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Edmund Dudley and the Church

by STEVEN GUNN

Edmund Dudley, minister of Henry VII, was a man both personally extraordinary and yet representative of his age. He abandoned the normal *cursus honorum* of the legal profession to enter the king's service more suddenly than any of his contemporaries; yet he was one of many common lawyers newly influential in the king's councils of the later fifteenth and earlier sixteenth centuries. He was probably the only layman in Henry's inner circle to have studied at a university; yet within fifty years of his death most English statesmen of the first rank would have done so. In pursuing the king's interests, Dudley generated sufficient animosity to make himself one of the two scapegoats for Henry's policies tried and executed in 1509–10; yet it was more his manner, his efficiency and his political isolation than any difference of intent that distinguished him from Henry's other ministers. In pursuing his own interests he built a large landed estate faster than any of his colleagues, but their aims and eventual achievements were not so different from his. The one respect in which Dudley was unique was that he had leisure, while under arrest in the Tower of London, to commit to paper his thoughts on English government and society. The resulting treatise, *The tree of commonwealth*, enables us to juxtapose his stated ideals with his actions as a royal minister and as an influential layman. Thereby we may hope to shed new light on the relations between Church, State and lay elites on the eve of the English Reformation.[1]

I am grateful to Susan Brigden, Jeremy Catto, Cliff Davies and Diarmaid MacCulloch for their comments on earlier drafts of this article.

[1] Edmund Dudley, *The tree of commonwealth*, ed. D. M. Brodie, Cambridge 1948. On Dudley's career and its context see Brodie's introduction; A. B. Emden, *A biographical register of the university of Oxford to AD 1500*, Oxford 1957–9, i. 597–8; E. W. Ives, *The common lawyers of pre-Reformation England: Thomas Kebell: a case study*, Cambridge 1983; M. M. Condon, 'Ruling elites in the reign of Henry VII', in C. D. Ross (ed.), *Patronage, pedigree and power in later medieval England*, Gloucester 1979, 109–42; S. J. Gunn, 'The accession of Henry VIII', *Historical Research* lxiv (1991), 278–88; D. M. Loades, *John Dudley, duke of*

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The tree of commonwealth has a good deal to say about the Church and its clergy, as one might expect given its attempt to comprehend the entire body politic within its metaphorical tree and its delivery of bracing moral exhortation to all the tree's limbs. Dudley began with the king's duty towards the Church. He was to be 'that Catholike king that shall… support and meyntein his Churche and the trew faith therof in all rightes as farr as in hym lyeth'.[2] He was to use his patronage within the Church to advance those who were 'both conning and vertuouse, and speciallie vertuouse'.[3] He was to avoid simony, for simoniacs 'shall neuer do good in there cures, and be but the distroiers of the Churche of Christe'.[4] He should be wary in acting on the recommendations of patrons, even those from his council and household. At best he would restore free election to ecclesiastical dignities and refrain even from supporting candidates with letters of recommendation. He should cease to ask his subjects, spiritual and temporal, to grant him the appointment to livings in their gift. He should discourage pluralism and non-residence, especially amongst prelates. He should put a stop to the appropriation of benefices to religious corporations and the union of religious houses, a process which threatened to 'distroie the honor of the Churche of England'.[5] Lastly, he should encourage the universities and their students, 'and specially divines, for thei decaie fast'.[6]

Addressing the clergy, Dudley did not question their jurisdiction over lay morals. In addition to praying and preaching, he urged them 'boldly and straightly to ponissh synne according to ther auctorite and dewtie'; he also insisted that the king should 'put to his mightie hand to thelpe and reformacion thereof' if 'ther be any sturdie or obstynate persons in his realme [that] will frowardly disobey ther ordenaries in the cawse of God'.[7] He reminded clerics of their canonical duty to divide their income between housekeeping, building repairs and charity rather than spend it on lands or marriages for their kinsfolk. He urged them to keep themselves distinct from the laity in their 'apparell and iesture' and even in the behaviour and clothing of their servants.[8] Rather than cultivate ruthless landlordship and elaborate nepotism, the promotion of 'yong schollers of x or xij years of age righte nere of your blood', he wished prelates to

Northumberland 1504–1553, Oxford 1996, 1–16. The last doubts that Dudley attended Oxford but does not consider Emden's evidence. Dudley would not have been by any means unique had he done so: T. A. R. Evans, 'The numbers, origins and careers of students', in J. I. Catto and T. A. R. Evans (eds), *History of the university of Oxford*, II*: Late medieval Oxford*, Oxford 1992, 521–2. Recent treatments of Dudley's ideas include Q. R. D. Skinner, *The foundations of modern political thought*, Cambridge, 1978, ii. 55–6; N. Wood, *Foundations of political economy: some early Tudor views on state and society*, Berkeley, CA 1994, 70–89; D. R. Starkey, 'England', in R. Porter and M. Teich (eds), *The Renaissance in national context*, Cambridge 1992, 152.

[2] Dudley, *Tree*, 24. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid. 24–5, 57, 103; for what follows see pp. 24–6. [5] Ibid. 26. [6] Ibid. 26. [7] Ibid. 32, 43. [8] Ibid. 43.

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advance clerical education, above all in the universities.[9] 'Loke well vpon your two vnyuersyties' he urged, 'how famouse thei haue ben and in what condicion thei be now.'[10] Young scholars should be funded; worthy scholars, 'suche as be vertuous and conning and not gyven to fleasshelynes', should be promoted; old scholars should be encouraged to go on studying.[11] To all his readers Dudley stressed the biblical principle that charitable deeds and devotions were best done in such a way as not to seek worldly honour by them. This he contrasted with the contemporary habit of marking pious gifts with 'scutchions, badges or scriptures, or both ... to declare openly the doers therof'.[12] Such behaviour threatened to induce sinful vainglory, identified in Dudley's cumbersome arboreal metaphor as 'the pestiferous core of this holsome fruite of good example and of all other good workes don by any person, spirituall or temporall'.[13]

These suggestions, though perhaps unrealistic, might seem uncontroversial. The king swore to defend the Church at his coronation, and the beneficent exercise of strong royal leadership in the Church seems to have been an accepted feature of English religious life in the fifteenth century, as it was for the continental princes on whom Henry VII perhaps modelled himself in this respect.[14] Despite the formalities of provision and election, most Englishmen would presumably have agreed with Dudley that it was the king who 'doth appoint and make the bisshopps' and even that keeping negligent prelates up to the mark was part of the king's duty towards 'his maker and redeamer of whome he hath all his power and auctorite'.[15] The problem of the appropriation of parochial livings to religious houses had been aired in the anglo-papal concordat of 1418 and was prominent in Archbishop Chichele's implementation of that concordat's reform provisions.[16] The issues of clerical conduct on which Dudley focused were virtually identical to those addressed by John Colet in his convocation sermon of 1510, a sermon of which the contents might even have been known to Dudley, who was following events in the parallel parliamentary session closely.[17] While there was certainly room for

[9] Ibid. 65–6. [10] Ibid. 62. [11] Ibid. 62–4. [12] Ibid. 73–5.
[13] Ibid. 77.
[14] L. G. Wickham Legg, *English coronation records*, Westminster 1901, 230; J. I. Catto, 'Religious change under Henry V', in G. L. Harriss (ed.), *Henry V: the practice of kingship*, Oxford 1985, 97–115, and 'The king's government and the fall of Pecock, 1457–58', in R. E. Archer and S. K. Walker (eds), *Rulers and ruled in late medieval England: essays presented to Gerald Harriss*, London 1995, 201–22; A. Goodman, 'Henry VII and Christian renewal', in K. Robbins (ed.), *Religion and humanism* (Studies in Church History xvii, 1981), 115–25.
[15] Dudley, *Tree*, 32.
[16] E. F. Jacob, *Archbishop Henry Chichele*, London, 1967, 40–1.
[17] *English historical documents*, V: *1485–1558*, ed. C. H. Williams, London 1971, 652–60; J. B. Gleason, *John Colet*, Berkeley, CA 1989, 181–4; *Letters and papers, foreign and domestic, of the reign of Henry VIII*, ed. J. S. Brewer, J. Gairdner and R. H. Brodie, London 1862–1932, i/1, no. 559.

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improvement, most of the English clergy of Dudley's and Colet's day seem to emerge fairly well from examination by these stern criteria.[18] Even the bishops were as practised educational benefactors as they were nepotists.[19] Nor was Dudley immune to the idea that exceptional causes might make abuses such as pluralism and non-residence necessary, notably for those leading prelates whose 'presens may not be forborne about the kinges person for his greate honor or for the comon wealth of the realme'.[20]

Though Dudley's sharp denunciation of simony placed him in the company of the Lollards, the Hussites and the advocates of the Devotio Moderna, it fitted equally well with the reforming agenda of the Council of Constance and the concordats that followed.[21] In other respects too his theology was impeccably orthodox, featuring not only the sinfulness of man, the grace of God, and the unpredictability of death, but also the merits of good works, the holiness of the saints, and the miracles of the Virgin.[22] As his closing exhortation to the clergy shows, he valued their ministrations highly. If they followed his advice, God would greet them with the words:

> 'Now come to me, my blyssyd pristes, [on] whose heades my holy vnction was not lost. Ye haue consecratyd my verie bodie with unpollutyd soules … Therfor I will make you my parfytt priest[es] for euer after myn owne order … and constytute you for euer fellooes to myn appostelles, whose stepps you haue followid.'[23]

Departure from such orthodoxy Dudley viewed with distaste, warning the commons that they should not 'smatter in matters of dyvynite lest th'infection of heresies crepe in with all'.[24] Even inattention 'at mattens and masse', a symptom of members of the governing classes unhealthily obsessed with 'delectacion in worldly prosperitie', met with Dudley's reproof.[25]

[18] C. Harper-Bill, 'Dean Colet's convocation sermon and the pre-Reformation Church in England', *History* lxxiii (1988), 191–210.

[19] F. Heal, *Of prelates and princes: a study of the economic and social position of the Tudor episcopate*, Cambridge 1980, 35, 44, 68, 96–8, 330–2; J. A. F. Thomson, *The early Tudor Church and society, 1485–1529*, London 1993, 53, 68–70; H. Jewell, 'English bishops as educational benefactors in the later fifteenth century', in R. B. Dobson (ed.), *The Church, patronage and politics in the fifteenth century*, Gloucester 1984, 146–67.

[20] Dudley, *Tree*, 25.

[21] J. Van Engen, 'Late medieval anticlericalism; the case of the new devout', and 'Anticlericalism among the Lollards', in P. A. Dykema and H. A. Oberman (eds), *Anticlericalism in late medieval and early modern Europe*, Leiden 1993, 28, 54; F. Smahel, 'The Hussite critique of the clergy's civil dominion', ibid. 85–6; P. H. Stump, *The reforms of the Council of Constance (1414–18)*, Leiden 1994, 72–5, 102–3, 140, 150, 177, 201–3; E. Delaruelle, E.-R. Labande and P. Ourliac, *L'Église au temps du grand schisme et de la crise conciliaire (1378–1449)*, Paris 1962–4, 212, 348–9, 410.

[22] Dudley, *Tree*, 69–86.

[23] Ibid. 100–1.

[24] Ibid. 58.

[25] Ibid. 78.

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At one level, then, Dudley's comments were commonplace. Yet many of them had a very specific context in the last years of Henry VII's reign. Simony was an issue on the king's mind and on the minds of others at court. In 1504 Henry, anxious about the state of his soul, obtained from the pope a ratification of any decisions made by the king's confessor about illicit receipts for simony.[26] The issue was also addressed in John Skelton's play *The nigromancer*, performed before the king at Woodstock on Palm Sunday 1504 and subsequently printed by Wynkyn de Worde.[27] Legislation against simony was passed in the Canterbury convocation of 1510.[28] The accounts of the treasurer of the king's chamber suggest the cause of such concern. Archbishop Savage of York bid 100 marks in 1501 for the king's favour in the appointment of a prior at Cartmel. Thomas Jane paid 2,000 marks for restitution of his temporalities on his promotion to the bishopric of Norwich in 1499, 'offred of his owne fre wyll after his bill was signed for his temp[er]altees' as the treasurer of the chamber was careful to note in his accounts.[29] The king's engrossing of churchmen's patronage was also a cause for friction, Bishop Oliver King of Bath and Wells complaining to Sir Reynold Bray, chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster, of the ill-effects of Henry's appointment of a non-resident precentor of Wells Cathedral.[30] Meanwhile the issues of non-residence by prelates and the king's motivation in their selection were raised by the new preponderance of lawyers, canon and above all civil, amongst those appointed to bishoprics after 1485.[31] Here royal policy perhaps exacerbated the comparative decline, lamented by Dudley, of talented students pressing on with higher studies in theology: law was the route to the top, and in the second half of the fifteenth century law students at Oxford moved from rough equality with theologians to outnumber them two to one.[32] Debate may have been sharpened by the radical example of pastoral activism and theological scholarship set by John Fisher, promoted to Rochester in 1504 for what Henry called 'the great and singular virtue

[26] *Calendar of entries in the papal registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, xviii, ed. M. J. Haren, Dublin 1989, no. 120.

[27] W. R. Streitberger, *Court revels, 1485–1559*, Toronto 1994, 58–9.

[28] Gleason, *Colet*, 370; *Registrum Ricardi Mayew, episcopi Herefordensis*, ed. A. T. Bannister (Canterbury and York Society xxvii, 1921), 107–8. There was also legislation on clerical dress, another topic addressed by Dudley.

[29] BL, MS Additional 21480, fos 154r, 180v.

[30] J. A. Robinson, 'Correspondence of Bishop Oliver King and Sir Reginald Bray', *Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society* lx (ii) (1915), 5–6.

[31] Thomson, *Early Tudor Church*, 47.

[32] Evans, 'Numbers, origins and careers of students', 497n.; S. L. Greenslade, 'The faculty of theology', in J. McConica (ed.), *History of the university of Oxford*, III: *The collegiate university*, Oxford 1986, 304–5.

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that I know and see in him'.[33] More of Henry's bishops matched the description he provided of Warham on his appointment to Canterbury:

> a substanciall and discrete man, enduyd with vertu and kunnyng, and wordely wysedom as shalbe mete therunto, and habyle nott only to execute the charge and cure thereof both spiritually and temporally to Godd's pleasure and to the well and honour of the saide Churche, but also, besides that, to doo unto us and our realme good and acceptabyll service.[34]

On two other matters of contemporary debate Dudley's views were rather more controversial. Dudley thought that clerics should not hold any temporal office, 'for therby most comonly is destroied the Churche and th'office'.[35] One wonders what reaction this opinion elicited if ever expressed at Henry's council table in the presence of William Warham, archbishop of Canterbury and lord chancellor, Richard Foxe, bishop of Winchester and lord privy seal, Roger Layburne, bishop of Carlisle and general surveyor of crown lands, and so on. It is possible, of course, that he would have regarded some of these offices, such as the chancellorship with its duties to the king's conscience in judicial matters, as more appropriate for clerics than others. On the other hand it is noticeable that Dudley himself was the first layman to act as president of the king's council.[36] He may perhaps also have had in mind the troubled presidency of the king's Council in the North of Thomas Savage, archbishop of York.[37] Dudley's concerns were shared by at least one contemporary, the king's astrologer, William Parron, and perhaps echoed the criticisms of clerical ministers made on occasion in the fourteenth century.[38]

Dudley would have enjoyed wider support for the contention that 'any manour of grudge' between the king's 'subiectes of the spiritualtie and his subiectes of the temporaltie for priuilege or liberties' might be 'stablisshed and reformyd' only by the king.[39] This placed him in the tradition of common lawyers who asserted the king's power over the Church as an aspect of his supreme jurisdiction within the realm, a tradition culminating in the works of Christopher St German and the statutes drafted by Thomas Cromwell.[40] In Henry's last years and onwards into

[33] S. Thompson, 'The bishop in his diocese', in B. Bradshaw and E. Duffy (eds), *Humanism, reform and the Reformation: the career of Bishop John Fisher*, Cambridge 1989, 67–80.
[34] HMC, *Eighth report*, appendix, pt 1, section ii, 331a–b. [35] Dudley, *Tree*, 25.
[36] *Select cases in the council of Henry VII*, ed. C. G. Bayne and W. H. Dunham (Selden Society lxxv, 1956), pp. xxxvii–xl.
[37] R. W. Hoyle, 'The earl, the archbishop and the council: the affray at Fulford, May 1504', in Archer and Walker, *Rulers and ruled*, 239–56.
[38] C. A. J. Armstrong, 'An Italian astrologer at the court of Henry VII', in his *England, France and Burgundy in the fifteenth century*, London 1983, 166; S. L. Waugh, *England in the Reign of Edward III*, Cambridge 1991, 216, 221. [39] Dudley, *Tree*, 41.
[40] J. A. Guy, 'Thomas Cromwell and the intellectual origins of the Henrician revolution', in A. Fox and J. A. Guy, *Reassessing the Henrician age*, Oxford 1986, 151–78.

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the first decades of his son's reign these ideas were put into effect by aggressive common lawyers on the king's council and the judicial bench. Churchmen were intimidated by prosecutions under the statutes of *praemunire* and provisors under the direction of attorneys-general Sir James Hobart and John Ernley. Privileges such as benefit of clergy and sanctuary were steadily eroded by the decisions of judges such as Sir John Fyneux, chief justice of king's bench.[41] Clerics fought back, contesting specific cases, arguing general principles and probably securing Hobart's dismissal as attorney-general.[42] Ernley, however, persevered not just with Hobart's general line of attack but even with the particular suits his predecessor had begun.[43]

Fiscal pressures on the Church also mounted under Henry. He levied clerical subsidies more intensively than any king since Henry v, amplified them with benevolences and forced loans, and added to them a wide range of other exactions, such as heavy fines for mortmain licences, for the restitution of temporalities, for the confirmation of privileges, for pardons for *praemunire* offences and so on.[44] These exactions bit deep. The dean and chapter of Wells had to pay the arrears of the former dean John Gunthorpe's contribution to the benevolence of 1491 in 1506 out of the lands he had left them to pray for his soul.[45] The abbot of Leicester reportedly had to sell a thousand marks' worth of timber and some of the abbey's old estates to pay the mortmain fine on newly-donated land.[46] This fiscalism, like Henry's simony and the judicial pressure on the Church, caused debate. At dinner on 28 April 1505, as he later admitted, the prior of Shouldham complained to his brother monks, 'I marvel the king's grace pillith us thus with these dismes.'[47] In the same year Richard Pynson printed an Italian work against excessive taxation of the Church, Celso Maffei's *Dissuasoria*, *ne christiani principes ecclesiasticos usurpent census*. This was a text circulated in manuscript in 1512 and perhaps earlier by Christopher Urswick, Henry's almoner, who also possessed a copy of the *Speculum Edwardi III*, written to defend the Church against that king's

[41] *The reports of Sir John Spelman*, ed. J. H. Baker (Selden Society xciii–xciv, 1977–8), ii. *66–8*, *327–45*; PRO, KB 9/455/108.

[42] *Spelman*, ii. *66–8*, *333–4*, *342–4*, *391*; M. J. Kelly, 'Canterbury jurisdiction and influence during the episcopate of William Warham, 1503–1532', unpubl. PhD diss. Cambridge 1963, 105–9.

[43] PRO, C 1/319/48.

[44] A. K. McHardy, 'Clerical tax collection in fifteenth-century England: the clergy as agents of the crown', in Dobson, *The Church, politics and patronage*, 168–92; A. Kreider, *English chantries: the road to dissolution*, Cambridge, Mass. 1979, 82; 'The petition of Edmund Dudley', ed. C. J. Harrison, *EHR* lxxxvii (1972), 87–90.

[45] *Report of the manuscripts of the dean and chapter of Wells*, ii (HMC report xii, 1914), 194–5, 204.

[46] PRO, C 1/330/7.

[47] *The Tudor constitution: documents and commentary*, ed. G. R. Elton, 2nd edn, Cambridge 1982, 62.

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extortions.[48] Urswick's stated admiration for Becket as a champion of the Church against the lay power foreshadowed that expressed by Warham twenty years later, as he faced prosecution under *praemunire* and elaborated a view of the history of Church–State relations in England in which all the kings who had infringed on the Church's liberties – Henry II, Edward III 'notwithstanding his grete conquestes and his grete triumphs', Richard II and Henry IV – 'wer punisshed by Godds hands with an ill deth in example of others to beware to make or to execute suche articles ageynst the liberties of Christes Church'.[49]

Whether churchmen privately expressed such opinions in Dudley's day we cannot tell, but they certainly made public complaint about infringements of the Church's liberties. They did so in the Canterbury convocation of 1504, and again in the presentation of an unsuccessful bill to secure those liberties in the parliament of 1510.[50] In 1497–8 some had been driven to an explicit repudiation of royal jurisdiction, driven on by Henry's resolve to move the burial place of his sainted uncle Henry VI from St George's Chapel, Windsor, to Westminster Abbey.[51] The canons of Windsor, led by Urswick as their dean, would not concede without a fight. Henry referred the matter to his council, but Urswick entered a formal protest against the council's jurisdiction over the matter. One of the dean's closest supporters amongst the canons was Richard Nykke, the future bishop of Norwich and enraged victim of Ernley and Hobart – whom he called 'an enemy of God and his Churche' – in their *praemunire* suits.[52] The dean and canons lost, but later received compensation from Henry VII's executors for the wrongs the king had done them.[53] Is it possible that the wrongs done to Urswick included his departure from the deanery, apparently without compensatory promotion elsewhere, in 1505, the same year in which the printing of Maffei's *Dissuasoria*, a printing in which Urswick 'may have taken a hand', implied criticism of royal policy towards the Church?[54]

Edmund Dudley was no mere spectator of these events. Indeed, both Polydore Vergil and the London chroniclers record that he and Sir Richard Empson were the objects of hostile preaching at Paul's Cross and elsewhere because they 'behaved as if they were plotting to snatch all lay

[48] J. B. Trapp, 'Christopher Urswick and his books: the reading of Henry VII's almoner', *Renaissance Studies* i (1987), 68–9.

[49] J. Moyes, 'Warham, an English primate on the eve of the Reformation', *Dublin Review* cxiv (1894), 407–10.

[50] Thomson, *Early Tudor Church*, 104; J. P. Cooper, 'Henry VII's last years reconsidered', *Historical Journal* ii (1959), 125.

[51] S. Anglo, *Images of Tudor kingship*, London, 1992, 67–8.

[52] J. N. Dalton, *The manuscripts of St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle*, Windsor 1937, 38–9; PRO, SC 1/44/83.

[53] Dalton, *Manuscripts*, 95.

[54] Emden, *Oxford*, iii. 1935–6; Trapp, 'Christopher Urswick', 69.

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and ecclesiastical wealth'; yet 'the more they were prechid agayn the more [they] vexyd the kyngis trewe subgectis'.[55] Dudley took a keen interest in the king's rights over his subjects, lay and clerical, throughout his career. As a reader at Gray's Inn he lectured on the *quo warranto* procedure, by which the king called lesser jurisdictions into question; in 1507 he borrowed from the king, presumably to refine his expertise further, 'his great booke called Jura Regalia'.[56] His involvement in most of the exactions we have examined is amply attested by his accounts for the years 1504–8 and the petition he wrote after his fall to distinguish between debts properly due to the old king and those which had merely been Henry's political tools.[57] He levied fines for mortmain, for offences under *praemunire*, for the restitution of temporalities, for escapes from episcopal and abbatial prisons; he took payments for arrears of clerical taxation, for the king's favour towards clerics in lawsuits and other unspecified matters, and for pardons for clergymen accused of treason or other offences. In spectacular contradiction to the principles expressed in *The tree of commonwealth*, he took £666 13*s*. 4*d*. from James Harrington 'for the king's most gracious favour in the deanry of Yorke', £333 6*s*. 8*d*. from James Stanley, newly appointed bishop of Ely, 'for the king's gracious favour to keepe and retayne the benefite of Wynwyke', £533 6*s*. 8*d*. from Laund Priory for the appropriation of the rectory of Rostherne and £466 13*s*. 4*d*. from St Stephen's Chapel, Westminster, for the appropriation of the priory of Cold Norton.[58] He was, as he might have wished to be, the instrument of the king's grant of free election to various religious houses; but only at a price. Malvern Priory, Ramsey Abbey, St Mary's Abbey, York, paid £100 each; for £5,000, all the Cistercian abbots secured free election as part of a package including freedom from suing for restoration of their temporalities and other liberties 'according to their old

[55] *The* Anglica historia *of Polydore Vergil AD 1485–1537*, ed. D. Hay (Camden Society lxxiv, 1950), 129–31; *The great chronicle of London*, ed. A. H. Thomas and I. D. Thornley, London 1938, 335.

[56] H. Garrett-Goodyear, 'The Tudor revival of *quo warranto* and local contributions to state building', in M. S. Arnold, T. A. Green, S. A. Scully and S. D. White (eds), *On the laws and customs of England: essays in honor of Samuel E. Thorne*, Chapel Hill, NC 1981, 231–4; Accounts, fo. 54r (see next note). It is not clear to me what the great book might have been.

[57] 'Petition', 82–99. I have examined three copies of the accounts, those in BL, MS Lansdowne 127; Huntington Library, San Marino, CA, MS Ellesmere 1518; and Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Eng. Hist. d 421 fos 7r–18v. References are to the foliation of the Huntington version; the contemporary foliation of the British Library version is identical, omitting fo. 33, but the modern foliation is one folio behind from fo. 33 (corresponding to fo. 34 of the Huntington MS) onwards.

[58] Accounts, fos 28v, 39r, 47r. For other apparent cases of simony see fos 31r, 54v, 55r; for appropriations see fos 5v, 12v, 41v, 42r, 53v. On Cold Norton see I. S. Leadam, 'Early years of the college', in *Brasenose College quatercentenary monographs* (Oxford Historical Society lii–iv, 1909–10), ii. 55–8.

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usage in that behalf'.[59] All in all Dudley collected some £38,112 10*s*. 5¼*d*, from English churchmen in four years, a little over a third of it in cash and the rest in bonds for future payment. Each year he was thus single-handedly extracting from the English Church nearly twice as much as the pope.[60]

He was equally caught up in the resolution of grudges between his master's temporal and spiritual subjects. Unlike Empson, he does not seem to have been directly involved in Hobart's and Ernley's *praemunire* suits, though he did collect £566 13*s*. 4*d*. from Hobart in November 1507 as the price of his pardon from the king and £100 from Ernley as the price of his appointment.[61] In 1505, perhaps relishing the prospect of return visits to his *alma mater*, he was appointed one of the lay external assessors to oversee the work of the Oxford university steward's court in its privileged but threatened jurisdiction.[62] Bernard André recorded how in February 1508 the provincial of the Dominicans and the prior of the London house went to Dudley, then to Warham to discuss infringements to their liberties in the arrest of a Breton friar accused of magical practices.[63] Cases before the king's council while Dudley was its president, such as that between the dean and chapter of Hereford Cathedral and the mayor and citizens of the city, must have drawn his attention.[64] We know for certain that the similar suit between the corporation and the abbey at Shrewsbury in 1507 did so, because as part of their litigation expenses the townsmen laid out £6 13*s*. 4*d*. 'for a reward to Mr Dudley' and 20*d*. to his servant Mr Beamond.[65]

Edmund Dudley, then, was an agent not only of the exercise of the sort of royal power over the Church he advocated in *The tree of commonwealth*, but also of most of the abuses of that power which he so eloquently castigated. But if his professional life fell short of the ideals he professed, what of his private life? His will suggests a conventional piety.[66] He invoked the assistance of the Holy Trinity, the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints in heaven for his executors. He left money for priests and the poor to pray for his soul and those of his relations. He left money for building work at churches with which he was associated, and two altar cloths to the priory of Tortington, where his first wife lay buried. It may be significant, given the sentiments expressed in *The tree of commonwealth*, that he did not specify that these bequests be adorned with his arms. In

[59] Accounts, fos 37v, 40r, 57v.

[60] J. J. Scarisbrick, 'Clerical taxation in England, 1485 to 1547', this JOURNAL xi (1960), 45–9.

[61] PRO, C 1/319/48; Accounts, fos 46v, 50v.

[62] R. L. Storey, 'University and government 1430–1500', in Catto and Evans, *Late medieval Oxford*, 745.

[63] *Memorials of King Henry VII*, ed. J. Gairdner (Rolls Series x, 1858), 109.

[64] Hereford Cathedral Archive, no. 2971.

[65] H. Owen and J. B. Blakeway, *A history of Shrewsbury*, London, 1825, i. 279.

[66] PRO, SP 1/2, fos 4–11 (*Letters and papers*, i/1, 559).

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this he was notably unlike his father, whose executor he had been, who specified repeatedly that his gifts to Arundel parish church, Holy Trinity College, Arundel, Boxgrove Priory and Tortington Priory should be marked with escutcheons of his arms and his wife's.[67] Other traces of Dudley's piety survive in the inventory of his confiscated goods, which mentions one stained altar-cloth but no other religious images, and in his psalter, which is in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.[68] He cared enough for the state of his soul to secure letters of confraternity from the monks of Durham together with Empson and Henry Wyatt on 10 February 1509.[69]

He does not seem to have shared in the characteristic religious emphases of Henry VII's court as much as many of his colleagues on the council.[70] Though his will concluded with a prayer for Henry VIII – a wise precaution while the hope of pardon or stay of execution remained – it made no provisions for prayers for the soul of Henry VII. Nor did it mention the Franciscan Observants, Syon, or the crusade, all enthusiasms of the late king and his intimates, though *The tree of commonwealth* did acknowledge the duty of 'very trew Christen knightes' to defend 'the faith of the Churche of Christ' before it demanded their service to 'the prince, to defend hym and his realme'.[71] Dudley also requested, in vain, burial in Westminster Abbey where the king and the queen, the king's mother, Lord Daubeney and Lord Welles lay. Yet even this preference for Westminster may be attributable to the burial there of his uncle William Dudley, bishop of Durham, rather than of his master King Henry.[72]

The concerns of *The tree of commonwealth* come more clearly into focus when we turn to Dudley's educational interests. He bequeathed £50 to poor priests in Oxford and Cambridge and required his chantry priest at Tortington to teach the choristers their grammar. In December 1507 he granted a £20 annuity from his manor of Hamsey to the support of the Lewes Free School at Southover, though admittedly he seems to have been compensated by other patrons of the school for doing so.[73] He had close contacts with the universities for which he expressed such enthusiasm. His cousin Richard, to whom he left twenty marks in his will as one of his executors, was a Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, from 1497 to 1506, and later proved a generous benefactor to the college. Oriel was one of the colleges in which theology remained the dominant higher

[67] *Transcripts of Sussex wills*, ed. W. H. Godfrey (Sussex Record Society xli–iii, xlv, 1935–9, 1941), i. 44, 50, 192; iv. 252.
[68] PRO, E 154/2/17; Emden, *Oxford*, i. 598.
[69] Department of Palaeography, University of Durham, Durham Priory Register 5, fo. 115.
[70] S. J. Gunn, 'Sir Thomas Lovell (*c.* 1449–1524): a new man in a new monarchy?', in J. L. Watts (ed.), *The end of the Middle Ages?*, Stroud 1998, 121, 124–5.
[71] Dudley, *Tree*, 98.
[72] Emden, *Oxford*, i. 600.
[73] VCH, *Sussex*, vii, London, 1940, 84–5; *Transcripts of Sussex wills*, iii. 152.

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faculty throughout the fifteenth century and Richard was a theologian with a doctorate from Turin; perhaps he helped shape Dudley's concern with the decay of divines.[74] Their uncle William, bishop of Durham from 1475 to 1483, had been chancellor of the university and interestingly never held a more significant office in the king's service than the deanship of the chapel royal and the occasional diplomatic posting.[75]

In his will, Edmund requested that his second or third son Jerome be educated for the priesthood under the guidance not only of his brother-in-law Andrew Windsor, but also of Richard Fitzjames, bishop of London, Dr Colet and one Dr Yonge. Fitzjames, a former royal almoner and president of the council who was still an active councillor and court preacher, he must have known well from his work in government, sufficiently well for the bishop to swear to him 'by his preisthoode the matter layed against him was not true' when Dudley arranged his payment of a fine.[76] Fitzjames was an energetic Warden of Merton College, Oxford, from 1483 to 1507, a theologian, and patron of a school at Bruton in Somerset.[77] There were two Dr John Yonges, both New College men, whom Dudley might have intended, but Andrew Windsor's will shows that his choice was not the Doctor of Civil Law, diplomat and archiepiscopal administrator who paid him £1,000 in 1508 for the mastership of the rolls, but the Doctor of Theology, future suffragan bishop to Fitzjames, reader of Savonarola and eventual Warden of New College: perhaps what we might expect, to judge from *The tree of commonwealth*.[78] Yonge's credentials as the sort of cleric of whom Dudley approved – and Dudley's ability to pick a team – are confirmed by the fact that in 1510 Fitzjames successfully asked Colet to persuade Yonge to accept the mastership of the hospital of St Thomas of Acon in the city of London, an office he was to exercise with vigour in the discipline of his clerical subordinates and with a generous regard to the interests of the

[74] Emden, *Oxford*, i. 598–9; G. C. Richards and C. L. Shadwell, *The Provosts and Fellows of Oriel College, Oxford*, Oxford 1922, 42; H. S. Grazebrook, *The barons of Dudley* (Collections for a History of Staffordshire ix (ii), 1888), 81–2; A. B. Cobban, 'Colleges and halls 1430–1500', in Catto and Evans, *Late medieval Oxford*, 603.

[75] Emden, *Oxford*, i. 599–600. The deanship did involve temporal duties in the judicial work of the king's council, at least by Henry VII's reign: J. A. Guy, *The cardinal's court: the impact of Thomas Wolsey in star chamber*, Hassocks 1977, 13.

[76] Emden, *Oxford*, ii. 691–2; *Council of Henry VII*, pp. xxxv, 46; 'Petition', 87. Jerome has left no trace of a career, and it has been assumed that he died in childhood: Loades, *John Dudley*, 16. In fact he survived until at least 1555, though apparently in a state of some physical or mental incapacity, as suggested by the bequest of Jane, duchess of Northumberland in that year 'to my lorde my husband[es] brother Jerome Dudley his borde and his apparell accordingly as they shall thinke mete for hym considering the state of hym': PRO, PROB 11/37/194v.

[77] Emden, *Oxford*, ii. 691–2; *Registrum annalium Collegii Mertonensis 1483–1521*, ed. H. E. Salter (Oxford Historical Society lxxvi, 1921), passim.

[78] PRO, PROB 11/29/23; Emden, *Oxford*, iii. 2135–7; Accounts, fo. 46v.

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hospital's lay patrons, the Mercers.[79] Meanwhile Colet, another Oxford theologian, was at that moment founding St Paul's School with its distinctive blend of his own ethical and pastoral priorities and Erasmus' outstanding textbooks and, again, with its endorsement of the Mercers' judgement in matters spiritual.[80] Colet's austerity and self-discipline seem to fit Dudley's vision of what was appropriate for the clergy better than Fitzjames's taste for grand building projects, expensive tapestries and illuminated manuscripts, but it seems Jerome was to be set on Colet's path: surplus income from the lands left to support his studies was to be given to poor scholars of divinity in Oxford.[81] All three, Fitzjames, Colet and Yonge, seem to fit the mood of the Oxford theology school Dudley wished to support, taking their learning out into pastoral practice at various levels.[82]

Dudley's use of the ecclesiastical patronage at his disposal matches less well with the high standards he set for the king and the prelates. He presented to two rectories in 1502 and 1506 Robert Bremmer or Bremner, the prior of Tortington. The second presentation was made under an advowson granted to Dudley by the prior and canons themselves, an arrangement sufficiently corrupt to require a special papal dispensation.[83] What the parishioners of Tyneham and Bramshott thought of the result can only be guessed. Visitation evidence suggests that the appointment of regular clergy to parochial livings was widely resented, but since the parishes were some seventy and twenty miles from the priory, one assumes that Bremmer would have hired a curate like any other pluralist.[84] For Dudley, on the other hand, the deal was much more satisfactory. His first wife was buried at Tortington, his father had been a benefactor there, and he held lands nearby: he was fashioning himself as the great patron of his local house. More concrete benefit came in the form of the garden of the prior's London house, of which he is said to have made regular use.[85]

[79] Gleason, *Colet*, 238; J. Watney, *Some account of the hospital of St Thomas of Acon, in the Cheap, London, and of the plate of the mercers' company*, London 1892, 60–108.

[80] Gleason, *Colet*, 217–34.

[81] Ibid. 63–4, 241–4; HMC, *An inventory of the historical monuments in the city of Oxford*, London 1939, 77–8, 82; *An inventory of the historical monuments in London*, II: *West London*, London 1925, 34–6; S. J. Gunn and P. G. Lindley, 'Introduction', in S. J. Gunn and P. G. Lindley (eds), *Cardinal Wolsey: Church, State and art*, Cambridge 1991, 45; J. J. G. Alexander and E. Temple, *Illuminated manuscripts in Oxford college libraries, the university archives and the Taylor institution*, Oxford 1985, nos 142, 175, 239, 588, 598, 618–19, 653, 897, 900, 903; C. H. Bullivant, *Minehead's great treasure: the missal of Richard Fitzjames*, 2nd edn, Minehead *c.* 1970.

[82] J. I. Catto, 'Theology after Wycliffism', in Catto and Evans, *Late medieval Oxford*, 263–80.

[83] Hampshire Record Office, 21M65/A1/17, fo. 1v; Wiltshire Record Office, Register Audley, fo. 27v; *Papal registers*, xviii, no. 289.

[84] P. Marshall, *The Catholic priesthood and the English Reformation*, Oxford 1994, 184.

[85] J. Stow, *A survey of London*, ed. C. L. Kingsford, Oxford, 1971, i. 224.

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Some reciprocal favour may have been shown in the appointment of a Richard Bremner as bailiff of two of Dudley's Sussex manors.[86]

Another of Dudley's presentations places him in that world of the pluralist clerics in government service from which he distances himself in *The tree of commonwealth*. In 1500 he presented Dr William Barons to the rectory of Beaconsfield under an advowson gained by a complex property transaction. Barons was a graduate of Oxford and Bologna, but as a civil lawyer; he was a royal chaplain, master of the rolls within fourteen months of this presentation, having undertaken to pay £666 13*s*. 4*d*. for the post, and bishop of London by August 1504, at which point he was still only in subdeacon's orders and had never said mass in his life though he had been rector of five parishes in three years.[87] It was inevitable that Dudley's rise into the governing elite would involve him with such men, but the speed with which he accommodated himself to their pluralistic ways is striking.

With pluralism came nepotism. Dudley's cousin Richard had already been dispensed in 1495 to hold two benefices while studying, but had merely acquired one rectory in the patronage of Westminster Abbey in 1498 and had been ordained priest in 1503 to the title of his college fellowship. Edmund's access to influence after 1504 coincided with a remarkable upturn in Richard's career, bringing him inside four years three rectories, six prebends and the precentorship of Salisbury Cathedral.[88] Three of these promotions were in the gift of the crown, granted in a period in which Edmund secured for himself seven grants of stewardships of crown estates in three years.[89] One was a collation by Edmund's old contact Bishop Barons of London.[90] Another, the rectory of Brington (Northants) was the result of a presentation by Thomas, marquess of Dorset, a courtier who seems to have made a habit of keeping the king's administrators happy by looking after their clerical relations, since Richard succeeded Christopher Litton, brother of the under-treasurer Sir Robert who had presented him there under an advowson from the marquess in 1502.[91] Ellington (Cambs) in 1506 came from the

[86] PRO, SC 6/Henry VIII/6217.

[87] Lincolnshire Archives Office (cited hereinafter as LAO), Register 23, fos 319v–20r; Emden, *Oxford*, i. 115–16; BL, MS Add. 21480, fo. 76r; *Papal registers*, xviii, nos 207–9. To be fair, he could not have been ordained priest and continue to study the civil law: Evans, 'Number, origins and careers of scholars', 520.

[88] *Papal registers*, xvi, ed. A. P. Fuller, Dublin 1986, no. 401; Worcester Record Office, b 716.093 – BA. 2648/8(i), p. 92; Emden, *Oxford*, i. 598–9.

[89] *Calendar of patent rolls, 1494–1509*, London 1963, 428, 444, 464, 498, 501, 534, 539, 554, 586, 589.

[90] J. Le Neve, *Fasti ecclesiae anglicanae 1300–1541: St Paul's London*, ed. J. M. Horn, London 1963, 33.

[91] LAO, Register 23, fos 183r, 204v; S. J. Gunn, 'The structures of politics in early Tudor England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6th ser. v (1995), 78.

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abbot and convent of Ramsey, which had done business with Edmund over the restitution of its temporalities a few months earlier.[92] Walton-on-the-Hill (Lancs), to which Richard was admitted on the same day, came on the resignation of James Stanley, Warden of Manchester College, who was at roughly that moment concluding one of three arrangements he made with Edmund in summer and autumn that year for the payment of £6,133 6*s*. 8*d*. to the king on his appointment as bishop of Ely and his family's indictment for retaining offences.[93] One prebend and the precentorship of Salisbury came from Bishop Edmund Audley, who agreed to pay £666 13*s*. 4*d*. for a general pardon three months before the second collation; a pardon 'for a verie light cause' as Edmund recalled in his petition.[94] In the city of London, Edmund Dudley had a reputation for making ruthless capital out of his position of influence. He and Empson, it was claimed, 'provoked men by sundry wayes & meanys to gyve unto theym rych & grete gyfftis of value and yit theyr causis full hardly sped'; in some instances Dudley won the king £200 and 'he & hys affynyte by meanys of brybory & pollyng' took £300.[95] It looks as though he was no less enterprising in the realm of ecclesiastical patronage.

Edmund Dudley's nepotism should not look strange. It was normal in the circles in which he moved, lay as well as clerical. John Ernley, the attorney-general, an associate of Dudley's in his land acquisitions, presented William Ernley to Yatesbury (Wilts) on the death of another William Ernley in 1522.[96] Richard Empson, Jr, enjoyed a successful ecclesiastical career in parallel with that of Richard Dudley.[97] Three small Brays, Edward, John and Reynold, began their clerical careers at the ages of seven or eight in the years around 1500, presumably with the backing of Sir Reynold, Dudley's own probable patron.[98] Uncle Reynold certainly helped John Bray, newly appointed prebendary of Fridaythorpe in York Minster, in his negotiations with York city council over land leases in 1501: the citizens agreed to oblige Sir Reynold 'as in the lieu of a reward unto hym for to have hym good maister unto this Citie'.[99]

For men of such influence there were still more direct rewards to be drawn from church resources. Empson gained not only advowsons from

[92] LAO, Register 23, fo. 372v; Accounts, fo. 16v.

[93] VCH, *Lancashire*, iii, London 1907, 7; Accounts, fos 23v, 28v, 31r.

[94] Wiltshire Record Office, Register Audley, fos 32r, 72v; Accounts, fo. 61r; 'Petition', 88.

[95] *Great chronicle*, 326, 348.

[96] Wiltshire Record Office, Register Audley, fo. 90v; PRO, SC 6/Henry VIII/6217; C 1/377/16; C 1/473/78.

[97] LAO, Register 23, fos 202r, 214r.

[98] *Papal registers*, xvi, no. 539; xvii (i), ed. A. P. Fuller, Dublin 1994, nos 688–9; HMC, *First report*, London 1874, appendix, 96; J. Le Neve, *Fasti ecclesiae anglicanae 1300–1541: Bath and Wells*, ed. B. Jones, London, 1964, 56; *Salisbury*, ed. J. M. Horn, London 1962, 101.

[99] *York civic records*, ed. A. Raine (Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series ciii, 1941), 170, 178–9.

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Notley Abbey and Chacombe Priory, but also fees from the prior of Durham and the abbots of Abingdon, Kenilworth, Peterborough and St James beside Northampton, often granted under threat of prosecution or 'in avoidyng of his displeas[ur]', as the grantors later claimed.[100] He obtained the farm of the escheated estates of Cold Norton Priory, allegedly by 'secrete labo[ur]' to the king when the abbot of St James thought Empson was lobbying for them on the abbey's behalf.[101] At Luffield Priory he anticipated the trajectory of many laymen in the next generation, first taking a fee and leasing individual estates on beneficial terms, then, in 1496, supervising the house's surrender into the king's hands, and finally, in 1504, securing a long lease of all the temporalities and spiritualities from Westminster Abbey.[102] Dudley equally landed such prizes, his fees ranging in size and location from £2 from the abbot of Quarr on the Isle of Wight through £3 from the abbot of Peterborough to £20 as chief steward of the estates of the bishop of Durham.[103] Even cousin Richard's good fortune might have come to benefit Edmund more directly, as in the dark days of 1509–10 he offered Thomas, Lord Darcy, £200 to persuade the new king to spare the fallen minister's life.[104]

Dudley and his colleagues were certainly not impious by our normal standards for measuring late medieval piety. Empson had a portable altar.[105] Fyneux, the enemy of sanctuary, who spurned the plea of a prisoner pulled out of Beaulieu Abbey that he be restored to its safe-keeping out of respect for the church's 'privelege and holy canons and the articles that Seynt Thomas of Caunterbury dyed for', requested burial near Becket's altar in Canterbury Cathedral, gave land to Faversham Abbey and spent more than £40 on repairs and adornments to the house and church of the Canterbury Austin Friars.[106] Hobart, the 'enemy of God and his Churche', rebuilt one Norfolk parish church in its entirety at his own expense and may have done the same for another.[107] Nor were

[100] LAO, Register 23, fo. 278r; Register 27, fo. 207v; *Extracts from the account rolls of the abbey of Durham*, ed. J. T. Fowler (Surtees Society xcix, c, ciii, 1898–1901), ii. 306–7; *Account rolls of the obedientiaries of Peterborough*, ed. J. Greatrex (Northamptonshire Record Society xxxiii, 1984), 178, 192; PRO, C 1/462/43; C 1/783/57; C 1/786/12.

[101] PRO, C 1/360/66.

[102] *Luffield Priory charters part ii*, ed. G. R. Elvey (Buckinghamshire Record Society xviii, 1975), pp. xxxiv–xxxvi, 441–2.

[103] *The charters of Quarr Abbey*, ed. S. F. Hockey (Isle of Wight Records Series iii, 1991), no. 59; *Account rolls for the obedientiaries of Peterborough*, 178, 192; Durham Priory Register 5, fo. 102.

[104] PRO, C 1/303/62.

[105] *Papal registers*, xv, ed. M. J. Haren, Dublin 1978, no. 797.

[106] *Spelman*, ii. *344*, *358–9*n.; C. R. Councer, 'Heraldic notices of the church of St Martin, Herne', *Archaeologia Cantiana* liii (1940), 88–90; W. Dugdale, *Monasticon anglicanum*, ed. J. Caley, H. Ellis and B. Bandinel, London 1817–30, vi/3, 1592–3.

[107] *Spelman*, ii. *391*n. Intriguingly, he is recorded as a benefactor to Norwich Cathedral (where he was buried) not in the year of his death but in that of his fall after his confrontation with Bishop Nykke, 1507: Dugdale, *Monasticon*, iv. 6.

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they anticlerical in the general sense in which we have been persuaded to discount anticlericalism as a cause of the English Reformation.[108] They wished the clergy well. But they also wished them better, and this was what rankled with at least some churchmen. When Christopher Urswick sent Maffei's *Dissuasoria* to his friend Prior Thomas Goldstone of Christ Church, Canterbury, he spoke in his prefatory letter of 'the opponents of ecclesiastical liberty, who indeed (it is to be lamented) are very many everywhere'. The old generosity to the Church had been replaced 'on the part of most' by 'detestable rapacity, nay rather sacrilege. And yet they who dare such things contend that they are acting rightly; and straightway speak recklessly of the corrupt morals of the clergy and their open vices, as if the censorship of others belonged to them'.[109]

That Dudley expressed high ideals in *The tree of commonwealth*, having contradicted most of them consistently in both his professional and his private life, should perhaps not surprise us. We all know the gap between our ideals and our flawed reality; that gap must have yawned very wide to Dudley under sentence of death. Dudley's thoughts in the Tower may also have been part of a wider reaction against the coercive and exploitative policies of Henry VII, of which he had been such an enthusiastic agent. In *The tree of commonwealth* he warns of the danger of princely covetousness, noting that 'peraduenture of that appetite haue ther ben some other of late tyme, and wer in maner withowt faulte, saving only [that]'.[110] Yet as we have seen, with regard to the Church much of Henry's exploitation was to be continued by his son. It was exploitation combined with orthodox devotion. Dudley fined the Master and Fellows of Fotheringhay College £200 in February 1508 after an inquisition, later condemned as falsely procured by Empson, threatened their tenure of their lands. Part of the settlement was that they also obliged themselves to say daily and quarterly masses for the king.[111] It was exploitation combined with royal leadership in church reform. The same Cistercians who paid so dearly to keep their accustomed privileges had been assured by Henry eleven years earlier of his enthusiasm for their reforming efforts.[112] Exploitation, orthodoxy and reform would prove a more dangerous mixture still in the hands of Henry VIII.

The combination of attitudes visible in Edmund Dudley's dealings with the Church was by no means a sufficient cause of the Henrician

[108] C. A. Haigh, 'Anticlericalism and the English reformation', *History* lxviii (1983), 391–407. On the other hand, if all critics of the clergy – John Colet, Thomas Gascoigne and so on – may be counted as anticlerical, then presumably Dudley qualifies: A. G. Dickens, 'The shape of anti-clericalism and the English reformation', in E. I. Kouri and T. Scott (eds), *Politics and society in reformation Europe: essays for Sir Geoffrey Elton on his sixty-fifth birthday*, London 1987, 384–6.

[109] *Records of the family of Urswyk, Urswick, or Urwick compiled by the late Thomas A. Urwick*, ed. W. Urwick, St Albans 1893, 120–2.

[110] Dudley, *Tree*, 29.

[111] 'Petition', 92.

[112] Goodman, 'Christian renewal', 117.

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Reformation: succession problems and evangelical sympathisers were necessary for the final form that Reformation took. Yet most powerful laymen, especially those at the centre of government, seem to have combined with a conventional late medieval faith a preparedness to extend royal power over the Church, to exploit the Church's resources for their own benefit and that of their families and to accept that the clergy needed improving and that the laity, led by the king, had the right to tell them so. Many thought education one of the great keys to that improvement, as Dudley seems to have done, and therefore supported the diversion of monastic wealth to ostensibly educational ends when they were not supporting its diversion to themselves. Many had insufficient grasp on the debates of the clergy to be aware of the theological whirlpools into which they were launching the nation, just as one must wonder whether Dudley in choosing the directors of his son's education had much understanding of the academic differences between Colet and Fitzjames which led Erasmus to praise the first and damn the second as 'superstitiosus atque invictus… Scotista'.[113] Often without knowing very well what they were doing, the lay elites of early Tudor England destroyed the Church as Urswick and Warham knew it. An examination of Edmund Dudley's relationship with the Church does not account for the Henrician Reformation, but it does help us to understand the course it took.

[113] Gleason, *Colet*, 235–61; Emden, *Oxford*, ii. 692. Gleason, it is true, stresses the probable differences of opinion about practical questions between the two men rather than the underlying academic differences which were, perhaps, over-dramatised by Erasmus.

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