virginia Company in May 1622, had been elected to its Council the following July, and had preached a stirring sermon in the fall of that year before the full Company, strongly

⁷⁵Bald, *A Life*, p. 460.

⁷⁶Whitlock, "St. Dunstan's—II," citing SDW, *ChA*, III, 401b.

⁷⁷SDW, *VM*, I, 143.

⁷⁸SDW, *VM*, I, 103.

supporting the Company's efforts in severely trying times. In 1623, his interest deepened, and he attended five meetings of the Company's Council.⁷⁹ Donne's near-fatal illness late in 1623 had pushed such interests aside, but this entry in the Vestry Minutes suggests that Donne had resumed his zealous support upon his recovery, especially its goal of "the conversion and reduccion of the [native] people in those partes unto the true worshipping of God and Christian religion."⁸⁰ Donne seems to have proselytized on the Company's behalf, urging his new parishioners to "assist to soe glorious a work" in the New World.⁸¹ The collection may well have followed an unrecorded sermon on the matter, one which repeated his claim before the Company itself in November 1622, that the glorious work "shall sweep your streets, and wash your dores, from idle persons, and the children of idle persons, and imploy them" (*Sermons*, 4:272, lines 271–272). The effort must have begun rather early, perhaps as early as April or May, before the ending of the disastrous Parliamentary session which preceded the dissolution of the Company, which was forced to surrender its records in June.⁸²

⁷⁹Bald, *A Life*, pp. 435–438; and Stanley Johnson, "John Donne and the Virginia Company," *ELH* 14 (1947): 127–138. For Donne's sermon in November 1622, see, for example, Florence Sandler, "'The Gallery to the New World': Donne, Herbert, and Ferrar on the Virginia Project," *John Donne Journal* 19 (2000): 267–297; and Jeanne Shami, "Love and Power: The Rhetorical Motives of John Donne's 1622 Sermon to the Virginia Company," *Renaissance Papers* 2004 (2005): 85–106.

⁸⁰Jeffrey Powers-Beck, *Writing the Flesh: The Herbert Family Dialogue* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1998), pp. 200–201.

⁸¹The phrase quoted comes from a letter of Sir John Danvers, who worked strenuously on behalf of the Company's emigration efforts. Danvers was one of four delegated to invite Donne to preach before the Company in 1622, and he himself contributed generously to the carriage of young women to the colony in 1621 (Powers-Beck, pp. 199, 205–206, 208). Donne was particularly close to Danvers in the 1620s, from whom he acquired a buck for a feast he hosted in July 1624 and with whom he would stay during the virulent outbreak of the plague the year following (Bald, *A Life*, pp. 463, 472–476).

⁸²A special commission was established to consider a new constitution for the Company on 15 July (A. L. Maycock, *Nicholas Ferrar of Little Gidding* [London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1938], p. 102). On the final phase of the Company and the Parliamentary struggles on its behalf, which ended late in May 1624 with the dissolution of Parliament, see Maycock, pp. 95–104; and

Other entries in 1624 indicate Donne's interest in the church itself and its worship. On 29 May 1624, the Senior Churchwarden paid "M^r: Smethwicke" for a new "Service booke for the Church."⁸³ Coming so shortly after Donne's arrival, it seems a likely indication of Donne's desire for decent books for conducting divine service. Then, as Whitlock and Bald discuss, there are the many entries concerning Donne's first "building programme," which began in earnest on 11 August and continued until late January in 1625. Since the project involved a new pulpit and nine new pews, we may suspect that, as with the new "Service booke," these matters arose as a result of Donne's initial experiences in the pulpit.⁸⁴ Thus, although we cannot document Donne's presence at official meetings of the Vestry, the records suggest that Donne engaged himself decisively in parish business during his first few months and on a variety of fronts: integrating himself with his parishioners as early as possible, sharing his zeal for the word of God and the Protestant cause, honoring parish traditions, upholding decency in the performance of the divine service, maintaining and extending parish charities, and supporting and directing various efforts to beautify the house of worship.

No specific documentation survives of Donne's activities at St. Dunstan's during the final four months of 1624.⁸⁵ His name does not appear among those attending meetings of the Vestry, but it seems unlikely that at the very least Donne did not regularly stroll down Ludgate Hill to view the progress of the workmen on the new pulpit, pews, and "necessary reparacions"; and it seems probable (as Whitlock

Amy M. Charles, *A Life of George Herbert* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 108–111. Maycock argues that, in light of the presence of so many members of the company in the Spring Parliament of 1624, "there was still the hope that a petition to Parliament . . . might save the situation" (p. 101). For Donne's many friends among this group, see especially Tom Cain, "John Donne and the Ideology of Colonization," *ELR* 31 (2001): 443–448.

⁸³SDW, *ChA*, II, 246a.

⁸⁴Whitlock, "St. Dunstan's—I"; and Bald, *A Life*, p. 462, both citing SDW, *ChA*, II, 243–245.

⁸⁵We should recognize that had Donne himself not preserved some of the early sermons he had delivered at St. Dunstan's, we would possess no record of their delivery. Of the five sermons he is known to have preached in his first ten months there, only the sermon for Adams is reported in parish records.

and Bald suggest) that he was present at the Bishop's Visitation at St. Dunstan's late in October, though the records supply no names of the participants nor of those who attended the dinner following the visitation at the Horne Tavern.⁸⁶ Bald, however, perceives Donne's hand in the delicate negotiations between the parish and the principal and members of Clifford's Inn which were brought to a conclusion in November 1624, so Donne's presence at St. Dunstan's is likely throughout the fall of his first year there.⁸⁷

That gap in the records, however, ends with a burst of notices at the beginning of 1625, some previously unnoted. Donne preached at St. Dunstan's on New Year's Day.⁸⁸ His name is still absent from the records of those attending official meetings of the Vestry early in the year, but two previously unnoted references document Donne's interaction with the Churchwardens in January and February and may indicate that, in contrast to his predecessor, Donne did maintain at least a monthly connection with his parish, particularly with the Churchwardens and Vestrymen.

Walton, who knew Donne, was insistent upon his charitableness: "unto the Poor he was full of Charity, and unto many others, who by his constant and long continued bounty might intitle themselves to be his Alms-people." Bald noted, in turn, that "Walton stresses the thoughtfulness and sensitiveness with which Donne's gifts were made" and that "Walton's account of [Donne's] kindnesses is substantiated in various ways."⁸⁹ Unnoticed references in the parish accounts confirm Walton's and Bald's assessments and suggest that in 1625 Donne was much concerned with charity. No reason has been suggested for Donne's decision to preach at St. Dunstan's on New Year's Day, a Saturday. Since payments for his first building project stop on 24 January, Donne may simply have seized the first significant ceremonial occasion following his appearance at St. Paul's at Christmas to preach in the new pulpit.⁹⁰ But

⁸⁶Bald, *A Life*, p. 506. See, however, n. 114 below.

⁸⁷Discussions with members of Clifford's Inn had been ongoing since 1623 at the request of the Bishop of London (SDW, *VM*, I, 100). See also Bald, *A Life*, p. 463, citing the entry in the Vestry Minutes dated 25 November 1624 (SDW, *VM*, I, 104–105).

⁸⁸*Sermons*, 6:16–17, 186–204.

⁸⁹Walton, *Lives*, p. 69; Bald, *A Life*, p. 430.

⁹⁰Whitlock, "St. Dunstan's—I."

in light of Donne's other charitable activities in 1625 and of his interest in honoring parish benefactors, it seems more likely that Donne elected to preach at St. Dunstan's on New Year's Day to honor fresh bequests to the poor of the parish deriving from Dr. White's will, for the Churchwardens' accounts contain this entry for 1 January: "Paid and distributed amongst the poore of this parish beinge the guift of M^r Docter White deceased."⁹¹ The very next day, a Communion Sunday, Robert Greene, a Vestryman and now Junior Churchwarden, recorded: "Given by the appointm^t. of M^r. Deane to John Lewys Clarke beinge sicke & weake ij^s vj^d."⁹² Taken together, the records suggest that Donne spent most of the first weekend in 1625 at St. Dunstan's, tending to parish affairs. Then the following month, on 9 February, Greene recorded: "Given by the appoyntment of M^r Deane to Walter Aston a poore minister v^s."⁹³

Collectively, these references reveal much about Donne's interests and activities. Since 9 February was only three days following the next communion Sunday of the year and is probably the date of the payment to Aston, the references may indicate that Donne made an effort to be present at St. Dunstan's during communion services throughout this early period, at which times he gave instructions to the various officers of the church. Equally interesting are the details. The term "Clarke" is ambiguous in seventeenth-century usage, nor is there currently any known connection between Donne and the figure in question. Nonetheless, the gift to Aston belongs with Donne's notable gift the following year to the impoverished children of Robert Gray, his curate at St. Dunstan's. Noting, on that occasion, the concern of the parish for Gray's orphaned children, Whitlock stressed that "only one person," Donne, "felt personally moved to do anything for the girls."⁹⁴ These gifts (which may well involve Lewys) thus most likely reveal Donne's special concern to relieve the sufferings of impoverished men of the cloth and their families.

⁹¹SDW, *ChA*, II, 253a.

⁹²SDW, *ChA*, II, 251a, 252a, 253a. As noted earlier, "Mr. Deane" invariably designates Donne (Whitlock, "St. Dunstan's—I"). Greene had been on the Vestry since 1618 (SDW, *VM*, I, 87; and *ChA*, II, 172b).

⁹³SDW, *ChA*, II, 253b.

⁹⁴Whitlock, "St. Dunstan's—I."

The reference to Aston, however, is unusually suggestive. Donne was acquainted with various members of the Aston family. He was on very friendly terms, for example, with Ann Cokayne, whom he visited at Ashbourne and with whom he corresponded actively in his final years. Ann's sister, Cordelia, was married to Sir Roger Aston.⁹⁵ Donne was likewise acquainted with the Staffordshire recusant family of Sir Walter Aston, a future ambassador to Spain. Lacking further evidence, it is impossible to identify Donne's figure with confidence, since the name Walter was particularly popular among the Staffordshire branches of the family.⁹⁶ Nonetheless, the reference remains a clue to a still underexplored cluster of friendships and associations. Whatever the nature of the associations, however, the entries fully validate Walton's declaration that "unto the Poor he was full of Charity, and unto many others, who by his constant and long continued bounty might intitle themselves to be his Alms-people."⁹⁷ Equally significant, since the vast majority of bequests to poverty-stricken individuals in the parish records originated with the parish curate, Donne was clearly interjecting himself personally into parish affairs.

One final record related to Donne from early 1625 concerns another member of the parish. Donne had come to an agreement with his parishioners concerning the tithes of the parish on 11 May 1624. Almost a year later, on 11 April 1625, we find a record of a payment for ale consumed at a meeting in the Vestry "when Collins made his accompt [sic] for the tythe."⁹⁸ The figure in question, Richard Collins, who lived

⁹⁵Ann's son, the poet Sir Aston Cokayne, professed that Donne was of "my Acquaintance," as did Charles Cotton, senior, who married another of Ann's sisters (Bald, *A Life*, pp. 501–503).

⁹⁶Deborah Aldrich Larson, "John Donne and the Astons," *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 55 (1992): 635–641; and *The Verse Miscellany of Constance Aston Fowler: A Diplomatic Edition*, ed. Deborah Aldrich-Watson, Renaissance English Text Society, 7th ser. 25 (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies in conjunction with Renaissance English Text Society, 2000), pp. xxi–xxiv. For the popularity of the name Walter within these families, see *Staffordshire Historical Collections*, 5, Pt. 2 (1885): 18–20; and Sir Robert Douglas, *The Peerage of Scotland*, 2nd ed., ed. John Philip Wood, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1813), 1:125–130.

⁹⁷Walton, *Lives*, p. 69.

⁹⁸Bald, *A Life*, p. 461; and SDW, *ChA*, II, 248b.

along Fleet Street, was not elected to the Vestry until January 1628, nor was he one of the men delegated to rate the parish with Ravenscroft, Johnson, and Feild in June 1624.⁹⁹ The entry establishes, however, that Collins was associated with Donne's finances within the parish throughout his tenure as Vicar, for after Donne's death, we find the following entry at a meeting of the Vestry on 18 February 1632/3:

At the same Vestry was also taken th'accompt of the said Richard Collins of all such moneys as he receiued for the yeres of our Lord God 1624 & 1625 for the tithe of S^t Dunstans parish in the west for the vse of M^r Andrew ffeild John Halliwell & others the parishioners of S^t Dunstan aforesaid lessees & farmors to D^r: Donne late Deane of Pauls then Viccar of the said parish by D^r: Marsh ffrancis Kemp Josias Harris John Stutevile Alexander Normington & Edmund Bull.¹⁰⁰

Hence it comes as no surprise that Donne's gift in 1626 concerning the daughters of Robert Gray was received by John Stutevile, the Junior Churchwarden, from the hands of Collins.¹⁰¹

Donne's engagement with the parish during the first half of 1625 was interrupted by other obligations and sickness. The death of King James at the end of March initiated a period of intense involvement with the Court.¹⁰² Additional responsibilities at St. Paul's left him little time for St. Dunstan's until early May, when we find him signing the Senior Churchwarden's Accounts with Vestrymen on 12 May.¹⁰³ Shortly

⁹⁹SDW, *VM*, I, 103, 122.

¹⁰⁰SDW, *VM*, I, 159–160.

¹⁰¹"Item the viijth of August [1626] receaved of Richard Collins as the guifte of M^r:Deane of Paules towards the placinge of 2 [sic] daughters of M^r: Gray our late Curate xxsm" (SDW, *ChA*, II, 313b). Stutvile served as Junior Churchwarden from 12 July 1626 until 17 April 1627 (SDW, *ChA*, II, 312a).

¹⁰²Donne's month at Court was April, and he preached before the new King twice, on 3 and 26 April. He also presumably marched in the old King's funeral procession in early May, for he received mourning cloth for himself and a servant (Bald, *A Life*, pp. 467–469).

¹⁰³Donne preached at St. Paul's on Easter (17 April) and on 8 May (Bald, *A Life*, pp. 470, 542). On 12 May, he signed the Senior, but not the Junior, Churchwarden's Accounts (SDW, *ChA*, II, 249b, 254a). No list was given of

thereafter he seems to have fallen seriously ill, so that “I had bin long in my chamber,” as he wrote to a friend in June. Later that month he was well enough to undertake excursions to Chelsea and Beddington, and he may have returned to St. Dunstan’s to be present on 29 June and 30 June when the Bishop of London and others consecrated St. Dunstan’s new churchyard in Fetter Lane.¹⁰⁴ Donne’s attendance at this event is perhaps made more likely by an unexpected and undated entry in the Churchwardens’ Accounts late in June: “Item paid to the Joyner for a frame of the Kings Armes by M^r: Deanes direccions xvij^d.” Whatever Donne’s location, the placement of the entry suggests that Donne was intent on having the arms of the new King on display in time for the Bishop’s visit.¹⁰⁵ Bald is incorrect, furthermore, in finding the consecration ceremony “celebrated by two dinners,” one at St. Dunstan’s Tavern and another at the Kingshead Tavern.¹⁰⁶ Bald missed the fact that two separate events took place then at St. Dunstan’s. In addition to the preparatory events and sermon that day for the consecration, 29 June was also the occasion for the annual memorial sermon and dinner in the gift

those attending the Vestry meeting on this date (SDW, *VM*, I, 100), so Donne’s signature in the Churchwardens’ Accounts is significant. It clearly demonstrates that we cannot assume Donne’s absence when no list is provided in the Vestry minutes. See n. 54 above.

¹⁰⁴On Donne’s illness, see Bald, *A Life*, pp. 470–472. Donne was thus prevented from delivering the annual commemorative sermon for Henry Adams either through sickness or as a result of conflicting responsibilities. Bald discusses the consecration, but fails to note that it took place, in fact, over a two-day period (*A Life*, p. 506). On 29 June, the Bishop came with his chaplain “and others” to deliver a sermon “in preparacion of the Consecracion,” following which the Vestry spent 2s.10d. upon wine for their party. The following day, the Bishop arrived with “the Chancello^r Register and others” to perform the actual consecration, followed by a large dinner at St. Dunstan’s tavern (SDW, *ChA*, II, 288a).

¹⁰⁵SDW, *ChA*, II, 288a. The entry, overlooked by Whitlock and Bald, appears between one dated 25 June and another dated 27 June. Donne may also have been responding to Archbishop Abbot’s known intention to have the ten commandments, the Lord’s Prayer, and the King’s arms “in due forme” to be painted “in all the Churches and Chappells within this Realme of England” (Matthew Holbeche Bloxam, *Companion to the Principles of Gothic Ecclesiastical Architecture* [London: George Bell and Sons, 1882], p. 115).

¹⁰⁶Bald (following Whitlock), *A Life*, p. 506.

of Henry Adams, and the Churchwardens' accounts make it clear that the Adams sermon was delivered, that his bequests to the poor were made in the presence of the senior Vestrymen, and that the dinner at the Kingshead Tavern was part of the Adams memorial events.¹⁰⁷

It must have been clear by the time of the Bishop's visitation that London faced a frightening outbreak of the plague. A letter dated from Fleet Street on 21 May reported that "The plauege [sic] doe much increase heare." By July the plague was raging violently in the parish.¹⁰⁸ Donne had retreated from London by 12 July to stay with Magdalen Herbert and her husband, Sir John Danvers, at Chelsea, and he did not return until the very end of the year.¹⁰⁹ Though removed from his parishioners, however, they remained in his thoughts. Bald and Whitlock record two gifts to the poor from Donne in this terrifying time, on 29 August and 23 December.¹¹⁰ In point of fact, Donne made *three* such gifts. On 13 August, at the height of the plague and a little more than two weeks before the first instance they record, we find the entry: "Receaved from M^r. Deane by Stemp the Clerke as his free guift to the poore xx^s."¹¹¹ Donne thus remained in contact with officers of the parish throughout the summer and fall of 1625, and he contributed £4 in total, a generous sum, to help the parish poor.

¹⁰⁷SDW, *ChA*, II, 288a.

¹⁰⁸J. F. D. Shrewsbury, *A History of Bubonic Plague in the British Isles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 319. The plague was "violently epidemic in July" (Shrewsbury, p. 318), and July, August, and September were the worst months of the plague at St. Dunstan's (Bald, *A Life*, pp. 472–473; and William Underhill, *Notes and Queries* 7th ser., 6 [27 October 1888]: 324–325). For the plague from 12 July in St. Gregory's next to St Paul's, where the lay vicars of the cathedral resided as well as some of the prebends, see F. Wm. Alington, *Notes and Queries* 7th ser., 6 (8 December 1888): 453. "Not until December," avers Bald, "can there have been any real assurance that the visitation was over" (*A Life*, p. 473).

¹⁰⁹It is possible that Donne may have attended the meeting at the Vestry house on 5 July 1625, but no record was kept of those attending (SDW, *VM*, I, 110).

¹¹⁰Bald, *A Life*, pp. 474, 480. The latter payment to the parish clerk was near or upon his return to London to deliver his Christmas sermon at St. Paul's (Whitlock, "St. Dunstan's—I").

¹¹¹SDW, *ChA*, II, 291b.

Donne's early relations with St. Dunstan's thus stand in marked contrast to the patterns of Dr. White's final years. At no point do we find Donne indifferent to his parish: his initial tenure is notable for his sociability, for his preaching, and for his charitable concerns. Returning to London after the abatement of the plague, Donne must have been horrified by the devastation in the ranks of his parishioners. In essence, he began again, once more courting his congregation and intensifying his interactions. We have records of Donne at St. Dunstan's, in fact, throughout the entire first half of 1626, commencing with his sermon on 15 January, replete with references to the plague and using the text, "For there was not a house where there was not one dead."¹¹² As Whitlock and Bald document, in this middle period Donne attends Vestry meetings and the dinners following with some regularity.¹¹³ In part, this change was doubtless owing to overturn in the Vestry, as many of the older members had passed away, and Donne wished to establish good relations with the newer members.

Whitlock, in particular, misrepresents the consequences of Donne's presence on such occasions. He begins early, commenting on the "extraordinary amount of wine consumed on any and all occasions" in the parish and on a "large dinner" consumed at the Bishop's visitation in October 1624. He then hints that Vestry dinners increased significantly when Donne was present and that by 29 March 1627, "[p]erhaps a feeling was already growing against the rather large sums spent for food at the meetings."¹¹⁴ Using this and other entries, Whitlock argues that

¹¹²*Sermons*, 6:349–364. There are records of Donne at St. Dunstan's for every month from January to August, except for March, when he was undoubtedly consumed by activities relating to his election as Prolocutor of Convocation (Whitlock, "St. Dunstan's—I"; and Bald, *A Life*, pp. 480–486).

¹¹³Whitlock, "St. Dunstan's—I." Whitlock's assertion, however, that "After a two-year period Donne began attending vestry meetings," goes too far. See my comments above on the lack of names of those attending meetings in 1624 and 1625.

¹¹⁴Whitlock, "St. Dunstan's—I." In fact, Whitlock confuses two events involving the Bishop. He comments on a "large dinner . . . consumed at the Horne Tavern" in October 1624. The dinner for the Bishop was indeed at the Horne Tavern then, but only 14 shillings were spent on that occasion (SDW, *ChA*, II, 247a). The "large dinner" to which he refers must be the dinner for the Bishop, his officers, "and others" at St. Dunstan's Tavern on 30 June 1625,

Donne's presence at such affairs led to extravagant expenditure, from which the Vestry ultimately recoiled, a quite misleading assessment.¹¹⁵

The Vestrymen of St. Dunstan's were a convivial lot, and they regularly overspent sums allotted for various dinners. In April 1621, for example, they spent five shillings more than granted by the Crowche bequest, and in April 1623 they overspent the same bequest by thirteen shillings. In June 1623 they spent 9s.8d. beyond the allotment for the Adams memorial dinner. In 1621, they spent 19 shillings more than provided for the Jenkinson memorial dinner, and two years later they overspent by 15s.5d. at the same occasion.¹¹⁶ More parishioners than usual may well have been invited to Donne's first parish dinner, eager to meet the new Vicar, but the additional expense of twenty shillings was certainly within the range often spent at such affairs.

More important, Whitlock fails to contextualize: he fails to correlate Vestry expenses during Donne's tenure with the patterns of the previous decade, with the numbers and attendance of the Vestry, and with the nature of specific occasions. Commenting on the modest expense of 55 shillings for the Vestry dinner on 23 January 1627/8, he speculates that Donne's absence was "[p]erhaps . . . the reason for the small bill."¹¹⁷ But the dinner following the January meeting was commonly the least expensive Vestry dinner of the year. Comparable expenses for the January dinners in 1620/1 and 1621/2, for example, were 45s.10d. and 57s.6d., respectively; and following another winter vestry meeting, on 5 March 1622/3, the tavern bill was only 59s.10d.¹¹⁸ Fewer Vestrymen attended these meetings, and afterwards more of them preferred to return home at these times of the year. Donne's presence or absence had little to do with these economies.

The same pattern generally pertains to Vestry dinners with Donne which Whitlock deems excessive. Comments within his articles reveal

which came to more than £6 (SDW, *ChA*, II, 288a). Whitlock's mistake bolstered his argument for Donne's extravagance by making it appear that the reputed "large" expenditures commenced immediately upon Donne's arrival as Vicar.

¹¹⁵See the comment that by 1629, the costs "of dinners were now becoming a matter of debate" (Whitlock, "St. Dunstan's—II").

¹¹⁶SDW, *ChA*, II, 195a, 200b–201a, 210a, 227a, 233a.

¹¹⁷Whitlock, "St. Dunstan's—II," citing SDW, *ChA*, II, 330b.

¹¹⁸SDW, *ChA*, II, 185a, 196a, 209b [5 March 1622/3].

that he characteristically regards meal expenses in excess of £4 to be exorbitant. Thus, Whitlock records the expenditure of £5.4s.4d. for the Vestry dinner at St. Dunstan's Tavern on 19 April 1628, as "a new high figure," and he finds the expense of £4.10s.6d. for the Vestry dinner at the Horne Tavern on 16 July 1628, "still high."¹¹⁹ Such outlays, he maintains, are a distinct sign of Donne's presence, inducing exorbitant expenditure.

More and less expensive Vestry dinners are indeed recorded throughout Donne's tenure, but the overall expenditures are consistent with patterns long in place before his arrival. Vestry dinners throughout the 1619–1620 period, for instance, regularly exceeded £4: one dinner on 24 April 1620 at the King's Head Tavern (when the Vicar was not even present) coming to £5.14s. Three of the Vestry dinners in 1623 came to more than £4.¹²⁰ Donne's presence had little to do with such characteristic expenses. More pertinent was the nature of the occasion and the size of the Vestry.

Such is almost certainly the case regarding Donne's first Vestry meeting of 1626, on 13 April, followed by a dinner at St. Dunstan's Tavern costing £6.9d.¹²¹ The meeting was an eventful one. The plague of 1625 had severely disrupted parish affairs, and the Vestry had not met since July 1625.¹²² Matters involving virtually every aspect of parish activity needed to be discussed, from the appointment of new clerics, considered below, to the jumbled records of the Churchwardens. The turn-out, accordingly, was unusually large—seventeen of the more than twenty Vestrymen were in attendance.¹²³ The Vestry, furthermore, was decidedly larger in the mid-1620s than it had been in the previous decade. Twelve or thirteen had been present on 15 May 1623, when the dinner cost £4.16s.6d.; sixteen Vestrymen were present on 26 October

¹¹⁹Whitlock, "St. Dunstan's—II," citing SDW, *ChA*, II, 332b; III, 352b.

¹²⁰SDW, *ChA*, II, 169a (£4.6s.8d.: 20 April 1619), 170b (£4.13s.6d.: 10 December 1619), 171b (24 April 1620, as above), 183a (£4.1s.6d.: 26 April 1620), 183a (£4.4s.: 4 May 1620), 226b (£4.9s.: April 1623, day unspecified), 226b (£4.16s.6d.: 16 May 1623), 227b (£4.6s.10d.: 10 November 1623).

¹²¹SDW, *VM*, I, 112; and *ChA*, II, 289a.

¹²²The last official meeting of the Vestry was on 5 July 1625; subsequent meetings in the Questhouse for the rest of the year were all "general" meetings, involving others than just the Vestry (SDW, *VM*, I, 110–112).

¹²³SDW, *VM*, I, 112. Donne made the eighteenth man present.

1624, when the charge for the dinner was £5.6s.8d.¹²⁴ In 1626, the larger Vestry and the necessity of tackling a great deal of past and pending business both contributed to the more expensive dinner.

Donne, in fact, attended five of the eight gatherings of the Vestry in 1626, most of them in the spring and early summer, as the Vestry buckled down to take care of backlogged and current business.¹²⁵ At the meeting in May he formally proposed his second building program, which involved moving the pulpit and making room for new pews.¹²⁶ Between the first two meetings of the Vestry and the following two in July, he preached the memorial sermon for Henry Adams on 29 June, joining the Vestry again for a dinner.¹²⁷ Then, in the period immediately following the memorial sermon, he met with the Vestry twice officially in relation to pressing business.¹²⁸

Some of that business concerned Donne's associates at St. Dunstan's, and events during the first half of 1626 provide an opportunity to consider St. Dunstan's clerics and parish officials in greater detail. The curate when Donne came to St. Dunstan's was Robert Gray, who had served in that capacity since 1615.¹²⁹ As Whitlock notes, among his

¹²⁴In 1623, thirteen signed the Senior Churchwarden's Accounts, but only twelve those of the Junior Churchwarden (SDW, *ChA*, II, 211a, 216a, 226b). For 1624, see SDW, *VM*, I, 103; and *ChA*, 247a.

¹²⁵Bald, *A Life*, pp. 483, 486, 489; and SDW, *VM*, I, 112–117.

¹²⁶Bald, *A Life*, p. 483.

¹²⁷SDW, *ChA*, II, 298b; and III, 352b.

¹²⁸Within his first five years at St. Dunstan's, Donne chose to deliver the memorial sermon for Adams three, not four times, as Bald reports (*A Life*, p. 461). Timothy Prior, the Curate, not Donne, preached the sermon in 1627 (SDW, *ChA*, II, 329a). Donne seems to have given up the opportunity only when conflicting obligations arose. In 1625 the cause was either illness or (more probably) his attendance at the Bishop's consecration of the churchyard; in 1627, the most likely cause for the omission was the commemorative sermon he delivered two days later for Magdalen Herbert (Bald, *A Life*, p. 496). We should note, given Donne's fondness for using "emergent occasions" to structure his preaching (occasions such as Candlemas Day and St. Paul's Day at the cathedral), that the sermon for Adams offered him the opportunity to preach on St. Peter's Day. In any given year Donne thus had the opportunity to offer sermons related to the two greatest figures of the early Church.

¹²⁹The previous Curate, Richard Young, was buried at St. Dunstan's on 17 August 1615 (SDW, *PR*, MS. 10, 342). Gray, however, had been serving the

responsibilities was the preaching of the majority of the memorial sermons delivered annually in the parish.¹³⁰ Early in 1622 Gray was joined by Timothy Prior (or Pryor). On 26 February that year, Thomas Johnson (the senior Vestryman who often acted as Dr. White's deputy) in concert with Andrew Feild and others, appointed Prior to be "the Lecturer of this parishe," for which Prior received a partial payment of £10, an arrangement "agreed upon by M^r George Croke and y^e rest of y^e parishe."¹³¹ It has always been assumed that Dr. White established this position at the time of his death; but entries in the parish records show that a Lectureship existed at St. Dunstan's before that time, that the Lecturers (as above) seem to have been chosen by the Vestry, and that they were paid by collections from the parishioners.¹³² White, through his bequest, made the post permanent, ordered the terms of the Lectureship more strictly, and stabilized the income.¹³³ Prior, in the event, served as parish Lecturer during Donne's earliest years in the parish, and Donne must have grown to know him and Gray well.

While Donne retreated before the plague in 1625, Gray and Prior remained at their posts, but they did not escape unscathed. Entries in the

parish in various capacities since 1614, since the Churchwardens' Accounts for 1613–1614 contain a payment to him: "Item paid to M^r Gray for many good duties as well in reading as in preaching by the consent of M^r Deputy, M^r Tirrell, M^r Roberte Johnson, Humfry Hooper & others" (SDW, *ChA*, II, 70b). Further payments to him are found in 1615, including payments in July and October for preaching memorial sermons for a "Mr. Baker" (SDW, *ChA*, II, 103b, 125a).

¹³⁰A significant number of these sermons, however, were delivered by others, apparently at the discretion of the curate or the Vestry, for a great many entries from 1615 to 1633 simply record them as having been delivered by "a minister," "the minister," or "the preacher."

¹³¹SDW, *ChA*, II, 196b.

¹³²See, for example, the burial on 25 June 1619 of "M^r Savell sometimes lecturer heere" (SDW, *PR*, MS. 10, 342), and the entry in the *Vestry Minutes* of 29 April 1622: "It was thought fitt that M^r Hallywell M^r Benyon M^r Adams M^r Smythwick M^r Stutfeild & M^r Hyde to be Collectors for M^r Pryor the Lectorman" (SDW, *VM*, I, 98). All six were on the Vestry.

¹³³For the terms of White's Lectureship, see Walter Adam Sampson, *The Life of the Rev. Thomas White, D. D.* (Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith, 1912), p. 25; and Jonquil Bevan, "Henry Valentine, John Donne, and Izaak Walton," *RES* n. s. 40 (1989): 187–188.

Churchwardens' Accounts on 5 August 1625 show both men as being sick, and both were given ten shillings to help them with their expenses.¹³⁴ Three days later, "M^r Robert Gray: Curatt of this Church [was] buried out of fleet street."¹³⁵ With Prior ill, parish business fell heavily upon William Stemp, the parish clerk, and it is that circumstance that undoubtedly led to Donne making his three gifts to the poor through "Stemp the Clerke."¹³⁶ Since Donne's first gift is recorded less than a week after Gray's burial, it seems likely that Stemp travelled to Chelsea to inform Donne of his curate's death and that he may have journeyed there regularly to inform Donne of church affairs.

Irregularities in the accounts throughout this period make it difficult to determine the precise course of events, but Prior had recovered by early 1626. By April he was preaching the memorial sermons earlier delivered by Gray, and on 6 August 1626 we find the first notice of him as "the Curate."¹³⁷ The selection of curates at St. Dunstan's is not clear.

¹³⁴SDW, *ChA*, II, 293b. Gray must have fallen sick by the end of July, for the Churchwardens' Accounts show a payment of seven shillings to him on 21 July and another on 25 July "for a Warder at M^r: Greys Dore" (SDW, *ChA*, II, 288b, 293a).

¹³⁵SDW, *PR*, MS. 10, 344. The entry is marked with a "p," indicating that Gray died of the plague. Bald and Whitlock both state that Gray died in August 1626 (Bald, *A Life*, p. 486; and Whitlock, "St. Dunstan's—I"), but the parish records are firm on the year of burial: "Item the same Day [8 August 1625] for the ground pitt and knell for M^r: Robert Gray Curate of this parish Church in the Churchyard without a Coffin" (SDW, *PR*, MS. 10, 342; and *ChA*, II, 261b).

¹³⁶Each of the entries records Stemp as the intermediary (SDW, *ChA*, II, 291b–292a.)

¹³⁷SDW, *ChA*, II, 315b. There is no indication in the records to determine which cleric led the monthly communion services held throughout the outbreak of the plague. It may have been the Schoolmaster, Cuthbert Clarke, who was also a minister, since he was paid 20 shillings in July "for his paynes in readinge sixe a clocke prayers for y^e tyme past," the customary sum previously given to the Curate for such service (SDW, *PR*, MS. 10, 344 [burials, 21 September 1630]; and *ChA*, II, 299a). As Lecturer, Prior was only obligated to deliver sermons during the law terms; but Trinity Term had been suspended on 18 June and remained suspended through Michaelmas Term (*CSPD*, 1625–1626, pp. 46, 97, 115, 122, 144, 153). Although they provide no evidence concerning his activities in 1625, the Churchwardens' Accounts note that Prior delivered the sermons in the gift of Henry Adams on the first Sundays of Easter, Trinity, and

Donne himself may have made the choice; by canon law, he must, at the very least, have been consulted.¹³⁸ The decision, in any event, must have been made by the Vestry meeting of 13 April, for in 1626 Easter fell on 9 April and Prior delivered the Adams sermon shortly thereafter.

These are likewise the circumstances leading to the choice of Henry Valentine, an M. A. of Christ's College, Cambridge, as the new Lecturer. Bald and Whitlock cite the entry regarding Valentine in the minutes of the Vestry meeting of 10 October: "Att the same Vestry it is further ordered That M^r: Valentyne the Lecturer shall continue the readinge of the lectures accordinge to Doctor White's Will and that he shall have the xvijth per Annum paid him given by the same Will duringe the tyme that he shall performe the same lectures."¹³⁹ Whatever the situation regarding the curate, the Vestry and Churchwardens had specifically been charged with the appointment of the Lecturer by the terms of Dr. White's will, and it is clear that they recruited Valentine early in the year on a probationary basis.¹⁴⁰ The crucial entry is in the

Michaelmas terms in 1626, and also, as "M^r: Prior the Curate," the memorial sermons that year for John Waynewright on 6 September, Mr. Morley on 15 October, Mr. Mawditt on 28 October, and Robert Jenkinson on 2 December (SDW, *ChA*, II, 309a, 314b). The lack of any record concerning the memorial sermons after June 1625 until these entries (including the Hilary term sermon in Adams's gift) suggests that all memorial events had been suspended at St. Dunstan's until Easter 1626.

¹³⁸According to ecclesiastical law, normally "[t]he appointment of a curate to officiate under an incumbent in his own church, must be by such incumbent's nomination of him to the bishop" (Richard Burn, *Ecclesiastical Law*, 2 vols. [London, 1763], 1:428; and *The Canon Law of the Church of England* [London: The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1947], p. 154). Yet, other "ancient customs" did exist, and the procedure for appointing curates was quite fluid in early seventeenth-century London (Burn, 1:427–439 ("Curates"); and H. Gareth Owen, "Parochial Curates in Elizabethan London," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 10 [1959]: 71).

¹³⁹Bald, *A Life*, p. 489, citing SDW, *VM*, I, 116. For Valentine himself, see Bevan, pp. 179–201, who incorrectly dates the entry as 16 October (p. 180).

¹⁴⁰On White's will, see Sampson, pp. 13–34, esp. p. 25. When Donne's successor, Dr. James Marsh, attempted to appoint a Lecturer without consent of the Vestrymen and other feoffees in 1640, he was sharply rebuffed (SDW, *VM*, I, 214). For the proper election of the Lecturer and probationary sermons, see especially SDW, *VM*, I, 149.

accounts of the Senior Churchwarden: "Item the xiiijth Day of July 1626 paid M^r: Valentine by appoyntm^t: of the Vestrymen for readinge the lecture of D^r: Whites guifte beginnunge in Easter Terme and endinge in Trinity Terme vj^{li}." ¹⁴¹ Decisions regarding Prior's promotion and Valentine's appointment, therefore, must have been made about the same time, for Prior and Valentine both undertook their new duties immediately following Easter. Here, too, the absence of all reference to Hilary term suggests that the plague had halted the round of commemorative sermons at St. Dunstan's for approximately nine months.

The range of entries directly and indirectly involving Donne clearly establish that he worked closely with the Vestrymen and Churchwardens throughout the spring and summer, and entries such as the one above indicate that much more business was conducted at the Vestry meetings than was recorded in the minutes, a matter which accounts for the more expensive vestry dinners. ¹⁴² The Vestry, in fact, faced a series of crises in this period, foremost being serious problems concerning the Churchwardens following the unexpected death of Robert Grinkin, the Senior Churchwarden, who was buried shortly before 29 June. ¹⁴³ On 4 July, the former Senior Churchwarden's accounts for the plague period were finally approved, which Donne signed, and a new Vestryman was elected to replace Grinkin. ¹⁴⁴ But another crisis erupted at that meeting

¹⁴¹SDW, *ChA*, II, 309a.

¹⁴²Whitlock ("St. Dunstan's—I") used the Adams memorial event of 29 June 1626 to subtly advance his argument for extravagant festivity associated with Donne. For the cost of the dinner (£4.12s.2d.) at the Horne, allowed by Adams's will, see n. 120 above. More important, it was a parish crisis, as we shall see, and it was the extraordinary amount of business to be conducted, not, as he contended, "celebration," which led to the unusual breakfast meeting the following day (SDW, *ChA*, II, 298b–299a).

¹⁴³Grinkin had been elected Senior Churchwarden on 13 April 1626. He was buried on 20 June 1626, before his accounts as Junior Churchwarden for the previous year (turned in on 19 April), had been examined (SDW, *VM*, I, 112; *ChA*, II, 291a; and *PR*, MS. 10, 344).

¹⁴⁴Whitlock, "St. Dunstan's—I," citing SDW, *VM*, I, 114; and *ChA*, II, 290a. No mention occurs in the *Vestry Minutes* of the examination of the earlier Churchwardens' Accounts, nor does Whitlock mention the election of a new Vestryman, which doubtless necessitated considerable discussion.

when Robert Gomersall, the Senior Churchwarden elect, refused service, resulting in a new election for both Churchwardens.¹⁴⁵ On 12 July, Donne and the Vestry gathered once again to wrestle with Grinkin's accounts for the previous year, making a payment to his widow. They also paid Cuthbert Clark for his service at morning prayer, and must have discussed Henry Valentine's performance as Lecturer, for the first payment to Valentine was made the following day.¹⁴⁶ It seems likely, given these circumstances, that Donne would have taken time to listen to Valentine in the pulpit at St. Dunstan's in the period since Easter. Whitlock additionally suggests that these meetings in July also saw Donne and the Vestrymen agreeing on the seating in his pews, for three Vestrymen—John Allanson, Thomas Hyde, and John Stutvile, the latter two the new Churchwardens—came forward to sit in the new pews in mid-July, and Donne received payment for their seating about a week after the second meeting in July.¹⁴⁷ Also under discussion must have been the care of the former curate's children. Gray had lost his wife Susanna in 1622, so his orphaned children now fell to the care of the parish. The children were apprenticed out early in August, at which time Donne made the contribution noted earlier of twenty shillings for their care.¹⁴⁸

For the remainder of 1626 and the following several years, Bald and Whitlock are accurate in their accounts, with a few exceptions. They miss, for example, some information in the records concerning Donne's new pews. Neither found any record of payment to Donne for John

¹⁴⁵Gomersall had been elected Junior Churchwarden at the meeting on 13 April. On 4 July he made "earnest suite" to be relieved of service, and the Vestry accepted his petition. Thomas Hyde was then chosen Senior Churchwarden, and John Stutevile elected to replace Gomersall, who served until 12 July (SDW, *VM*, I, 114; and *ChA*, II, 297a, 301a).

¹⁴⁶SDW, *ChA*, II, 296b, 299a, 309a. Here, too, the genuinely high cost of the Vestry dinner on 12 July (£7), was owing to the extraordinary amount of business to be resolved (SDW, *ChA*, II, 299a).

¹⁴⁷Whitlock, "St. Dunstan's—I"; and SDW, *ChA*, II, 298a, 299b (20 July). A fourth member, John Smethwick, paid his fee on 29 July (SDW, *ChA*, II, 313b, 315b).

¹⁴⁸SDW, *PR*, MS. 10, 342 (burials, 19 April 1622). The daughters were apprenticed out on 3 August and 8 August, and Donne made his contribution towards their care on the latter date via Richard Collins (SDW, *ChA*, II, 313b, 315b).

Smethwick's removal to one of the new pews. However, Donne received payment for Smethwick and for a previously unnoted Vestryman, Henry Parkinson, on 10 May 1627, when he also signed both Churchwardens' Accounts.¹⁴⁹ Regarding the lack of a Vestry dinner following the meeting on 29 March 1627, Whitlock comments, "Perhaps a feeling was already growing against the rather large sums spent for food at the meetings, but it was to be two years before any definite action was taken." Then, regarding expenses involving meals in 1629, Whitlock remarks that the costs "of dinners were becoming a matter of debate. In July the rising prices of the dinner meeting were threatening the existence of the general meetings between the parishioners and the members of the Inner and Middle Temples."¹⁵⁰

Whitlock is correct about the declining expenses beginning in 1628, but the situation is complex. Part of the shift was almost certainly owing to the death late in 1626 of Thomas Johnson, who had presided over the

¹⁴⁹The payment appears in a note in the left margin of the Accounts: "The said accomptant hath also paid vnto M^r deane of Paules vppon the removinge of M^r Smythwicke & M^r Parkinson into the quyer according to agreement xiiij^s iiij^d" (SDW, *ChA*, II, 311a). Ultimately nine members of the Vestry paid to be seated in Donne's new pews in the first two years: John Allanson, Thomas Hyde, John Stuteville, John Smethwicke, Henry Parkinson, Josias Harris, Nicholas Hall, John Hoth, and John Smith (SDW, *ChA*, II, 298a [3], 313b, 320a [3]). He received payment for the last three on 20 January 1627/8 (SDW, *ChA*, II, 330b). But Whitlock is wrong in arguing that on 11 February 1631/2, "the old order passed away" when a tenth man, "Thomas Bell, paid 6s.8d. to the vestry for the priviledge of moving into the chancel according to the agreement with Donne" ("St. Dunstan's—II"; see also SDW, *ChA*, III, 403a). He apparently believed that Bell was one of the "anncientest and better sort of the parrishioners which have not borne office" whom the Vestry on 16 July 1628 felt ought now to be allowed to be seated in Donne's pews. But Bell had served on the Vestry since April 1626 (SDW, *VM*, I, 112–114, 124).

¹⁵⁰Whitlock, "St. Dunstan's—I" and "Donne at St. Dunstan's—II." The specific complaint in 1629 did not arise, however, from the cost of Vestry dinners. It concerned the special expenses in "bakinge & spendinge" arising from the annual gift of two bucks from the Readers of the Inner and Middle Temple for a large "neighbourly meetinge" (SDW, *VM*, I, 129). See, for example, the two parish dinners at the Horne Tavern in February 1629/30 for which "M^r John Davys Reader of y^e Inner Temple" and his wife had provided two does (SDW, *ChA*, III, 375b).

Vestry for more than a decade and had continued the ebullient customs of the Vestry dinners from earlier in the century.¹⁵¹ Some, however, in turn evinced their displeasure at the new direction, as we find from an entry in the Vestry book in July 1629 mentioning an old custom of granting £4 annually for a feast for “those w^{ch} had borne office,” “which good order hath of late yeres bene forborne out of the private respect of some particular parsons [sic].”¹⁵² The point of the entry was to register a protest against earlier protests, and larger payments for parish dinners resume. We do find here, however, the seeds of a revolt which took root during the Civil Wars. At least one member of Donne’s Vestry, Alexander Normington, was involved in the Presbyterian takeover of the parish in 1642 and 1643.¹⁵³ Then as well, the cost of vestry dinners declined, and the greatly radicalized Vestry “ordered that noe wine be hereafter brought into the Vestrie after the Sermons,” which had been the custom in Donne’s time.¹⁵⁴ It seems significant in this connection that Normington was one of the Vestrymen who made no effort to join his fellows in Donne’s pews.

Although Bald and Whitlock present the direct references to Donne over the next few years, moreover, a large number of records offer valuable information about Donne’s associates and parishioners and inform us about the nature of worship at St. Dunstan’s. One figure to whom Donne was naturally drawn closer throughout the mid-1620s, for example, was William Stemp, the parish clerk. Stemp had come to the

^{151a}“M^r Thomas Johnson Merchant taylor was buried out of ffleet streete” (SDW, PR, MS. 10, 344 [31 August 1626]). Johnson had served on the Vestry from at least 1598, and he signed as first on the Vestry as early as 1611 (SDW, VM, I, 28, 69; and ChA, II, 126a, 198a).

¹⁵²SDW, VM, I, 129.

¹⁵³Valerie Pearl, *London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution: City Government and National Politics, 1625–43* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 137, 140, 244, 323; and Keith Lindley, *Popular Politics and Religion in Civil War London* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997), pp. 183–185, 193, 274, 390.

¹⁵⁴SDW, VM, I, 242. See the characteristic entries from the late 1620s for “a pint of Wine, beere and bread” for “Mr. Webb the Preacher after his sermon ended”; for pints of “Canary” for unnamed ministers; and the entry for 12 April 1629, when “M^r Martin the Preacher” substituted that Sunday for another who failed to appear “then paid for a pint of Sacke into the Vestry” (SDW, ChA, III, 354b, 359a, 360b).

parish in 1623, upon the death of John Browne, a stationer also serving as the parish clerk.¹⁵⁵ In 1625, as we have seen, Stemp seems to have served as Donne's chief link to the parish, and in 1626 he received a special payment for attending Donne's sermon on 29 June.¹⁵⁶ The entry seems odd, until we understand the larger context. Stemp's salary was modest, so he supplemented his income by washing the church linen and by "attending" various services, particularly morning prayer.¹⁵⁷ The situation becomes clearer upon reading the unique tribute inserted into the parish registers at the time of his burial on 6 March 1642/3:

W^m Stampe Clarke of this parish Church of S^t Dunstons in y^e West was buried: A man much lamented by most in y^e parish: in his skill of song rare, for his honest, gentle, and Curteous behaiour to all vnimitable. he was Clarke al most 20 yeeres.¹⁵⁸

There seems to have been no organ at St. Dunstan's before the installation of the famous instrument by Renatus Harris in 1672.¹⁵⁹ Stemp, the parish clerk, obviously led his parishioners in the singing of metrical psalms, teaching his congregation to sing the psalm tunes and responses with skill and fluency.¹⁶⁰ Donne's love of church music, attested

¹⁵⁵SDW, *PR*, MS. 10, 342: "John Browne stationer and parish clarke of S^t Dunstons was buried" (8 October 1622).

¹⁵⁶SDW, *ChA*, II, 309a.

¹⁵⁷See, for example, SDW, *ChA*, II, 299b, 310a-b; and III, 375b-376a. His annual salary as parish clerk was £10 (SDW, *ChA*, II, 309a). Prior was reading morning prayer at this time (SDW, *ChA*, II, 310a-b).

¹⁵⁸SDW, *PR*, MS. 10, 344.

¹⁵⁹Sylvia Bogdanescu, *The Life and Times of St Dunstan-in-the-West* (London: The Guild Church Council, St. Dunstan-in-the-West, 1986), p. 13. Further proof is provided by the fact that although we find numerous records during Donne's time for the maintenance of the bells and the famous clock at St. Dunstan's, there are no references to any repair to an organ.

¹⁶⁰On the popularity and singing of metrical psalms, see *Shakespeare's England: An Account of the Life and Manners of His Age*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916), 2:19-20; Reginald H. Adams, *The Parish Clerks of London* (London: Phillimore, 1971), p. 36; and Nicholas Temperley, "John Playford and the Metrical Psalms," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 25 (1972): 331-378. Parish Clerks were expected to lead their congregations in singing them; hence when they were re-incorporated by King James in 1611,

by Walton, would thus have found additional reach at St. Dunstan's. At St. Paul's he enjoyed a stunning assemblage of professional musicians, who enriched worship with full choral and instrumental resources. At St. Dunstan's he experienced the more popular veins of church music, here, too, performed with skill.¹⁶¹ Stemp's combined duties, in the event, clearly made him one of Donne's chief assistants during divine services there, and he was the natural contact between Donne and the parish in 1625, since as parish clerk, he had the duty of compiling the weekly bills of mortality, and could thus offer Donne precise information about the state of the parish and the health of specific parishioners.¹⁶²

The extensive parish records likewise offer entries providing a better sense of the character of Donne's congregation. Whitlock and Bald describe a few of the more important personalities, but numerous entries broaden our knowledge of those to whom Donne preached and ministered. Most accounts of the parish, for example, stress the predominance of members of London's guilds within the congregation. Consider Bald's description:

When Donne preached at St. Dunstan's, as he often did, his congregation must usually have included not only the citizens and their families who lived in the parish, but also a large sprinkling of lawyers, and of fashionable folk from the

each clerk was ordered to be able to write and "to be able to sing the Psalms of David according to the usual tunes" (Reginald Adams, p. 41; *CSPD*, 1611–1618, p. 104; Cogswell, p. 44; and Christopher Harvey, "The Cleark" [*The Synagogue, or, The Shadow of the Temple* (London, 1657), p. 24]). Compare the glowing tribute to William Stemp above to complaints of others and the comments of John Playford at the Restoration, recounted by Reginald Adams, p. 38, and P. H. Ditchfield, "The Parish Clerk, III.—The Clerk as Singer," *The Treasury* 5 (1905): 232–233.

¹⁶¹Walton, *Lives*, p. 62. For music at St. Paul's, see Clayton D. Lein, "Donne, Thomas Myriell, and the Musicians of St. Paul's," *John Donne Journal* 23 (2004): 234–235.

¹⁶²In divine service, the parish clerk was also to read the first lesson and the Epistle. For the full range of the activities of the parish clerk, who among other things, was to provide the archdeacon with the names of all those failing to attend church services, see Reginald Adams, pp. 10–12, 35–36, 38–40, 41, 49, 53–55.

neighbouring parish of St. Clement Danes, in which he had lived for many years.¹⁶³

Such a description misleads the reader badly. It is not sufficient to describe the guildsmen of the parish simply as “citizens,” for the congregation included a great many members of the merchant elite—Wardens and members of the Liveries of the Great Twelve, who often retired to the countryside as gentlemen or esquires. The description likewise errs badly by implying that the sprinkling of “fashionable folk” came from a neighboring parish.

In Donne’s time, the congregation of St. Dunstan’s had a much broader composition than Bald suggests. St. Dunstan’s was at this time, in fact, a decidedly wealthy and “fashionable” parish, and parish records document the presence of many persons of rank throughout the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, ranging from members of the lesser gentry to members of the aristocracy, some living in the parish on a seasonable basis, some residing there permanently.¹⁶⁴ Among the more notable figures, we find Sir Nicholas Fortescue, Kt., Chamberlain of the Exchequer, who maintained a residence in Fetter Lane, where he died late in 1633.¹⁶⁵ Sir Thomas Merry, Kt., was rated at £30 for lands in the parish and lived on Chancery Lane.¹⁶⁶ Sir Richard Grobham, Kt., appears in parish records as early as 1615, and he left a legacy to the parish upon his death in 1629.¹⁶⁷ Similarly residing in the parish in 1627 was Sir

¹⁶³Bald, *A Life*, p. 459.

¹⁶⁴Emrys Jones notes that “the entire parish of St Dunstan’s in the West was comparable to the city core [in its wealth], and it boasted four titled householders” (“London in the Early Seventeenth Century: An Ecological Approach,” *The London Journal* 6 [1980]: 131). Also see SDW, *ChA*, II, 336b; and III, 363a.

¹⁶⁵*CSPD* 1623–1625, p. 276; and *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (hereafter cited as *ODNB*). Since Sir Nicholas entered the Inner Temple at about the same time that Donne entered Lincoln’s Inn, he may have known Donne since their time at the Inns of Court (*ODNB*).

¹⁶⁶TNA, E.179.147/498, f. 5b (1621); and *Middlesex County Records*, ed. John Cordy Jeaffreson, 4 vols. (1886; rpt., London: Greater London Council, 1972), 2:162.

¹⁶⁷For 1615, see SDW, *ChA*, II, 81a. For Sir Richard in the 1620s, see, for example, SDW, *PR*, MS. 10, 342 (burials 6 June 1620); and *ChA*, II, 336b

Francis Wortley, Knight and Baronet, MP in 1625 and 1626, a future royalist commander and author of *Characters and Elegies* (1646). Sir Francis is a figure likely known to Donne, moreover, for the baronet served as gentleman of the Privy Chamber to King James and is likely to have heard Donne on occasion when he preached to the King's household.¹⁶⁸ Also to be found in the parish in the 1620s were Sir Humphry Lynde, the celebrated Protestant apologist, and the courtiers Sir John Stanhope, Kt. and Sir Thomas Penruddock, Kt., who lived on Chancery Lane.¹⁶⁹ Like Donne, Penruddock had served in the Parliaments of 1601 and 1614, and he, like Donne, marched in the funeral procession of King James in 1625.¹⁷⁰ Burial records from the

(March 1628). In his will, as "Sir Richard Grobham, of Great Wishford, in the countie of Wilts., knight," Sir Richard bequeathed twenty pounds "towards the bettringe and bewtifying of the parish church of St. Dunstons in the West, and the ornaments thereof" (PCC, 68 Ridley; and SDW, *ChA*, III, 363a [13 December 1629]). He made "M^r Justice Crooke, knight," one of his "ho^{ble} and worthie good friends," one of the three overseers to his will.

¹⁶⁸Wortley was a member of "an ancient Yorkshire family"; for his life and career, see *ODNB*. His son Richard was baptized out of Chancery Lane on 19 December 1627 (SDW, *PR*, MS 10, 344). The author of the *ODNB* account is only aware of his later residence in the parish.

¹⁶⁹For Lynde, see *ODNB* and the baptism of his daughter Mary (SDW, *PR*, MS. 10, 344 [29 May 1629]). For Sir John Stanhope, see SDW, *PR*, MS. 10, 344 (baptisms 31 October 1628 and 12 March 1631/2).

¹⁷⁰Penruddock had been knighted at Whitehall shortly before King James's coronation and had lived in St. Dunstan's for more than a decade before Donne's arrival (William A. Shaw, *The Knights of England*, 2 vols. [1906; rpt. Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1971], 2:115; *Middlesex County Records*, ed. Jeaffreson, 2:66; and SDW, *PR*, MS. 10, 342 (baptisms 24 July 1609, 12 April 1611, 12 September 1615). A student at Gray's Inn in 1590, where his father was Reader, he obtained the office of King's Sewer for life in 1604 (Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*, 4 vols. [Oxford, 1891], 3:1143; and *CSPD*, 1603–1610, p. 126). For his service in Parliament with Donne, see Foster, 3:1143; and Bald, *A Life*, pp. 114–115, 284–289. From 1618 through the early 1620s, he was appointed to various royal commissions, where he served with Donne's friends, patrons, and various members of Lincoln's Inn, including Christopher Brooke, William Hackwill, and William Ravenscroft (Thomas Rymer, *Foedera*, 3rd ed., 7, Pt. 3 [1741], pp. 82–83, 231; Pt. 4 [1741], pp. 89–90).

1620s provide still further evidence that the parish contained a large elite population, for we find references there to the burials of servants to the Lady Brett, Sir Charles Bartlett, and the Lady Gunter, as well as to the burials of such figures as Lady Elizabeth Parker, Sir John Jackson, Lady Mary Willoughby, Sir Henry Holmes, Lady Emilyne St. Leger, Lady Elizabeth Cotton (wife of Sir John Cotton), and the Lady Elizabeth Pealls, wife of Sir Bartholomew Pealls.¹⁷¹

Many other knighted figures within the parish were preeminent legal figures. Bald and Whitlock tersely note the presence of Sir Julius Caesar, for example, but it is of particular interest that he appears especially often in the records of Donne's final half-a-dozen years in the parish.¹⁷² Sir Robert Rich, Donne's friend from his early days at Lincoln's Inn, now a Master in Chancery, lived in a house in Chancery Lane he had purchased from Sir Matthew Carew, the father of the poet, Thomas Carew.¹⁷³ Parish registers record the baptism of his children in the early

¹⁷¹For the servants, see SDW, *PR*, MS. 10, 342 (burials 4 April 1622, 5 October 1624, 20 February 1628/9, and 2 January 1629/30); and *PR*, MS. 10, 344 (burials 11 January 1631/2). For the other figures, see SDW, *PR*, MS. 10, 342 (burials 5 December 1622 and 29 October 1623); and *PR*, MS. 10, 344 (burials 17 November 1624, 17 February 1626/7, 12 October 1629, 9 March 1630/1, and 25 July 1631). The "right honorable George Lord Baltimore" was buried at St. Dunstan's on 16 April 1632 (SDW, *PR*, MS. 10, 344). He is found in the parish periodically, but his overall residence in the parish is less certain. To ascertain the full extent of titled figures, one needs to examine both the parish registers and the Churchwardens' Accounts, for the latter contains many references to additional titled figures who died in the parish but were "carried out of the parish into the country" for burial, and hence do not appear in the registers.

¹⁷²Whitlock mentions Sir Julius briskly ("St. Dunstan's—II"); Bald provides greater detail, including the reference to a repair to "Lady Cesars pew doore" (Bald, *A Life*, p. 454); but Sir Julius also paid a fine to the parish regularly in these years to eat flesh in Lent (SDW, *ChA*, II, 313b; and III, 358a, 379a, 396b).

¹⁷³*The Poems of Thomas Carew*, ed. Rhodes Dunlap (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949), p. xxxi. I. A. Shapiro mistakenly believed that Donne's friendship with Robert Rich did not begin until 1612 ("It's No Allusion to Donne," *Notes and Queries* n. s. 41 [1994]: 61), presumably based on an error in the printed volume of admissions to Lincoln's Inn; but Rich entered Lincoln's Inn two years before Donne and their acquaintance undoubtedly dates from that period (*Shardeloes*

1620s, and the burial of his wife Anne out of Chancery Lane in October 1628. Rich handled official business for the parish on occasion, and his residence, near the Six Clerks' Office in Chancery Lane, was a very short walk from the church. He and Donne must have crossed paths regularly.¹⁷⁴

Entirely absent from Bald's account, however, is a major figure who doubtless played a more significant role in Donne's life than currently recognized—the celebrated jurist Sir George Croke. A member of the Inner Temple, Sir George was knighted by King James in the summer of 1623.¹⁷⁵ Donne must have become acquainted with him later that year, if not earlier, when Croke was created sergeant of law together with Donne's old friend Sir John Hoskins. Donne preached a sermon before the sergeants at St. Paul's for that occasion and presumably joined the new sergeants at the elaborate festivities in the hall of the Temple.¹⁷⁶ Croke continued to advance quickly throughout this period: in February 1625 he became a justice of the Common Pleas, where he served with Donne's friend, Sir Henry Hobart; and in October 1628 he was raised to

Papers of the 17th and 18th Centuries, ed. G. Eland [London: Oxford University Press, 1947], p. 2).

¹⁷⁴For the location of Rich's residence and adjacent shops, see SDW, *ChA*, II, 313a; and *Shardeloes Papers*, ed. Eland, p. 2. Rich made an annual payment to the parish, the gift of Sir Mathew Carew levied on the property, for bread to the poor (SDW, *ChA*, II, 335a). The legacy was still being collected in the twentieth century (*Poems of Thomas Carew*, pp. xxviii–xxix). For Rich's work for the parish, see SDW, *ChA*, II, 208a. For the burials of his wife and servants, see SDW, *PR*, MS. 10, 344 (23 September 1625, 29 October 1628, and 18 May 1631). He was close to Sir Julius Caesar, and in June 1622, his son "Julius" was baptized in the parish church (SDW, *PR*, MS. 10, 342).

¹⁷⁵Croke became a Bencher at the Inner Temple in 1597, twice served as Reader at the Inn, and in 1609 served as Treasurer. For his life, see Sir Alexander Croke, *The Genealogical History of the Croke Family, Originally Named Le Blount*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1823), 1:561–605; and *ODNB*, "George Croke."

¹⁷⁶Bald, *A Life*, p. 448. Bald does not mention Croke's creation, although Chamberlain specifically singled him out as one of the five "prime men" among the fifteen promoted on the occasion (*The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. Norman Egbert McClure, 2 vols. [1939; rpt., Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979], 2:518). For a description of the festivities, see *The Diary of Sir Simonds D'Ewes*, ed. Bourcier, pp. 165–167.

the Court of the King's Bench.¹⁷⁷ Unnoted by Whitlock and Bald, Croke was a permanent resident of the parish. He and his family had owned property on Fleet street since the end of the sixteenth century, and he appears regularly in parish records throughout Donne's time.¹⁷⁸ Croke enjoyed, moreover, a special relationship with the parish. By the terms of Dr. White's will, his consent was necessary in the appointment of the parish Lecturer, so Donne and the Vestry would have dealt with him directly in the appointment of Henry Valentine.¹⁷⁹ Equally important, he served on occasion as Donne's colleague. In 1628, for example, he and Donne both served on a commission in the Court of Delegates.¹⁸⁰ As Bald noted generally, the judges "seem to have frequented St. Dunstan's" in Donne's time, but it is useful to be able to identify specific figures, particularly ones with whom Donne most likely worked on parish affairs and whose relations with Donne extended beyond the parish.¹⁸¹

Sir George also brings to the fore another likely association. Sir George's neighbor on Fleet Street was Simon (later Sir Simon) Baskerville, a fellow of the College of Physicians and a physician with a

¹⁷⁷Humphrey W. Woolrych, *A Series of the Lords Chancellors, Keepers of the Great Seal, Masters of the Rolls, Vice-Chancellors, Chief Justices and Judges* (London: J. & W. T. Clarke, 1826), pp. 34, 37; and ODNB, "George Croke."

¹⁷⁸London Record Society 29 (1993): 236; Alexander Croke, 2:827; TNA, E.179.146/394, f. 5 (1599); E.179.147/498, f. 6a (1621); and the records of the baptism of his children in July 1613, June 1614, and August 1616 (SDW, *PR*, MS. 10, 342). Croke may thus possibly have met Donne during the period of Donne's service at Lincoln's Inn. For his presence in the parish during Donne's time as Vicar, see SDW, *ChA*, II, 196b, 313b, 336b; and III, 379a, 416a. He was still resident in the parish in 1638 (T. C. Dale, ed., *The Inhabitants of London in 1638* [London: The Society of Genealogists, 1931], p. 230).

¹⁷⁹Croke was the figure, we recall, who approved the terms for the Lecturer for the parish early in 1622. White deemed Croke "my very dear and kind Freind" and first made him executor, then subsequently overseer of his will (Sampson, pp. 29–30, 33). For Justice Croke and the election of the parish Lecturer, see especially, SDW, *ChA*, II, 196b; III, 393b; and *VM*, I, 149, where he appears first in the list of those granting approval. In his own will, Croke left a bequest of £100 to the library of Sion College, which White founded (Edward Foss, *The Judges of England*, 9 vols. [1848–1864; rpt., New York: AMS Press, 1966], 6:296).

¹⁸⁰Bald, *A Life*, pp. 414–415.

¹⁸¹Bald, *A Life*, p. 459.

large fashionable practice.¹⁸² Baskerville was close to Sir George, from whom he ultimately bought his residence, and Donne is most likely to have been well acquainted with him.¹⁸³ To begin, Baskerville served with Donne's friend, Dr. Simeon Foxe, as personal physician to Donne's patron, the Earl of Dorset, at the end of his life.¹⁸⁴ He likewise enjoyed connections with Donne's associates at St. Paul's. When Donne's fellow residentiary Thomas Winniff compounded for the Prebend of Mora in November 1624, Baskerville acted as one of his sureties, and at the end of his life Baskerville was buried in St. Paul's.¹⁸⁵ Nor is there any doubt that he was one of Donne's steady auditors at St. Dunstan's, for he maintained a pew there in St. Anne's Chapel.¹⁸⁶ We can thus be reasonably sure that Baskerville was a member of the congregation whom Donne came to know well through his ministry.

Less expected (and unremarked by Bald and Whitlock) is the reference in late December 1624 to payments to a workman for painting "the Earle of Dorsetts pewe."¹⁸⁷ Equally provocative is the presence of Henry Grey, the eighth Earl of Kent. Bald confesses that Donne's

¹⁸²By the 1630s, Baskerville was reputed to be seeing a hundred patients per week (*ODNB*, "Sir Simon Baskerville"; and *SDW*, *ChA*, III, 457a [c. 1630]). He follows Sir George in the list of landholders in an assessment dated September, 19 James I (1621); and in 1638 his is the second name following Sir George (TNA, E.179.147/498, f. 6a; and Dale, ed., *Inhabitants of London in 1638*, p. 230).

¹⁸³For Baskerville's residence, see his will (PCC, 88 Evelyn).

¹⁸⁴George C. Williamson, *Lady Anne Clifford, Countess of Dorset, Pembroke & Montgomery. 1590–1676*, 2nd. ed. (1922; rpt., Wakefield, Yorkshire: S. R. Publishers, 1967), p. 143. Equally significant, Baskerville was admitted to Lincoln's Inn in March 1625, drawing him closer to Donne's acquaintances there (Lincoln's Inn, *Admissions from A. D. 1420 to A. D. 1799*, p. 197).

¹⁸⁵For Winniff, see TNA, E.334/17, f. 30b, which records Baskerville as living in the parish of St. Dunstan's in the West. Since another of Donne's intimates and fellow prebends, Henry King, had been chaplain to Richard Sackville, Donne's patron, Baskerville was very likely friendly with two of Donne's closest associates at St. Paul's (*Sermons of Henry King*, ed. Hobbs, p. 48). Dugdale printed Baskerville's memorial plaque in the cathedral (*The History of Saint Paul's Cathedral in London*, ed. Henry Ellis [London: Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor, and Jones, 1818], pp. 70–71).

¹⁸⁶*SDW*, *ChA*, III, 371b, 393b.

¹⁸⁷*SDW*, *ChA*, II, 247b.

friendship with the Earl and his father is obscure. Nonetheless, they were sufficiently close for the seventh Earl to present Donne to the rectory of Blunham in Bedfordshire in 1622.¹⁸⁸ Bald stresses the periodic retreats of both Earls to their country estate at Wrest, where Donne resided when he preached at Blunham.¹⁸⁹ He failed to mention, however, that both father and son also resided in the parish of St. Dunstan's.

The Earls of Kent had occupied a portion of the former buildings of the Priory of the Whitefriars from the time of the dissolution.¹⁹⁰ Admittedly a region of mixed character, Whitefriars in Donne's time still boasted a gentry and aristocratic population. Stow averred that "[i]n place of this Friers Church, bee now many faire houses builded, lodgings for Noblemen and other."¹⁹¹ Thus Sir Charles Morrison and his wife were to be found there, in whose house the future Marquis of Worcester was born in 1613—likewise the Earls of Kent and their families throughout the early seventeenth century.¹⁹² Thus, at any given time Donne preached at St. Dunstan's to many members of the merchant elite and to a large number of gentry and titled figures, among them two of

¹⁸⁸Bald, *A Life*, pp. 412–413; he prints a letter of 1622 showing that Donne was well acquainted with the seventh Earl (d. 1623) and the eighth Earl and his wife and notes that he had been acquainted with Charles Grey, the seventh Earl, by 1620. Yet Donne's association with the family may go back decades. The widow of Reynold Grey, the "*de jure*" fifth Earl of Kent, married Sir John Wingfield as her second husband, whose death in the Cadiz expedition of 1596 inspired one of Donne's early epigrams; the seventh Earl, moreover, entered Gray's Inn early in 1588, where he would have met a number of Donne's friends, among them William Strachey and Henry Wotton (G. E. Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, 13 vols., rev. Vicary Gibbs and ed. H. A. Doubleday and Lord Howard de Walden (London: St. Catherine Press, 1910–1940), 7:170–175.

¹⁸⁹Bald, *A Life*, p. 499.

¹⁹⁰L. W. Cowie, "Whitefriars in London," *History Today* 25 (1975): 438.

¹⁹¹*Survey of London* (1633), p. 438. The Earls' mansion was located near the Temple gate (Walter George Bell, *Fleet Street in Seven Centuries* [London: Sir I. Pitman & Sons, 1912], pp. 252, 280–281).

¹⁹²See the entry on 30 May 1610 for the baptism of "Katherine daughter of S^r William Dorrington knight [out of] S^r Charles Morisons" (SDW, *PR*, MS. 10, 342), marked in the margin, "ffriers." Henry, the eighth Earl, died at his mansion in Whitefriars in 1639 (Cokayne, 7:174). Richard Gregorie, "Servant to my Lord of Kent," was buried at St. Dunstan's "out of the ffriers" on 20 May 1628 (SDW, *PR*, MS. 10, 344).

his most important patrons, patrons specifically mentioned in his will. The presence of the Earl of Kent in the parish similarly suggests the at least occasional presence of John Selden. By 1622, Selden was the friend of both Donne and Sir Henry Goodyer, and after 1623 he served as steward to Henry Grey, the eighth Earl. Consequently, on any given Sunday, Selden may also have been found in the congregation together with the Earl or his wife, Lady Ruthyn, to whom Selden was devoted.¹⁹³

Donne's involvement with his parish, in the event, remained especially strong throughout the period 1626–1628. The Vestry, as we have seen, was in complete disarray and met not at all at the beginning of 1626; but Donne attended all the major meetings of the Vestry for the rest of the year. There is, in fact, a distinct pattern: Donne conscientiously attends the official quarterly meetings of the Vestry, characteristically missing only the meetings labelled "General Meetings" in the *Vestry Minutes*. Thus, in 1627, he attended all of the regular meetings of the Vestry; and in 1628 he attended at least two of the vestry meetings, but none of the "general" meetings.¹⁹⁴ These are years, too, in

¹⁹³Bald flags the shared friendships with Goodyer and documents the clear association with Selden, the future Earl, and Lady Ruthyn in 1622 (*A Life*, pp. 412–413, 438, 523). For Selden's association with Henry Grey and his wife, see *Brief Lives, chiefly of Contemporaries, set down by John Aubrey, between the Years 1669 & 1696*, ed. Andrew Clark, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), 2:220–221; and David Sandler Berkowitz, *John Selden's Formative Years: Politics and Society in Early Seventeenth-Century England* (Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1988), pp. 31, 65, who attributes the association in part to the nearness of the Inner Temple to the Grey's residence in White Friars. After 1623, Selden apparently spent his summers and even larger periods at Wrest. Donne regularly visited his patron and his patron's son and wife there during his summer travels to Blunham, where the Earls characteristically spent part of their summers (Michael P. Parker, "To my friend G. N. from Wrest: Carew's Secular Masque," in *Classic and Cavalier: Essays on Jonson and the Sons of Ben*, eds. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth [Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1982], pp. 172–174; and Bald, *A Life*, p. 499). Donne and Selden thus undoubtedly met often in the Earl's company in London as well as at Wrest.

¹⁹⁴Whitlock marks Donne's absence at all meetings noted in the *Vestry Minutes* without distinguishing between meetings of the closed Vestry and meetings called "general" meetings, involving other members of the parish for election to parish and ward offices. Although no attendance is listed for

which he takes a greater part in preaching on memorial occasions at St. Dunstan's, preaching the Michaelmas sermon in Adams's gift in September 1627 in addition to the memorial sermon for Robert Jenkinson the following December, and two more in Adams's "guifte" in 1628.¹⁹⁵ When we combine the references to the sermons with those of the Vestry meetings, we can trace interactions between Donne and St. Dunstan's during most months in 1626, 1627, and the first half of 1628.

There are some peculiarities. By the terms of Jenkinson's will, his memorial sermon and dinner were to take place on 2 December, but it was not uncommon in the 1620s for this event to be moved, seemingly to avoid a conflict with Communion Sunday.¹⁹⁶ But in 1627, Donne specifically chose to deliver the Jenkinson sermon *on* Communion Sunday, perhaps because it permitted him to conveniently combine

"general" meetings, it would appear that Donne commonly skipped the meetings in July which concerned the election of scavengers for the parish and the meetings in December which involved the election of men to serve as constables and on the Wardmote Inquest. Thus, in 1626, Donne skipped "general" meetings on 25 January, 31 July, and 19 December; nor was he present at either of the two general election meetings on 4 July and 19 December in 1627. In 1628, Donne attended the spring and summer quarterly meetings of the Vestry, missing the January and October meetings and all four "general" meetings on 28 February, 31 March, 25 July, 26 December, for which no records of attendance were kept (SDW, *VM*, I, 115–126). The records of 1627 are somewhat strange in that the Vestry clearly also met on 10 May to examine the Churchwardens' Accounts, which Donne signed, with a dinner following, although the meeting was not recorded in the *Vestry Minutes* (SDW, *VM*, I, 119–120; and *ChA*, II, 311a, 318a). This anomaly occurs periodically in the records; see, for example, n. 208 below, and the identical situation in 1623, when 13 Vestrymen gathered to audit the Churchwardens' Accounts, followed by a dinner; yet there, too, the meeting does not appear in the *Vestry Minutes* (SDW, *ChA*, II, 211a, 226b). Counting this meeting, Donne met with the Vestry five times in 1626 and four times in 1627, all the "regular" meetings of the closed Vestry.

¹⁹⁵Bald, *A Life*, pp. 497, 499, 504. Bald errs, however, in regarding Donne's sermon at St. Dunstan's on 20 May 1627 as a memorial sermon (*A Life*, p. 544); it was a festive sermon preached on Trinity Sunday (*Sermons*, 8:1). Timothy Prior was paid for the Adams sermon on the first Sunday in Trinity Term (SDW, *ChA*, II, 338a).

¹⁹⁶See, for example, SDW, *ChA*, II, 189a (4 December 1620), 213b (24 November 1622), 233a (4 December 1623), and 253a (28 November 1624).

events. The dinner was then delayed by two days, perhaps to insure that Donne could attend the annual dinner with the Vestry and “ancients.”¹⁹⁷

More variation appears in Donne’s activities in 1628, but it is equally evident that he remained deeply involved in parish affairs through the summer that year. On 20 January, he received a payment from the Churchwardens for seats in his new pews in accordance with his agreement with the Vestry. Since this was a Sunday, it seems likely that Donne was present, preaching at St. Dunstan’s that day.¹⁹⁸ It is not clear why Donne missed the Vestry meeting three days later, but from that point on he maintained his usual commitments until late summer, his heaviest recorded involvement running from April through July.¹⁹⁹

It is precisely in this period, in fact, that we discover a previously unnoticed activity involving Donne and leading members of his parish. Another well-to-do auditor of Donne’s sermons was Edward Latymer, one of the two common attorneys for the Court of Wards. Like Ravenscroft and Croke, Latymer had been a resident of the parish since the late sixteenth century. In 1600 he was living at “the Cock” in Fleet Street, not far from Lincoln’s Inn; but by 1615 he had moved to Ram Alley.²⁰⁰ He was buried at St. Dunstan’s late in January 1627, and the

¹⁹⁷SDW, *ChA*, II, 337a, 338a. Was Donne perhaps unable to attend a dinner on 2 December because of duties that day (the first Sunday in Advent) at St. Paul’s?

¹⁹⁸SDW, *ChA*, II, 330b. This is the more likely since other payments received by Donne for the pews were on other days of the week. For the dates of Sundays this year, see the record of receipts for communion Sundays in the Churchwardens’ Accounts (SDW, *ChA*, II, 337a). The records now suggest, moreover, that Donne characteristically devoted time to St. Dunstan’s each January, for he delivered at least one sermon there that month in 1625, 1626, and 1628 (as argued above), and his presence is recorded at a meeting there in January 1627 (Bald, *A Life*, pp. 542–543, 572–573).

¹⁹⁹Bald, *A Life*, p. 504; and SDW, *VM*, I, 122. One wonders if Donne missed the meeting of 23 January 1627/8 because it involved the election of new members to the Vestry. Another possible explanation is that he was preoccupied with preparing for a sermon at St. Paul’s on 27 January (Bald, *A Life*, p. 500), as was the case later in the same year (Bald, *A Life*, p. 508).

²⁰⁰SDW, *ChA*, II, 79a (1615). For Latymer’s life and career, see William Wheatley, *The History of Edward Latymer and His Foundations*, rev. ed. (Beccles: William Clowes & Sons, 1953). Donne is likely to have made his acquaintance early, for Latymer’s father had been Dean of Peterborough.

service must have been impressive.²⁰¹ In his will he requested 66 poor men to “attend my corpse to the grave” and to be buried “in some part of the south side Isle of the said church where I have usuallie attended divine service and sermons.”²⁰² He appointed “M^r Justice Croake” to be overseer of the will, and Donne became involved in his extensive legacies.²⁰³

According to the will, on 20 March 1625 Latymer had entered into an indenture conveying property in Fulham in perpetuity to the parish of St. Dunstan’s to support certain charities. Specifically, the land was “bargained sould enffeooffed and confirmed” (among others) unto “[blank] Dunn Doctor of Divinitie, vicar of the parrish church of S^t Dunstons in the West unto S^r Robert Rich knight [blank] Baskerville Doctor of Lawe,” as well as unto the two Churchwardens, leading members of the Vestry, and some friends living on Fleet Street.²⁰⁴

Latymer’s wish (carried out until the nineteenth century) was to have a dozen penny loaves of “good and wholesome wheaten bread” distributed at St. Dunstan’s “soone after morninge praiers” every Wednesday and Friday “for ever” to twelve “poore aged persons men and weomen.” These were the days on which the Litany was to be said publicly in every parish church, by order of the Prayer Book, and Latymer’s will assures us that this practice was carried out in Donne’s parish.²⁰⁵ In 1628, however, an

²⁰¹20 January 1626/7: “M^r Edw: Latimer was buried out of ffilet streete” (SDW, *PR*, MS. 10, 344).

²⁰²PCC, 15 Skynner. He was buried in St. Anne’s Chapel (SDW, *ChA*, II, 306b).

²⁰³PCC, 15 Skynner; and Wheatley, pp. 176–190. Wheatley identifies the “M^r Justice Croake” in Latymer’s will as Sir John Croke (p. 190 n.), but Sir John died in 1620 (*ODNB*, “Sir John Croke”). The overseer, in fact, is the Sir George Croke mentioned earlier, Sir John’s younger brother and Latymer’s neighbor on Fleet Street.

²⁰⁴Latymer’s original will has been lost. The surviving copy is dated 16 March, 22 James I (i. e., 1625); but the will was revised periodically (Wheatley, p. 183 n.). Latymer dates the indenture in question 20 March, 22 James I (1625), and the date is confirmed by mention of Hyde and Greene as the Churchwardens. They had been elected in April 1624 to serve for the following year (SDW, *VM*, I, 102).

²⁰⁵PCC, 15 Skynner. For the days and the importance of the wheaten bread, see Wheatley, p. 112.

adjustment was made to the original indenture. On 14 April that year, a new indenture was drawn up, assigning the lands in Fulham to new trustees. Sir George Croke was now named as the senior trustee, and Croke, “John Dunne Doctor of divinitie,” “Sir Robert Riche knight,” and Simon Baskerville (properly identified as “Doctor of Phisicke”), are the first four named in the indenture, together with the current Churchwardens (one being John Smethwick), various members of the Vestry, and a few additional members of the parish.²⁰⁶

As Bald details, this active participation was abruptly cut short by sickness. In August, Donne fell ill “in a full fever,” and was confined to his bed. As late as 18 November, he confesses to being “afrayed to put myself to y^e exercise of my poore function,” and admits he “should be sorry, if thys should make me a silenc’d minister.” At the same time, he confides that “I have tryed once, at S. Dunstans, since thys distemper overtooke me, and, I thanke God, not been the worse for yt.” This now missing sermon was most likely delivered in early November, and Donne’s absence from the Vestry meeting of 15 October was surely understood by all as owing to his weakened condition.²⁰⁷ The fact that he even attempted to deliver a sermon at St. Dunstan’s in this period demonstrates his steady concern to meet his obligations to the parish.

1629 is admittedly an odd year; even so, the reports of Whitlock and Bald are misleading. There was no meeting of the Vestry for some reason early in the year, and confusion exists about Donne’s presence or absence from the Vestry meeting on 20 May. His name is indeed absent from the list of those attending, but he signed the Churchwardens’ Accounts with

²⁰⁶TNA, C54/2756/20. The deed was enrolled on 28 May 1628. No record of this business involving Donne and the Vestrymen or the indenture appears in the *Vestry Minutes*, another indication of the unreliability of those records for establishing Donne’s full interactions with the parish. However, the Churchwardens’ Accounts record receipt of rents from Latymer’s Fulham properties for the use of the poor on 18 April 1628, one day before the Vestry Meeting attended by Donne (SDW, *ChA*, II, 336a).

²⁰⁷*Sermons*, 8:24–25. There were three Sundays in November when Donne may have preached before he penned his letter: 2 November (a Communion Sunday, perhaps the most likely), and 9 and 16 November. With the notable exception of the above mentioned sermon at St. Dunstan’s, Donne’s bout with extreme tonsillitis kept him from the pulpit from the end of the summer until the end of November in 1628 (Bald, *A Life*, pp. 510–512).

the Vestrymen that day and thus certainly met with them at some point.²⁰⁸ Claiming Donne's absence from the next Vestry meeting on 4 June and some subsequent meetings, Whitlock becomes frustrated and can find nothing which would "explain his absence from all further meetings of the year." But Donne may very well have been present at the Vestry meeting in June: Whitlock fails to mention that the minutes for that meeting merely offer brisk descriptions of the business conducted then and provide no list of those attending.²⁰⁹ There may also be a reason for Donne's earlier absence. The meeting on 20 May also involved the election of new men to the Vestry. Donne, as I suggested in an earlier case, may not have wished to participate in that discussion. If so, the Vestry may have met first to deal with the Churchwardens' Accounts, and Donne may then simply have absented himself for the portion of the meeting involving the election. It is thus quite possible that Donne did in fact meet with the Vestry on every "official" occasion in 1629, just as he had in the past.²¹⁰ Whitlock's insistence on "no reason" for Donne's absences at other meetings during the year once again needs to be qualified. For some reason, there were only two official meetings of the closed Vestry in 1629, the two considered above; no meetings were held in the fall. The records in fact reveal an unprecedented development. Eight meetings are noted during the calendar year, but six of those eight meetings were "general" meetings, the very meetings Donne rarely attended. Donne, therefore, probably maintained the same patterns in 1629 as in the previous three years.²¹¹

But St. Dunstan's did experience disruption in the clerical staff in 1629. By April, the curate, Timothy Prior, had fallen seriously ill.²¹² This

²⁰⁸SDW, *ChA*, III, 357b, 361a; and Whitlock, "St. Dunstan's—II." Especially important is the fact that the *Vestry Minutes* explicitly state that "At this Vestrie alsoe the severall accompts of John Smithwick and Henry Parkinson late Churchwardens . . . ending at Easter last were by the Vestrimen then present Cast up and exammned" (SDW, *VM*, I, 128).

²⁰⁹SDW, *VM*, I, 128; and Whitlock, "St. Dunstan's—II." Bald simply repeats Whitlock's information, claiming Donne "is not known . . . to have attended a vestry meeting" (*A Life*, p. 512), despite the entry in the minutes cited above.

²¹⁰SDW, *VM*, I, 128; and n. 199 above.

²¹¹See n. 194 above; and SDW, *VM*, I, 127–131.

²¹²See the gift of 40 shillings from the Junior Churchwarden to Prior on 9 April "in respect of his sickness" (SDW, *ChA*, III, 360b). Prior had been well in

accounts for the curious entry for Sunday, 12 April: “given to M^r Martin the Preacher by Consent of y^e Common Councell men and M^r Smithwicke for a sermon there made by him when the preacher appointed failed.”²¹³ Prior was, in fact, fatally weakened, and “M^r Timothy Prior Curat [sic] of this Church” was buried on 23 April.²¹⁴ In his will, probated less than a week later, he left his copy of St. Augustine’s “De Ciuitate Dei in English” to his “loueing friend M^r Richard Wotton,” a leading member of the Vestry, and also made the following curious request:

And my bodie I bequeath to the earth to bee buried (by the
leau of Docto^r Donn) as neere vnto the Pulpitt post as may
bee that I maye touch it.²¹⁵

The pulpit intended was undoubtedly Donne’s newly reoriented pulpit. Whether Prior’s request was owing to his fondness for the pulpit from which he himself often preached, or was a testimony to his admiration for Donne’s passionate preaching there, it is impossible to determine. But the request suggests an amiable relationship.²¹⁶ Once again Cuthbert Clarke took over the task of reading Morning Prayer at St. Dunstan’s, and the Vestry concerned itself with helping Prior’s widow and children.²¹⁷

the middle of March, when he delivered one of the memorial sermons (SDW, *ChA*, III, 360b).

²¹³SDW, *ChA*, III, 360b.

²¹⁴SDW, *PR*, MS. 10, 344; and *ChA*, III, 364a.

²¹⁵The will of Timothy Prior, “Clarke and Curate of the parish Church of S^t Dunstan in the West London” was probated on 29 April 1629 (PCC, 31 Ridley). Prior made Wotton, now one of the Common Councilmen, and his uncle, Leonard Ward of Lincoln’s Inn, overseers of the will.

²¹⁶Donne’s other clerical colleague, Henry Valentine, was certainly impressed with Donne’s preaching: “*Divinity*,” he wrote, “Lost such a *Trump* as even to *Extasie* / Could charme the Soule, and had an *Influence* / To teach best *judgements*, and please dullest *Sense*” (“*An Elegie upon the incomparable D^r Donne*,” in *The Poems of John Donne*, ed. Herbert J. C. Grierson, 2 vols. (1912; rpt., London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 1:375.

²¹⁷“[W]iddow Prior” received a generous present of 20 shillings from the Senior Churchwarden on 9 July; on 22 December she received a further gift of 20 shillings “in her sicknes” [sic]. She died the following January, leaving

This time, the Vestry or Donne (or both) took their time in selecting a new Curate. By the end of the year, however, they had chosen Richard Wyse (or Wise), who took over the reading of Morning Prayer and the delivery of the memorial sermons early in 1630.²¹⁸ But curates at St. Dunstan's did not fare well in this period. On 14 August, mere months after assuming his new position, "M^r Richard Wise Curatt [sic] of this Church was buried out of Hercules Pillers."²¹⁹ Clarke reassumed the duties of reading Morning Prayer, and sometime during the fall of 1630, William Dillingham was chosen to take Pryor's place.²²⁰

At best, Donne could only have been lightly acquainted with these last two curates, though his engagements with the Vestry early in 1630 indicate that he had undoubtedly met and served some with Wyse during that time. Donne may well, in fact, have maintained his basic patterns throughout the first half of 1630, except when business and family matters intervened, for he attended the quarter meetings of the Vestry on 20 January and 21 April 1630, and the missed meetings with the Vestry in May and June have plausible explanations.²²¹ As Evelyn Simpson pointed out, his absence from the meeting on 20 May "may easily be explained by the pressure of other business," in this case extensive work

children in the care of the parish, and a special collection was taken for them (SDW, *ChA*, III, 372b, 374a, 388b; and *PR*, MS. 10, 344).

^{218a}"M^r Wise" was recommending payments to poor ministers (as Gray and Prior had before him) by 6 November 1629. On 2 April 1630, he was paid for reading morning prayers "this quarter," and he preached his first sermons in Adams's gift in Easter term and Midsummer term 1630 (SDW, *ChA*, III, 375b–376a, 379b, 380b, 388b). A "Mr. Martin," however, was also preaching in the parish in 1629 (SDW, *ChA*, III, 379b).

²¹⁹SDW, *PR*, MS. 10, 344; and *ChA*, III, 385a.

²²⁰Clarke was paid ten shillings for reading Morning Prayer "from the tyme that M^r Wyse died" on 1 October 1630, and he continued to be paid for that service for the rest of the year (SDW, *ChA*, III, 391a, 392a). One month later, on 2 November, Dillingham is paid "for preaching in the vacacion" and is paid for various sermons during the following months. By 1 December, he is recommending payments to poor ministers as previous curates had done; in February 1630/1 he is paid for delivering the sermon in Hilary term in Adams's gift; and finally, on 1 May 1631, he is officially called "M^r Dillingham y^e Curate" (*ChA*, III, 393a, 400a–b, 401a, 408b).

²²¹Bald, *A Life*, p. 514; and SDW, *VM*, I, 134–135.

with the Court of Delegates and at Charterhouse.²²² Donne's absence from the Vestry meeting on 23 June, meanwhile, has an even more natural explanation: the marriage of his daughter Constance to Samuel Harvey the very next day at Camberwell. Donne was undoubtedly with his daughter, engaged in final preparations for the wedding.²²³ The missed meetings, therefore, were quite possibly owing to circumstance and have nothing to do with a lessening of Donne's interest in the parish. The date of his daughter's marriage likewise indicates that Donne almost certainly did not miss the meeting in June because of his health. Walton maintained that Donne did not fall ill until August 1630, and he is surely right.²²⁴ Donne intended to return to London and resume his customary patterns, which is why the Vestry could confidently instruct a parishioner to return at the fall quarterly meeting of the Vestry to renew a lease, when Donne was expected to be present.²²⁵

The records of St. Dunstan's thus provide an unusually rich sense of Donne's concerns, experiences, and associations within the parish, and previously unreported references significantly expand and enhance our knowledge of his activities. We would love to know more about his specific preaching activities there, but had Donne himself not preserved a number of the sermons delivered at St. Dunstan's, we would know far less. The parish records are silent about all normal preaching by its salaried clerics. Walton's testimony, however, that in the "latter part of his life . . . he usually preached once a week, if not oftner," should be borne in mind.²²⁶ A good amount of that preaching must have taken place at St. Dunstan's, and it was probably deeply passionate at the outset. Donne confessed in the *Devotions* that he felt like Lazarus,

²²²*Sermons*, 9:31; and SDW, *ChA*, III, 376b, 377a. Donne was appointed judge in cases in the Court of Delegates on 4 and 7 May, and was again involved with committees at Charterhouse on the 12th of that month, slightly more than a week before the Vestry meeting on 20 May (Bald, *A Life*, p. 546; and Robert Evans, "John Donne, Governor of Charterhouse," *John Donne Journal* 8 [1989]: 145–146). He also may have preached at St. Paul's on Whitsunday, 16 May (*Sermons*, 9:30–31).

²²³Bald, *A Life*, pp. 515–516, 518; SDW, *VM*, I, 136–137; and Whitlock, "St. Dunstan's—II."

²²⁴Walton, *Lives*, p. 60.

²²⁵SDW, *VM*, I, 137.

²²⁶Walton, *Lives*, p. 67.

released from the tomb. He had felt the hand of God in his sickness, and he firmly believed that he had been miraculously saved to do God's work.²²⁷ It was with a renewed zeal that he came to the pulpit at St. Dunstan's, and more than a few who experienced his passionate performances in the pulpit must have been deeply moved. According to "Mr. Chidley, a frequent hearer of his Sermons," he made a religious life more awe inspiring than a life of sin: "*Have you seen crimes so shap't, or loveliness / Such as his lips did clothe Religion in?*"²²⁸ Henry Valentine, his associate at St. Dunstan's, ventured that "if each *Priest* of God shine as a *Starre*, / His *Glory* is as his *Gifts*, 'bove others farre."²²⁹ "Forget his powerfull preaching," exclaimed Izaak Walton, one of the parishioners about whom we know the most, "so should my gratitude, / My vowes of gratitude should so be broke." "I am his *Convert*," he insisted.²³⁰ He can hardly have been the only one so affected.

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²²⁷Bald, *A Life*, p. 453.

²²⁸Walton, *Lives*, p. 49.

²²⁹Valentine, "*An Elegie upon the incomparable D^r Donne*," 1:375.

²³⁰Walton, "*An Elegie upon D^r Donne*," in *Poems of Donne*, ed. Grierson, 1:377.