

Making a Trade of Preaching: Clergy, Labor, and Political Economy between the Interregnum and Restoration

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Abstract Many writers of political economy in the 1660s and 1670s agreed that there were too many clergy and divinity students in England. This surplus of ministers and aspiring clerics, they argued, would better contribute to the public if they worked as productive laborers in agriculture and manufacturing. The question of whether preaching constituted labor had been a contentious theological debate in the late years of the Interregnum, and the proposals advanced by commentators like William Petty and Edward Chamberlayne to put ministers to other work assumed that clergy were comparable to profane professionals who labored for their keep. This article traces how this fraught question continued to confront schemes of political economy that otherwise sought to avoid religious controversy. In the 1670s, Christopher Wase responded to calls to limit clergy and free schools with an innovative survey and arguments drawn from empirical evidence, scriptural exegesis, and economic principles. Wase was one among other contemporaries who assigned a productive place for learning despite its irreducibility to a form of labor. His efforts thereby elevated the status of the clergy on a foundation of economic premises arrived at through engagement in theological debate.

In a discussion in his 1776 *Wealth of Nations* on the public expense for education, Adam Smith digressed seamlessly into a reflection on the financial basis of the established Church of England and the nature of pastoral care. He argued that clergy responsible for “religious instruction” were more attentive to their flocks and more effective as pastors when they were paid by voluntary contributions rather than mandatory tithes.¹ A religious landscape without an extractive church, he maintained, would gradually encourage “moderation” and in the long run would curb the tendency toward “enthusiasm” that so often animated new sects and their demands for toleration. In this passage, Smith turned to a surprising ecclesiastical model: that which the “Independents” advanced “at the end of the civil war.”² Though populated by enthusiasts, that movement represented a dashed possibility for the kind of laissez-faire market of voluntary clerical contributions that Smith thought would ultimately ameliorate the most dangerous religious passions. He cited the Quaker colony of Pennsylvania as a natural experiment that proved

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¹ Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, ed. Edwin Cannan (New York, 2000), 877–78.

² Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, 849.

him correct. The ecclesiology of the Interregnum independents resonated in Smith's vision, but his ideas about the purpose of preaching and the public role of pastoral care that underwrote his argument were far from theirs. Taking an entirely transcendent view of religious instruction, he claimed that its "object is not so much to render the people good citizens in this world, as to prepare them for another and a better world in a life to come."³ The doctrines one heard preached in a well-ordered ecclesiastical settlement were primarily a private concern that ought to be bound by voluntary payments, not a public charge built on coercive tithes.⁴

Smith consigned the clergy's teaching to the concerns of the next life, and his formulation suggests that he filled the public space vacated by Christian doctrines of church organization with his own principles of market exchange. His model for the organization of churches could apply as easily to any voluntary society. But Smith's retrospective illustrates how the Interregnum and its violent theological controversies were generative for new ideas about the clergy, the payment for their service, and their proper relationship to the public. His reference to the Civil War marks how those debates informed the burgeoning discourse of political economy that Smith would inherit and later represent. For the Interregnum-era independents whose ecclesiastical vision he admired, their argument for voluntary contributions rested on contentious theological premises drawn from scripture and the example of the primitive church about the nature of preaching and the justification for collecting payment for it. These conflicting ideas about the learning and effort necessary to effectively preach, and about the legitimacy of expecting payment in exchange for pastoral care, clashed in a sprawling debate in the 1640s and 1650s over the status of the ministry as labor. Out of these polemics and replies emerged new assumptions about the clergy, their learning, and their labor that resonated with influential writers and political economists through the period of the Restoration beginning in 1660.

Scholars have identified political economy as a new framework that increasingly defined public debate in this period. Central to these arguments, according to recent work, was recognition of the productive potential of human labor, particularly in agriculture and manufacture but also in the mercantile trade that made it the source of a nation's wealth.⁵ It was a theological controversy of the Interregnum that drove otherwise deeply divided interlocutors to begin to see the clerical profession in a way they could reconcile with the imperative for a productive population. Theological controversies raged over the necessity of a learned clergy and the legitimacy of tithes to support their education and livelihood. Defenders of a national ministry insisted that pastors performed labor as other professions did and so deserved fair compensation. Against accusations of "making a trade of preaching," they analogized the clergy to other professionals who sold their services in exchange for

³ Smith, 846.

⁴ Smith, 877–78.

⁵ Steve Pincus, "Neither Machiavellian Moment nor Possessive Individualism: Commercial Society and the Defenders of the English Commonwealth," *American Historical Review* 103, no. 3 (1998): 705–36, at 721; Abigail L. Swingen, *Competing Visions of Empire: Labor, Slavery, and the Origins of the British Atlantic Empire* (New Haven, 2015); Ted McCormick, "Population: Modes of Seventeenth-Century Demographic Thought," in *Mercantilism Reimagined: Political Economy in Early Modern Britain and Its Empire*, ed. Philip J. Stern and Carl Wennerlind (Oxford, 2014), 25–45; Carl Wennerlind, "Circulation: Hartlibian Political Economy and the New Culture of Credit," in Stern and Wennerlind, *Mercantilism Reimagined*, 74–96.

payment.⁶ That response to the radicals informed the schemes of mainstream commentators and counselors like William Petty and Edward Chamberlayne, who incorporated the clergy into their early visions of political economy in the 1660s. I show how Petty, Chamberlayne, and contemporaries counted the ministry as one more unproductive profession within a framework that valued agriculture and manufacturing, in so doing allowing them to justify an increasingly prominent proposal for retrenchment in the public upkeep of the ministry and the schools that trained them. This view of the clergy as a profession also invited suggestions that they instead depend on an open religious marketplace for support. These proposals in turn provoked a response from the scholar Christopher Wase, whose survey of schools in the 1670s and public criticism of a proportional reduction of the clergy is the subject of this article's final section. Wase's research and his publication illustrate how theological claims drawn from scripture and ecclesiastical history about the relationship between pastoral care and labor continued to push churchmen to articulate novel arguments about the contributions that unproductive professions, "contemplative" learning, and Christian piety could make to the enrichment of the nation.⁷

If Smith's assessment of the value of preaching rendered it private and transcendent, his predecessors in the Interregnum and Restoration did not, and their work demonstrates how theological commitments to the unique nature of pastoral labor could inform innovations in economic thinking. Steve Pincus has argued that statesmen and commentators could only elevate the condition of the population as the foundation for national wealth and power after recognizing that policy based on Protestant union and Christian perfectionism could never be possible after the Civil War.⁸ In such an account, political economy becomes a theologically impartial alternative to religious controversies whose consequences proved them futile and destructive, and it thereby fits the epistemic conditions of what William Bulman describes as "elite secularity."⁹ Other historians, particularly John Robertson and Sophus Reinert, have stressed the formative relationship of anticlericalism with early theories of political economy that marginalized the role of the ministry in schemes for social and material amelioration across Europe.¹⁰ Scholars like Boyd Hilton have elaborated on the contours of a "Christian economics" in the late

⁶ The phrase comes from John Milton, "Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings out of the Church (1659)," in John Milton, *Areopagitica and Other Writings*, ed. William Poole (London, 2014), 201–41, at 228.

⁷ Christopher Wase, *Considerations Concerning Free-Schools as Settled in England* (Oxford, 1678), 17.

⁸ Steve Pincus, "From Holy Cause to Economic Interest: The Study of Population and the Invention of the State," in *A Nation Transformed: England after the Restoration*, ed. Steve Pincus and Alan Houston (Cambridge, 2001), 272–98, at 283–84.

⁹ William Bulman, introduction to *God in the Enlightenment*, ed. William Bulman and Robert Ingram (Oxford, 2016), 1–41, at 16–18; William Bulman, *The Anglican Enlightenment: Orientalism, Religion, and Politics in England and Its Empire, 1648–1715* (Cambridge, 2015), xiii. Emily Erikson generalizes this argument to suggest that the expanding reading public that merchant authors had to appeal to can account for the increasingly "abstract" texts of political economy that were less likely to articulate "religious sentiments" over the course of the century. Emily Erikson, *Trade and Nation: How Companies and Politics Reshaped Economic Thought, Trade, and Nation* (New York, 2021), 129–30.

¹⁰ John Robertson, *The Case for The Enlightenment: Scotland and Naples, 1680–1760* (Cambridge, 2005), 31–32; Sophus A. Reinert, *The Academy of Fisticuffs: Political Economy and Commercial Society in Enlightenment Italy* (Cambridge, MA, 2018), chap. 5. Reinert does discuss defenders of the Catholic

eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when political economy had become an identifiable mode of analysis. Commentators at the time claimed that economists like Thomas Chalmers “began that baptism so to speak of political economy with Christianity” insofar as Chalmers explicitly argued for the consistency between Christian ethics and economic principles after the latter’s association with anticlericalism in the century prior.¹¹ Even Karl Marx tied the innovative economic thought of William Petty, David Hume, and Adam Smith to their status as “enemy of parsons.”¹² All these accounts identify philosophers, critics, or reformers who, as the normative early modern political economists, sketched visions of social improvement that barred the intervention of clerics and their doctrines.

Wase’s survey and writings show, however, how new arguments for the necessity of an established learned ministry—arguments that they should be elevated above a mundane market for clerical labor and unbound from a proportional logic of retrenchment—could still innovate within the framework of political economy. Wase directly responded to critics who sought the reinvestment of public funds in labor more lucrative than preaching, and he did so with theological arguments built on scriptural citations and ecclesiastical precedents on the status of clerical labor and compensation. In his defense of free schools, he articulated a view of learning in the abstract that saw contemplation as important to augment productive work but was not reducible to it. He drew this principle from scripture to defend schools that would train the next generation of clergy, and in so doing he also upheld these institutions as engines of learning that were conducive to invention. An older theology that resisted equating the learning and the office of the clergy to exchangeable labor led him to views on the insufficiency of manual labor and the practical knowledge that followed from it to lead to invention; this position was consistent with contemporary “political epistemologies,” as Paola Bertucci describes them, that valued the national economic benefits of artisanal innovation.¹³

The controversy over the legitimacy of a learned clergy maintained by tithes was carried out in terms and with evidence that Charly Coleman has recently described as “economic theology.”¹⁴ Commercial exchange for pastoral service and proprietary claims to tithes were framed in the theological language of simony and compared against the practices of the primitive church. Reflection on the nature of labor and its constitutive role in the nation’s wealth was central to political economy in

Church such as Anselm Desing and Ferdinando Facchini, who advocated for its public role on the grounds of its economic contribution. Reinert, *Academy of Fisticuffs*, 274–77.

¹¹ Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1785–1865* (Oxford, 1988), 50–53, 56.

¹² Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, ed. Ernest Mandel, trans. Ben Fowkes, vol. 1 (London, 1990), 766–67n6.

¹³ Paola Bertucci, *Artisanal Enlightenment: Science and the Mechanical Arts in Old Regime France* (New Haven, 2017), 3; Larry Stewart, *The Rise of Public Science: Rhetoric, Technology, and Natural Philosophy in Newtonian Britain, 1660–1750* (Cambridge, 1992), xxii.

¹⁴ Charly Coleman, *The Spirit of French Capitalism: Economic Theology in the Age of Enlightenment* (Palo Alto, 2021), 4–5. Karl Gunther and Ethan Shagan also use this term and apply it to the explicit thought on the “divinely sanctioned order of human exchange,” specifically the economic reforms necessary to fulfill scriptural imperatives for laity and clergy both to “labor” during the early English Reformation. Gunther and Shagan, “Protestant Radicalism and Political Thought in the Reign of Henry VIII,” *Past & Present* 194 (2007): 35–74, at 39–40.

Britain, and so economic theology that addressed labor and exchange, often in discussion of the clergy, generated relevant new ideas. That reflection ultimately led Wase to articulate a new place for the ministry within a “state, especially Christian,” that was increasingly concerned with its material wealth.¹⁵ Wase’s arguments for education that could augment labor but should not be left to exchange on the market still resonated in Smith’s proposals for public parish education a century later.

MECHANIC PREACHERS AND CLERICAL LABOR IN THE INTERREGNUM

The English Revolution held the promise of realizing the long-standing aspiration of Protestant reformers for an expanded learned ministry, particularly for the Presbyterians and moderate independents who largely directed the Long Parliament’s ecclesiastical policy. Since the 1570s, the more puritan Protestants had militated for pastoral reform with an arsenal of surveys and testimonies that complained of a church that included unlearned preachers, impoverished curates, and absentee clerics alongside wealthy bishops and striving “pluralists.”¹⁶ The criticism of pluralism, the practice by which clergymen served multiple parishes and drew income from each, became the grounds on which reformers could articulate their objections to the status quo in quantitative and financial terms. Critics charged that the practice of pluralism permitted time-serving ministers to enrich themselves off tithes from parishes where they did not have the time to write or preach appropriate sermons—thus abandoning their most important pastoral obligation. Such critics circulated records of salaries composed of bundled benefices to illustrate just how many parishes and sinecures one enterprising priest might arrogate to himself, while others made a pittance.¹⁷ Others saw pluralism as a necessary response of ministers deprived of sufficient tithes, instead identifying the root of pastoral neglect as “impropriations” whereby lay or ecclesiastical patrons purchased the right to collect the tithes of a parish with the (often unmet) expectation that they would provide for cure of souls.¹⁸ That pastoral neglect, reformers charged, precluded most laity from hearing sermons preached by ministers with enough learning to expound on scripture. Claire Cross quotes one long-serving rector who saw impropriations and a clergy of “blind guides and ignorant reading ministers” as intertwined problems and complained that “insufficient maintenance hath bred insufficient ministers.” Cross’s assessment of clerical wealth in urban parishes in the Elizabethan period supports the rector’s analysis.¹⁹

Senior churchmen rebuked these critics for proposing an “impossibility” and insisted that without pluralities the economic condition of the church could not

¹⁵ Wase, *Considerations Concerning Free-Schools*, 14.

¹⁶ Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London, 1967), 280–81.

¹⁷ “A note of such ecclesiastical persones as have more livings then one,” 1576, Stowe MS 570, fols. 96–99, British Library, London.

¹⁸ “Reasons Presented to the Queen by the Clergy against the Bill of Pluralities,” 13 March 1589, SP 12/223, fol. 20, National Archives, London. This argument identifies the fundamental problem of lay impropriations as a reason to oppose restriction on pluralism.

¹⁹ Claire Cross, “The Incomes of Provincial Urban Clergy, 1520–1645,” in *Princes and Paupers in the English Church, 1500–1800*, ed. Rosemary O’Day and Felicity Heal (Leicester, 1981), 65–91, at 65, 76.

support whatever learning there was among its clergy.²⁰ Archbishop Whitgift used the arguments about the necessity of maintaining learning in the church in his defense of ecclesiastical impropriations against a series of bills to restrict pluralities debated between 1585 and 1601.²¹ He and his allies warned that parliamentary reforms targeting these practices would undermine the universities by dissolving the fellowships funded by impropriations that allowed learned men to defend true religion through their theological works. The abolition of impropriations and pluralism, Whitgift declared, “cannot but in tyme overthrowe in both ye Universities the studie of Divinitie, for who will applie himself to that profession wherein hee cannot have sufficient meynenance”; another letter annotated by Whitgift and possibly written by his chaplain warned that “theare will be a neglect of studie for noe men will strive to excell in learninge, where the reward is aequall.”²² In response, divines like William Perkins and Richard Bernard explicitly rejected the logic that would match the resources of the church only to what was deemed feasible in the fiscal status quo. They called for a greater number of more learned lecturers to swell the ranks of the preaching ministry. Perkins insisted that the number of able clergy could be increased by more public maintenance for education: “A good Minister is one of a thousand: If therefore they would have the number increased, maintaine the Seminaries.”²³

The abolition of the episcopal hierarchy of bishops in 1646 finally presented the opportunity to redistribute more systematically the riches of the church to support underpaid ministers and the “poor scholars” who would fill more pulpits, pushing the bounds of what earlier churchmen had considered possible.²⁴ The parliamentary Committee for Plundered Ministers addressed the old problem of clerical poverty through local redistribution of church wealth from defunct bishoprics and inappropriate tithes owned by royalists to augment the small stipends of ministers.²⁵ These efforts expanded under the direction of the Trustees for the Maintenance of a Preaching Ministry after 1649, which accompanied the new Committees for the Propagation of the Gospel to augment the salaries of loyal preachers, pay itinerant lecturers, and consolidate parishes to assure equal distribution of pastoral care.²⁶ The

²⁰ [Benjamin Carrier?], “Whether pluralitie of benefices may be dispensed withall in the state of England,” 1601, MS 2004, fol. 17v, Lambeth Palace Library, London.

²¹ Lucy M. Kaufman, “Ecclesiastical Improvements, Lay Impropriations, and the Building of a Post-Reformation Church in England, 1560–1600,” *Historical Journal* 58, no. 1 (2015): 1–23.

²² John Whitgift, Draft of Reasons against Pluralities Bill of 1601, n.d., MS, 2004, fol. 21, Lambeth Palace Library; [Benjamin Carrier?], “Whether pluralitie of benefices may be dispensed withall in the state of England,” [1601], MS, 2004, fols. 17–18, Lambeth Palace Library. For this argument, see also “Reasons Presented to the Queen by the Clergy against the Bill of Pluralities,” 13 March 1589, SP 12/223, fol. 20, National Archives.

²³ William Perkins, *Of the Calling of the Ministerie Two Treatises, Discribing the Duties and Dignities of That Calling* [. . .] (London, 1605), 23, 37. See also Richard Bernard, *The Faithfull Shepheard the Shepherds Faithfulness* [. . .] (London, 1607), 2.

²⁴ *Motives to perswade people to abstain from one meals meat in a week, and to give the value thereof unto the trustees for propagation of the Gospel: especially for maintaining hopefull poor scholars at the Universities* (London, 1646)

²⁵ Register-Book of the Committee for Plundered Ministers, December 1642–October 1647, Add MS 15669, fols. 2–5, British Library.

²⁶ Ann Hughes, “The National Church in Interregnum England,” in *Religion in Revolutionary England*, ed. Judith Maltby and Christopher Durston (Manchester, 2006), 93–114, at 95–98; Alex Craven,

churchmen who advocated this campaign of ecclesiastical reform recognized public support for impoverished students to move from free schools into the ministry as an imperative to advance their mission. By the last two years of the Interregnum, established churchmen at both Oxford and Cambridge, including Richard Baxter, Matthew Poole, Benjamin Whichcote, and Seth Ward, devised schemes to fund impecunious divinity students, hoping to preserve the commitment to a more learned ministry in the face of challenges from all sides.²⁷

The so-called Cambridge Model that Poole devised for funding students at the university met, like so many other efforts to fund divinity education, with a blistering polemical response.²⁸ If the Revolution encouraged efforts to enrich clerical learning, it also moved from the radical margins to the popular press the critiques of the learned ministry and the schools that trained them. The range of arguments against more support for the education of the ministry advanced different political and theological visions and found distinct faults with the status quo. What they shared, however, was deep suspicion of the supposed idleness of the ministry and the pedantry upon which they claimed their unique authority to preach, collect tithes and, now, receive augmentations. Critics in the 1640s charged the established clergy with hypocrisy for “making a trade” of preaching and demanding compensation in tithes without performing the honest labor of the tradesmen-preachers they excluded.²⁹ This debate turned on the question of whether the clergy could legitimately claim to labor for their public compensation and the public charge of their education.

From the beginning, the attacks on a tithe-supported ministry targeted the education that the clergy claimed gave them authority to preach, just as the debate on pluralism and impropriation had been framed as a question of the funding necessary to make the most learned possible ministry. Samuel How, a cobbler who garnered short-lived celebrity in 1640 by proving through example that tradesmen like himself could preach from pulpits across London, published a theological justification opposing the relevance of “humane learning,” that is, “knowledge of Arts and Sciences, divers Tongues, and much reading,” for the office of preaching as Christ and his apostles had practiced it.³⁰ The humane learning taught in schools and universities might be valuable to “States-men, Physicians, Lawyers, and Gentlemen,” he maintained, but not to those who aspired to preach following the example of the early church. The ministry, he said, was no “worldly employment,” and those who practiced it, like the original apostles, must not confuse a divine calling with an earthly profession as the tithe-supported clergy do, who are “so farre from *working with*

“Ministers of State: The Established Church in Lancashire during the English Revolution, 1642–1660,” *Northern History* 45, no. 1 (2008): 51–69; Rosemary O’Day and Ann Hughes, “Augmentation and Amalgamation: Was There a Systematic Approach to the Reform of Parochial Finance, 1640–1660?,” in O’Day and Heal, *Princes and Paupers*, 167–94.

²⁷ Matthew Poole, *A Model for the Maintaining of Students of Choice Abilities at the University, and Principally in Order to the Ministry* [. . .] (London, 1658); *Sundry Things from Severall Hands Concerning the University of Oxford: viz. I. A petition from some well-affected therein; II. A modell for a colledge reformation; III. Queries concerning the said university, and several persons therein* (London, 1659).

²⁸ E.M. *A brief answer unto the Cambridge model* [. . .] (London, 1658).

²⁹ Milton, “Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings out of the Church,” 228.

³⁰ Samuel How, *The Sufficiency of the Spirits Teaching without Humane Learning* (London, 1640), Bv.

their own hands for their own *necessities*, as the Apostle requires.”³¹ A broadside defending him, published in 1640, appended the punning verse,

Cambridge and Oxford, may their glory now,
Vail to a *Cobler*; if they know but *How*:
Thought big with Art, they cannot over-top
The *Spirits teaching* in a *Cobler's Shop*.³²

How's argument rested on the position that the contemporary clergy ought to recreate the ministry of their predecessors in the primitive church and so must take to carpentry, farming, and “working with their own hands” to support themselves.³³ In the following years, unlicensed preachers to London's gathered congregations and itinerant ministers with the New Model Army extrapolated principles from the biblical precedent to justify their ministry and condemn tithes and the divinity learning those tithes upheld. In 1645, the churchman Daniel Featley cautioned against the proliferation of “Coach-men, Weavers, Felt-makers, and other base Mechanics” who “are now (by some) thought able Ministers.”³⁴ Featley directed the charge against the Baptists who had sprung up from behind their clandestine pulpits, including Edward Barber. That same year, Barber explained what it would practically mean for preachers to live up to the apostolic example that How and others elevated, including the obligation that they “strive to make the Gospell free.” Anything short of that effort, he said, would invite accusations of simony, insofar as it would mean buying and selling of sermons for pay. And so for anyone who took up preaching, he advised: “[T]hey that have Trades let them use them, and those that have none let them get into one,” further citing Ephesians 4:28, “that so he that stole may steale no more, but labour with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.”³⁵ Barber's fellow Baptist Thomas Collier, whose ministry followed parliamentary armies, extended this principle to a polemic in print against an established ministry of “monopolizers” who “merchandized” their sermons while barring any “Fisherman, Carpenter, Cobler” from preaching.³⁶

These radical arguments depicted simony as obstructing pastoral reform and the “mechanik” labor of the itinerant preacher as the alternative source of income that could replace the extractive tithes and exploitative fees that fed the church.³⁷ Exchanging manual work and artisan skill for compensation could preclude the “hireling” clergy from demanding pay for preaching and thereby sinking further into the sin of simony.³⁸

³¹ How, *The Sufficiencie of the Spirits Teaching without Humane Learning* E4v.

³² *The Vindication of the Cobler; Being a Briefe Publication of His Doctrine* [. . .] (London, 1640). The verse was also attached to a third reprint in 1655.

³³ How, *Sufficiencie of the Spirits Teaching without Humane Learning*, E4v.

³⁴ Daniel Featley, *The Dippers Dipt, or, The Anabaptists Duck'd and Plung'd over Head and Eares, at a Disputation in Southwark* [. . .] (London, 1645), 136.

³⁵ Edward Barber, *A True Discovery of the Ministry of the Gospell* [. . .] (London, 1645), 7.

³⁶ Thomas Collier, *A Brief Discovery of the Corruption of the Ministry of the Church of England* [. . .] (London, 1647), 13, 30. See also Stephen Wright, s.v. “Collier, Thomas (d. 1691), Baptist Preacher,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/5922>.

³⁷ William Hartley, *The Prerogative Priests Passing-Bell* (London, 1651), 6.

³⁸ Roger Williams, *The Hirelings Ministry None of Christs, or, A Discourse Touching the Propagating the Gospel of Christ Jesus* [. . .] (London, 1652); Milton, “Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings out of the Church,” 202.

In addition to following apostolic precedent, the preacher's mundane labor was valuable insofar as it could be exchanged for subsistence, and the tithes were sinful insofar as they reduced pastoral work to the same kind of labor that could be sold or withheld. The arguments for mechanic preaching thus fed into the sprawling debate over the legitimacy of tithes. David Hawkes has traced this line of criticism through to the late years of the Interregnum, when Henry Stubbe and John Milton interpreted the practice of tithing as a coercive demand for the payment of a wage in exchange for the labor that a cleric claimed to perform.³⁹ In his polemic directed squarely at the sinful spirit of "Hire" that he saw as animating the national ministry, Milton captured concisely the attitude that revered tradesmen-preachers while scorning ministers who "make a trade" of their ministry: "But our ministers think scorn to use a trade, and count it the reproach of this age that tradesmen preach the gospel. It were to be wished they were all trades-men; they would not then so many of them for want of another trade make a trade of their preaching: and yet they clamour that tradesmen preach; and yet they preach, while they themselves are the worst tradesmen of all."⁴⁰ It was the tithes that "make Merchandize of Religion" by treating the sermon, the centerpiece of Protestant devotion, as a service that could be exchanged and withheld for pay.⁴¹

In rising to the defense of tithes, not all churchmen and their advocates fell back on scriptural exegesis and biblical precedent; some instead offered new arguments. From the period of transition from Rump to Barebones Parliament in the early 1650s, at the height of aspirations and fears that the learned ministry and their churches would be leveled and their right to enforce tithes denied, defenders warned of the dangers such policy would pose to the new ecclesiastical settlement. The basis for the clergy's right to collect tithes, long a practical matter of dispute, had since James's reign only become more controversial, particularly in the contentious case of enforcing Londoners' obligation to pay parish ministers rather than independent lecturers.⁴² John Selden's 1618 *Historie of Tithes* attracted censure for denying that the right to tithes came directly from scripture and showing instead how it grew in custom over time.⁴³ By the 1650s, though, the defenders of a tithe-supported ministry had followed Selden and abandoned earlier justifications that rendered the right to them *iure divino* and instead sought other arguments. Selden noted in his *Table Talk* the irony that clerics by then were embracing his own historical account of tithes that sidelined divine-right claims, which was the same that had been excoriated for undermining clerical authority three decades earlier.⁴⁴ Where they had cited scripture against him to prove a *iure divino* right in the 1620s, now defenders

³⁹ David Hawkes, "The Concept of the 'Hireling' in Milton's Theology," *Milton Studies*, no. 43 (2004): 64–85.

⁴⁰ Milton, "Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings out of the Church," 228.

⁴¹ William Sprigg, *A Modest Plea, for an Equal Common-Wealth, against Monarchy* [. . .] (London, 1659), 40.

⁴² Christopher Hill, *Economic Problems of the Church from Archbishop Whitgift to the Long Parliament* (Oxford, 1956), 158–59, 278–80.

⁴³ John Selden, *The History of tithes that is the practice of payment of them* [. . .] (London 1618) G. J. Toomer, "Selden's *Historie of Tithes*: Genesis, Publication, Aftermath," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 65, nos. 3–4 (2003): 345–78.

⁴⁴ *The Table Talk of John Selden*, ed. Samuel Harvey Reynolds (Oxford, 1892), 179–81, as quoted in Toomer, "Selden's *Historie of Tithes*: Genesis, Publication, Aftermath," 374–75; Edith Anne Bershadsky,

of tithes turned to custom, comparison, and analogy.⁴⁵ When the Presbyterians and moderate independents sought to justify tithes, some offered premises that compared rather than distinguished the clergy from other professions who provided their service for compensation. These like William Prynne met the critics on their own terms and insisted that the clergy really did “labor” for their trade and that their education really was an “apprenticeship.”⁴⁶

The schoolmaster and curate Thomas Hall, possibly the most prolific respondent to all the accusations leveled by critics of the clergy, laid out this kind of argument directly. In the first volley of his many controversies, Hall compared the priesthood to any other profession, a strategy to denigrate the pretensions of those who claimed they could preach without ordination or education: “If in the Commonwealth none may intrude into anothers Calling, but must proceed in an orderly way, and first serve an Apprenticeship, Then much lesse may any intrude into the Ministers Calling.”⁴⁷ He justified the comparison through an account of the “most laborious work” that went into the pastoral care of preaching, catechizing, and tending to parishioners: “apprenticeship” at the universities was required to learn this laborious work, but was also a prerequisite for the learned minister’s time spent outside of that work.⁴⁸ In his 1654 *Vindiciae Literarum, the Schools Guarded*, he detailed how reading of ecclesiastical histories, for instance, was “necessary” for the responsible preacher but must be done in “succive houres for recreation, after strong labour.”⁴⁹ The Christ’s College fellow Joseph Sedgwick likewise instructed his listeners and readers at the university to “mind not the popular cavil of your being brought up to a trade & bound Apprentices to the University.” Rather, they must respond to this increasingly common accusation and thank God that “Providence hath conjoin’d in our education our lively-hood with serving him in the Church; and withall hath stirr’d up our Ancestours to a liberal provision for the labourers in the Word and Doctrine, and to a confirming it by so undoubted a legal right of propriety to the Clergy.”⁵⁰

The claim for clergy’s right to tithes also rested on the legitimacy of the education that made them a *learned* ministry.⁵¹ For reformers like John Hall (not to be confused with Thomas Hall, above), who advocated for an established ministry in the

“Politics, Erudition, and Ecclesiology: John Selden’s ‘Historie of Tithes’ and Its Contexts and Ramifications” (PhD diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1994), 206.

⁴⁵ For this scriptural argument against Selden, see “A shorte collection of arguments to prove that tithes bee due by the word and law of god, and by naturall or common reason, to be paid for the maintenance of ministers and preachers,” [1623–25], Add MS 5960, Cambridge University Library.

⁴⁶ William Prynne, *A Gospel Plea* (1653), as quoted in Hawkes, “The Concept of the ‘Hireling’ in Milton’s Theology,” 75.

⁴⁷ Thomas Hall, *The Pulpit Guarded with XVII Arguments Proving the Unlawfulness, Sinfulness, and Danger of Suffering Private Persons to Take upon Them Publike Preaching* [. . .] (London, 1651), 22.

⁴⁸ Hall, *Pulpit Guarded with XVII Arguments*, 22, 25.

⁴⁹ Thomas Hall, *Vindiciae Literarum, the Schools Guarded; or, The excellency and vsefulness of humane learning in subordination to divinity, and preparation to the ministry* [. . .] (London, 1654), 8.

⁵⁰ Joseph Sedgwick, *A Sermon, Preached at St. Marie’s in the University of Cambridge May 1st, 1653; Or, An Essay to the Discovery of the Spirit of Enthusiasme and Pretended Inspiration, That Disturbs and Strikes at the Universities* (London, 1653), 14.

⁵¹ For discussion on defenses of tithes as proprietary rents, see Laura Brace, *The Idea of Property in Seventeenth-Century England: Tithes and the Individual* (Manchester, 1998), 30.

aftermath of Barebones Parliament debates over their abolition in 1653, it was the education and the work of learning that justified a minister's proprietary claim to make money on the same grounds as anyone who has a right to earn money by his "office or profession."⁵² Just as attorneys learned the law so they could ask payment for their services, so ministers studied scripture so they could expect upkeep for their preaching. John Hall ultimately argued that this attack on the clergy would destroy the "good men of the Universities" who without the possibility of preferment would have "shut up their study-doors, and have gone to plow."⁵³ Five years earlier, he had advocated a sweeping reallocation of university funds away from fellowships earmarked for clerical study and had called for their investment instead in "humane" and "mechanical knowledge." This, he had argued, would stem the proliferation of "idle pedantick brotherhoods."⁵⁴ These two works intervened in distinct debates before different parliaments. Their arguments were not, however, inconsistent. The coupling of an argument for retrenchment in funding for the clergy with a defense of that clergy's professional status would, as will be seen, reappear with consequence after the Interregnum.

From these arguments about the ministry as labor, divinity education as apprenticeship, and preaching as profession emerged a justification for the clergy and their tithes as an employment like any other, with work that could be compensated comparably. The critics charged that this was precisely the excuse for a hireling clergy that fundamentally misconstrued the work of the minister and the necessary preparation to preach. William Hartley, in support of five mechanic preachers who had disputed with Thomas Hall, identified this argument at the center of the debate and challenged it. The work of the "Mechanik and Trademan" was guided by the real "arts and sciences" which, unlike the education that Thomas Hall and others claimed for themselves, helped lead mechanic preachers to "useful" employments.⁵⁵ Formal education, in the estimation of clerics like Hartley, was useless because it posited the wrong kind of human effort in the crafting of a sermon. The strident critics who sought the abolition of tithes and the elevation of cobbler-preachers and their colleagues were often guided by the belief that effective sermons came directly from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁶ Schooling in divinity as an apprenticeship was seen as irrelevant and exclusionary because the inward calling of the preacher did not discriminate on the basis of biblical erudition; manual labor was thus no distraction. For those like Hartley and Roger Williams, manual work and craft trades were a much more relevant education for a preacher who felt the inward calling.⁵⁷ Performing the same work as one's congregation helped one preach and apply the doctrine to their flock's condition and so was positively

⁵² John Hall, *Confusion Confounded: Or, A Firm Way of Settlement Settled and Confirmed* [. . .] (London, 1654), 9.

⁵³ John Hall, *Confusion Confounded*, 14–18.

⁵⁴ John Hall, *An Humble Motion to the Parliament of England Concerning the Advancement of Learning, and Reformation of the Universities* (London, 1649), 14–17.

⁵⁵ Hartley, *Prerogative Priests Passing-Bell*, 1, 6.

⁵⁶ Mary Morrissey has found this pneumological homiletics at work in radical accounts of preaching particularly in the Interregnum. Mary Morrissey, "Scripture, Style and Persuasion in Seventeenth-Century English Theories of Preaching," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 53, no. 4 (2002): 686–706.

⁵⁷ Hartley, *Prerogative Priests Passing-Bell*, 6; Hawkes, "Concept of the 'Hireling' in Milton's Theology," 75.

beneficial to that work. Advanced schooling that took people away from labor should therefore never be chargeable to the parish or the public.

By the waning years of the Interregnum, when new horizons of possibility invited proposals for sweeping ecclesiastical reform, the most strident critics of the establishment proposed the abolition of tithes to level not just the established ministry but also the schools and universities they supported. The Quakers who collected signatures for a 1659 petition from the women of Wales and Herefordshire demanded the “colleges be sold” and “all the Tithes that belong to them thrown down, and then if you will have Schools to teach boyes Natural Languages and several Tongues to make Merchants of them, let every one that sends his Son pay him his wages.”⁵⁸ Their proposal coupled the criticism of school divinity, the elevation of lucrative learning, and the private obligation to pay for the education that taught it. For Milton, an ally in the same anti-tithe struggle, what little education in languages or history that might be valuable for a preacher could be had “at secondary leisure and at home.”⁵⁹ He clarified his support of voluntary “alms” that parishioners might give to their preacher.⁶⁰ For learning that could be done in leisure, alms would be more appropriate than the wages that would be expected for labor.

The restoration of the monarchy dashed these hopes for the abolition of tithes and the reform of education. However, the following years saw a growing concern with the wealth of the realm and the productive workers who could contribute to it, and in those visions for national enrichment, the reputed idleness of ministers became a new kind of problem. Their status as laborers and their contribution to the productivity of their parishes became particularly important in schemes that slotted them among other secular professions. The framework that valued production could uphold the clergy’s professional status, as moderates of the Interregnum had done, while also proposing significant retrenchment and reallocation of resources to more useful employments. The writing of John Hall (discussed above) demonstrated how those two seemingly opposed imperatives could work together, and prominent works of the Restoration carried it further. They left behind William Perkins’s insistence at the turn to the seventeenth century that better education and maintenance could increase the proportion of good clergy within the population.

PRODUCTION, PROPORTION, AND THE RETRENCHMENT OF THE CLERGY IN THE RESTORATION

A focus on trade supremacy, mercantile competition, and material enrichment more frequently set the terms of public debate across the political spectrum beginning in the contentious late years of the Interregnum.⁶¹ The urgent need to raise money to field armies and exert political power during the civil wars and after led thinkers

⁵⁸ [Mary Forster], ed., *These Several Papers Was Sent to the Parliament the Twentieth Day of the Fifth Moneth, 1659* [. . .] (London, 1659). For discussion of the demographics and social background of the signatories, see Stephen A. Kent, “‘Hand-Maids and Daughters of the Lord’: Quaker Women, Quaker Families, and Somerset’s Anti-Tithe Petition in 1659,” *Quaker History* 97, no. 1 (2008): 32–63.

⁵⁹ Milton, “Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means,” 238.

⁶⁰ Milton, 232.

⁶¹ Blair Hoxby, *Mammon’s Music: Literature and Economics in the Age of Milton* (New Haven, 2002), 76.

to advocate new management of England's diplomacy, resources, and population.⁶² Ted McCormick and Abigail Swingen have shown how the emergence of this way of debating coincided with novel ways of conceiving the ideal population.⁶³ Political thinkers like William Petty argued that, even if not everyone was perfectly industrious, the nation should at least have a sufficient proportion of productive workers distributed in balance across the empire and across professions. Petty's systematic application of a proportional framework for determining ideal distributions of land and professions within a population was informed by James Harrington's republican political science from the late years of the Interregnum, which also propped up Harrington's defense of an established ministry.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, Petty's views on a substantial reallocation of public funds, education, and young people away from the clergy were shared by other writers on political economy. Divorced from the contentious ecclesiological politics of the previous decades, these plans could achieve a degree of consensus not previously possible. By the 1670s, it was not uncommon for commentators on the issue to derive their conclusions about the clergy and their education from principles of trade and schemes for national enrichment. Thus the satirist John Eachard proposed a plan to reduce the number of graduate clergy, "some vent for our Learned Ones beyond the Sea" by which England "could transport so many Tunn of Divines yearly, as we do other Commodities with which the Nation is over stocked."⁶⁵

While Eachard's mercantile solution was made in jest, clergy were accounted by others as yet another profession and form of labor within the proposals of political economy. Petty offered a comprehensive account of necessary "public charges" and the way to augment them to their ideal proportion in 1662. His discussion of the clergy shows how his vision of preachers' work within Protestant devotion could fit them in as one more profession among comparable secular employments. That particular employment would, if Petty's vision were realized, rely more and more on an open market for pastoral labor and the voluntary payment for it. Petty deemed the clergy "publicly chargeable" insofar as they maintained order by teaching their congregations the "Laws of God," threatening them punishment in the afterlife, and promising them reward on earth.⁶⁶ This was a minimalist conception of the ministry's public obligation, and he suggested meager funds to support it. He argued that the church and its laity were weighed down by too many parishes, which the Reformation and the sermon-centric devotion it delivered had rendered redundant. Protestant preachers could "preach unto multitudes assembled in one place" without an

⁶² Pincus, "Neither Machiavellian Moment nor Possessive Individualism," 718–21.

⁶³ McCormick, "Seventeenth-Century Demographic Thought"; Ted McCormick, *William Petty and the Ambitions of Political Arithmetic* (Oxford, 2009); Swingen, *Competing Visions of Empire*.

⁶⁴ Philip Connell attributes the resistance to substantial reform of tithes in the 1659 Rump Parliament to the influence of James Harrington, who argued for the necessity of an established clergy for Erastian reasons of political stability. Philip Connell, *Secular Chains: Poetry and the Politics of Religion from Milton to Pope* (Oxford, 2016), 32–33. See also McCormick, *William Petty*, 119–20; Frank Amati and Tony Aspromourgos, "Petty Contra Hobbes: A Previously Untranslated Manuscript," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 46, no. 1 (1985): 127–32.

⁶⁵ John Eachard, *The Grounds & Occasions of the Contempt of the Clergy and Religion Enquired into in a Letter Written to R.L.* (London, 1670), 115.

⁶⁶ William Petty, *A treatise of taxes & contributions: shewing the nature and measures of crown-lands, assessments, customs, poll-moneys* [. . .] (London, 1662), 19.

obligation to hear oral confession, so the number of parishes could be reduced to no more than one thousand in total. Petty estimated there were ten times that number in the status quo.⁶⁷

Petty mustered other arguments about historical continuity with the Reformation and the most effective means to edify the laity that bolstered his calculations about the reduction in public upkeep for the church. He would couple fewer parishes with smaller tithe payments as well. Doing so would not only save the payments to be spent elsewhere but would also discipline an extravagant clergy; that newfound humility would make them “patterns of holiness, for showing their own self-denials, mortifications, and austerities, that ’tis possible to imitate them in the precepts of God.”⁶⁸ The reduction in tithes would also entail the divestment of endowments from divinity education and university fellowships that exacerbated the “bare pulpit discourse” that passed for learned sermons but showed none of the holiness in behavior expected of their authors.⁶⁹ That “retrenchment” would also reapportion funds for education in law and medicine as part of Petty’s vision to swell the ranks of “husbandry and manufacture”—in his view, the only trades that generated “nutritive juyces of the Body Politick.”⁷⁰ Though professions like the ministry, along with medicine, law, and commerce, might fulfill some public service, the labor of the clergy was not productive of the wealth needed to pay it.⁷¹ Petty’s conclusions addressed questions of ecclesiology by outlining principles of church organization and the way that those principles drew from claims about church history and homiletics; yet he subjected clergy and the church to a logic he applied to any profession and professional society.

If the clergy were only minimally valuable to the public for the social discipline their living examples instilled, then much of what was recognizable in their office was instead a private concern. Petty’s skepticism of the edifying potential of “bare pulpit discourse” and the formal learning that taught it led him to wonder whether all divinity education “ought to be made a private Trade”—the same conclusions arrived at by revolutionary critics.⁷² He, too, would relegate most of the preacher’s work and his upkeep to private, voluntary transactions with parishioners. The pastor who wanted to supplement his meager living should depend instead on the “free contribution of his flock.” This arrangement would have the added benefit of placating congregationalists like Milton who recommended a similar scheme of uncoerced “alms” to sustain their preachers. Petty also insisted that his reform could effectively contain the spread of religious dissent, since ministers would now feel a financial incentive to keep congregants paying for their services rather than those of an independent competitor.⁷³ They would fight dissent by opening up a market for voluntary payment for pastoral care, which conformed

⁶⁷ Petty, *Treatise of taxes and contributions*, 6–7.

⁶⁸ Petty, 53.

⁶⁹ Petty, 73.

⁷⁰ Petty, 11, 28.

⁷¹ In a contemporary work, Josiah Child likewise classes these professions, with the exception of merchants, as those who “doe onely hand [wealth] from one to another at home.” Child did not name clergy specifically but referred to “scholars.” Josiah Child, *Brief Observations Concerning Trade, and Interest of Money by J. C.* (London, 1668), 16.

⁷² Petty, *Treatise of taxes and contributions*, 19.

⁷³ Petty, 73.

with many nonconformists' preferred ecclesiastical organization in practice, even if the thought of preaching as a service exchangeable for pay might offend their theology.

Petty's vision for the reduction of public professions to their correct proportion also extended the logic of the moderate defense of the professional ministry that had been articulated in the Interregnum. The clergy were one more profession that could expect pay for their labor, so it would be reasonable to expect they would sell their services on a market like other tradesmen. To the extent that their labor was a public charge that could not be subjected to a market, then it would be possible for a political arithmetician like Petty to calculate that there were too many.⁷⁴ Writers with political and religious convictions that differed from Petty's echoed his call to turn more divinity students out to agriculture and manufacturing. Edward Chamberlayne, whose frequently reprinted and ever-expanding *Angliae Notitia* from 1669, which surveyed English geography, customs, and economy to uphold a social order with the monarch at its head, identified grammar schools and the impoverished preachers they trained for university as a drain on the economy and a threat to political stability. He advocated that they instead learn for "the more profitable Plough, and beneficial Manufactures," and advocated that England emulate recent ordinances promulgated by the king of Spain to reduce the number of grammar schools for that very purpose.⁷⁵

Chamberlayne was concerned that the overabundance of graduate clergy was also weighing on the benefices of ministers, which he claimed were some of the most shamefully meager in Europe. Here too he emulated England's continental counterparts and sought more generous support for a clergy that, he argued, needed more maintenance lest they fall into disrepute in the eyes of their parishioners. This position contrasted with that of Petty, who insisted that "austerities" could "reconcile [clergy] to the people."⁷⁶ Churchmen of the period agreed with Chamberlayne. In 1661, clergymen wrote a petition seeking to address the issue of threadbare maintenance, suggesting, among other things, excluding from support nongraduates, "raw youths," and any of questionable pastoral abilities and unorthodox theology.⁷⁷

Proposals to repurpose young divinity students into husbandmen and artisans received a hearing in popular media outside the corridors of scholarly institutions like the Royal Society—which claimed both Petty and Chamberlayne as members. In 1676, Thomas Shadwell's well-received play *The Virtuoso* tapped into the growing body of proposals for pastoral reform to satirize the society's experimental pretensions. In it, the prominent experimentalist Sir Nicholas Gimcrack presents an array of ridiculous contraptions, including an enormous "Speaking-Trumpet" or "Stetrophonical Tube" to amplify voices.⁷⁸ "When I have perfected it," he projects, "there needs but one Parson to Preach to a whole County; the King may then take

⁷⁴ Petty, 19.

⁷⁵ Edward Chamberlayne, *The second part of The present state of England* [. . .], 6th ed. (London, 1676), 282–83. The first edition to include this critical section on the grammar schools was *The second part of the fifth edition*, printed in 1674.

⁷⁶ Petty, *Treatise of Taxes and Contributions*, 73.

⁷⁷ John Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England, 1646–1689* (New Haven, 1991), 168.

⁷⁸ Thomas Shadwell, *The Virtuoso, A Comedy, Acted at the Duke's Theatre* [. . .] (London, 1676), 70. I thank Vera Keller for pointing out this reference to me.

all the Church Lands into his own hands, and serve all *England* with his Chaplains in Ordinary.” He assures his audiences that the dispossessed parsons can instead find more productive work: “It is no matter, let ’em learn to make Wollen Cloth, and advance the Manufacture of the Nation; or learn to make Nets, and improve the Fishing-Trade; it is a fine sedentary life for those idle Fellows in black.” He is abruptly interrupted by the cries of a mob of ribbon-weavers who descend on him in retaliation for his invention of the “engine-loom” that has destroyed their livelihoods, just as the amplifying device would do for parsons.⁷⁹ (The eminent Samuel Morland had in fact published work on such a tube in the Royal Society’s *Philosophical Transactions*, but he kept his aspirations for it to diplomacy, with no mention of preaching.⁸⁰)

As a proliferating literature in the 1660s and 1670s bolstered the call to fit more youths to productive employments from agriculture and manufacture to mercantile trade, the claim that a glut weighed the clergy down became more and more commonplace.⁸¹ The complaints against the “excess of ecclesiastiques” persisted from the late years of the Interregnum to become a common refrain from otherwise conflicting positions.⁸² As some arguments defended the clergy as another form of labor that deserved compensation, contrary visions rendered them as practically reliant on a market for their own trades or on voluntary contributions. Writers like Petty and Chamberlayne bolstered their arguments with strong claims about the nature of Protestant devotion, the conditions for pastoral edification, and the material upkeep it required. They were not, for the most part, drawing these claims from scripture or from doctrine; they consulted recent history, proportional calculations, and the example of imperial rivals like Spain and the Netherlands. When Christopher Wase cautioned in print in 1678 against the coalescing consensus about the overabundance of clergy, he attacked it with arguments about the scriptural imperative to preach to the ignorant, without departing from the framework of political economy.

CHRISTOPHER WASE’S SURVEY AND THE VALUE OF CLERICAL LEARNING

Christopher Wase had spent the better part of his career in schools and universities as a schoolmaster, translator, grammarian, and editor for the press at Oxford. He responded to the mounting literature on the waste of resources dedicated to clergy and the schools that taught them by focusing his efforts on the latter. Wase undertook an ambitious project to survey the free schools across England and Wales in 1673.

⁷⁹ Shadwell, *Virtuoso*, 74. See also Judith B. Slagle, “‘A Great Rabble of People’: The Ribbon-Weavers in Thomas Shadwell’s *The Virtuoso*,” *Notes and Queries* 36, no. 3 (1989): 351–54. There is no evidence to suggest that an engine loom was actually conceived by or associated with the Royal Society.

⁸⁰ Samuel Morland, “An Account of the Speaking Trumpet, as It Hath Been Contrived and Published by Sir Sam. Moreland Knight and Baronet; Together with Its Uses Both at Sea and Land,” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* 6, no. 79 (1671): 3056–58.

⁸¹ For some publications that tied England’s economic fate to the employment of its youth, see Child, *Brief Observations Concerning Trade, and Interest of Money* by J.C.; [John Houghton], *England’s Great Happiness. Or, A Dialogue between Content and Complaint* [. . .] (London, 1677); Thomas Firmin, *Some Proposals for the Imployment of the Poor, and for the Prevention of Idleness and the Consequence Thereof* [. . .] (London, 1681).

⁸² Francis Osborn, *Advice to a Son; By Francis Osborn: The Second Part* (London, 1658), 79.

His career had led from his ejection from Cambridge for his royalist sympathies in 1650 to a position tutoring and teaching school, to a stipend from the secretary of state after the Restoration, all while he published celebrated Latin translations and dictionaries.⁸³ By the time he sent out his survey to collect information, his scholarly accomplishments had earned him credibility from the schoolmasters he canvassed.⁸⁴ Through this survey and the publication that followed, he turned from advancing humane learning to defending school education with arguments elevating the classroom subjects and Christian piety that schoolmasters taught as engines for more productive labor. His *Considerations Concerning Free-Schools as Settled in England* (1678) justified the efforts of his survey respondents in explicitly economic terms, declaring that the “ground reclaim’d by culture will set at the highest rent. Grammar learning is requisite to very many honest callings.”⁸⁵

Wase had conducted his survey by sending printed questionnaires to intermediaries who distributed them and collected the desired information from schoolmasters, trustees, and villagers within a region.⁸⁶ The questionnaires asked when a school was founded, how it was endowed and by whom, which schoolmasters had taught there, who served as governors or trustees, whether it had any exhibitions (bursaries) or fellowships to the universities, and whether it had libraries holding interesting manuscripts. The survey was dogged with difficulties from the start, particularly from respondents reticent to see the details of their schools’ endowments published when such facts were so often the grounds of legal controversy.⁸⁷ By the summer of 1676, Wase was considering abandoning the project, or at least scaling it back to focus only on a “specimen” of schools in Oxfordshire.⁸⁸

He did not let the subject rest, however, and two years later published the result of his investigations. In it, Wase laid out a sophisticated defense of the ecclesiastical establishment and the free schools scattered across the kingdom that fed it. The *Considerations*, however, made little reference to any quantitative data he had collected from his survey. He presented numeric data about the augmentations to ministers paid in 1548, extracted from records he read in the Augmentation of the Kings Revenue, for instance, but did not use quantitative information on schoolmaster salaries or endowments gathered in his own survey.⁸⁹ He recognized that critics of the free schools saw them as engines for the production of too many clerics, and his

⁸³ Richard E. Hodges, s.v. “Wase, Christopher (1627–1690), Schoolmaster and Classical Scholar,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/28802>.

⁸⁴ Letter from Ferdinando Archer, 31 December 1673, Christopher Wase Papers, MS 390/2, fol. 103, Corpus Christi College Library, Oxford; Letter from William Speed, 28 August 1675, Christopher Wase Papers, MS 390/2, fol. 9, Corpus Christi College Library.

⁸⁵ Wase, *Considerations Concerning Free-Schools*, 34.

⁸⁶ References to the questionnaire as a printed document can be found in the letter of Samuel Moore, 1673, Christopher Wase Papers, MS 391/1, fol. 87, Corpus Christi College Library. For the novelty of printed questionnaires, see Adam Fox, “Printed Questionnaires, Research Networks, and the Discovery of the British Isles, 1650–1800,” *Historical Journal* 53, no. 3 (2010): 593–621.

⁸⁷ See Letter from Stephen Haffenden, 12 January 1673, Christopher Wase Papers, MS 391/1, fol. 87, Corpus Christi College Library; Letter from John Matthews, 13 September 1674, Christopher Wase Papers, MS 390/1 fol. 77r, Corpus Christi College Library; Letter from Samuel Frankland, 27 April 1675, Christopher Wase Papers, MS 391/1, fol. 86, Corpus Christi College Library.

⁸⁸ Letter from Robert Herne, 27 November 1676, Christopher Wase Papers, MS 390/3 fol. 152, Corpus Christi College Library.

⁸⁹ Wase, *Considerations Concerning Free-Schools*, 39–40.

survey did uncover examples of country schools offering grants to students intended for the ministry.⁹⁰ He dismissed the possibility of determining an actual proportion of ministers necessary at a particular moment, however, since limited access to mortality records constrained the ability to determine how many more clerics could be supported with current revenues.

Wase's objection to these proportional frameworks for the clergy was not just empirical. He argued that a proportional framework fundamentally misconceived the imperative to educate the next generation of laborers and professionals within the realm, and that it particularly misconstrued the ministry and its work within a "state, especially Christian."⁹¹ He insisted that, rather than reduce clergy to fit revenue, a Christian state should increase revenue to support the clergy necessary. "A great harvest," he reminded his readers, "requireth many labourers." The imperative to preaching and pastoral care did not change, so why should England train fewer clergy? He posed comparative and historical arguments rather than strictly proportional ones, asking, "And indeed do they who have suffer'd themselves to receive such perswasion know how many they are in Spain? How many they were in England in the reign of K. Hen. 8? Do they reckon thus, that however revenue may vary, the same work abides?"⁹² He turned to the history of clerical societies in collegiate churches to trace one continuous imperative derailed at the Reformation to educate the ministry, and in turn the laity. He stated that Henry VIII had intended to establish the old monasteries as "Collegiate Churches" for teaching ministers, but with his death, that project had never been brought to fruition. He held up the Council of Trent's decision to fund "seminaries," giving their recognition of the value of "learning" to "religion" as an example to follow.⁹³

Wase's respondents had already suggested fragments of this historical narrative to him in their correspondence. His historical claim that early free schools had been successful continuations of the monasteries and colleges dissolved by Henry VIII had been sketched for him by Oliver Doiley of the school at Cambridge. Doiley praised Wase's survey insofar as it could "justify the Reformation by making it appear that public charity is not thereby extinguished but rather a Commutation made for those numerous monasteries & religious Houses which were heretofore in this nation."⁹⁴ Schools, for Wase and for Doiley, carried on the same function for clerical education specifically and lay religious edification more generally that had been entrusted to monasteries, colleges, and chapters before they had been

⁹⁰ Letter from G. Francis, 1673, Christopher Wase Papers, MS 390/1 fol. 108v, Corpus Christi College Library; Letter from Master of the School at Derby, n.d., Christopher Wase Papers, MS 390/3, fol. 138r, Corpus Christi College Library.

⁹¹ Wase, *Considerations Concerning Free-Schools*, 45.

⁹² Wase, 110.

⁹³ Wase, 36–38. Henry's reign rather saw the dissolution of a significant number of collegiate churches, see J. J. Scarisbrick, "Henry VIII and the Dissolution of the Secular Colleges," in *Law and Government under the Tudors: Essays Presented to Sir Geoffrey Elton*, ed. Claire Cross, David Loades, and J. J. Scarisbrick (Cambridge, 1988), 51–66. English Protestants, including puritans, had lamented the gap in educational provision left by the dissolution of the monasteries since the Elizabethan period. Harriet Lyon, *Memory and the Dissolution of the Monasteries in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2021), 109.

⁹⁴ Letter from Oliver Doiley, 17 December 1673, Christopher Wase Papers, 391/1, fol. 75, Corpus Christi College Library.

purged. John Bradshaw, the rector at Cublington and an intermediary who distributed and collected Wase's survey from his associates, recounted from his own experience how his free school had imprinted in him the principles of Christianity and other learning that prepared him to enter the ministry: "Schooles are the places where the foundations are first layd of piety & learning. The pious principles that Mr. whitehead instilled into me I hope I shall never part with whilse I live. He was a right Elizabeth protestant, & tooke great paines especially on the Lords day to ground his schollers in the knowledge & practice of sound religion. I looke upon exactness in the learned tongues to be the best learning. & the good linguist to be the best scholler; for it layes a foundation to arts & all other learning."⁹⁵ Bradshaw's panegyric to the Christian education at the schools must have made an impression on Wase, since he made a rare marginal mark beside this account.

Wase's historical narrative of a commitment to collegiate forms of clerical learning carried on in free schools led him to the debates on the education of the ministry that had raged two decades before his own publication. The clergy, he argued, must partake in formal learning, which they in turn provided in schools and pulpits. On the first point, he engaged with the mechanic preachers and their advocates, reiterating controversies from the Interregnum and insisting that the foundations of true religion were learned and not received: "But the *Doctrine of Faith* being an ingrafted word, not from nature, but by culture, needed to be *reveled*; to be couch'd in Holy Writt; exhibited under Sacraments; and entrusted to *Dispencers* not only *faithful*, but *able* also."⁹⁶ He cited patristic authorities like the Christian historian Pamphilus of Caesarea and his student Eusebius to establish that it was "academical studies" rather than manual trades that were capable of cultivating that *able* ministry.⁹⁷

If doctrine of faith must be taught through "culture" to the ministry, then they in turn must inculcate it in their parishioners. Abundant free schools would be valuable insofar as they could train more students destined for the ministry, but more importantly, they would teach "piety and letters preparatory to trade" to those destined for secular work.⁹⁸ Those schoolmasters who described funds to pay for students' apprenticeships confirmed this for Wase.⁹⁹ The learning that was inextricable from piety was not merely supplemental to the practical education for trades but necessary to augment its productivity. Wase argued throughout that learning that doctrine of faith and the piety attending it could train more efficient workers, and used a telling example to explain how learning could materially increase the value of one's labor: "There is improvement of mind, the fruits of discipline, not to be despi'd. A learned slave would sell for more. A youth brought up at school will be taken Apprentice with less mony then an illiterate. The broken Colt, tam'd Heifer,

⁹⁵ Letter from Bradshaw, 9 December 1674, Christopher Wase Papers, MS 390/1, fol. 84v, Corpus Christi College Library.

⁹⁶ Wase, *Considerations Concerning Free-Schools*, 6.

⁹⁷ Wase, 25.

⁹⁸ Wase, 53.

⁹⁹ Letter from Hugh Pugh, 7 August 1675, Christopher Wase Papers, MS 390/3, fol. 20, Corpus Christi College Library; Letter on School at Church Okeley, n.d., Christopher Wase Papers, MS 390/1, fols. 170–71, Corpus Christi College Library.

polish'd Diamond; known instances: nay ground reclaim'd by culture will set at the highest rent. Grammar learning is requisite to very many honest callings."¹⁰⁰

Like several of his respondents, Wase thus did not rely strictly on claims about the continuity of the Reformation and its educational mission. He offered original economic arguments about the importance of learning, the funding for it, and the material benefits it could accrue. William Speed recognized the financial value of Wase's *Considerations* for schools, maintaining that as publicity "is a principal meanes of their advancement (for mony is the encourager of other arts as well as ye military) you have worthily undertaken to transmitt a Record to posterity of our publick Nurserys of Learning in England, wth ye revenues & advantages belonging to them."¹⁰¹ Money was the origin of "arts," which could in turn conduce to the enrichment of other trades. One proposal among the responses Wade received called for "Publick Libraries" in market towns, funded by benefactors and parishioners; these libraries would assist small vicarages but also bring material "profit" to the "publick" by keeping within England the "manufacturing" of books usually printed in Europe.¹⁰² In *Considerations*, Wase elaborated principles of political economy that generalized these responses. Magistrates should not limit professions but instead "moderate and by the Prudence of their Orders remove obstructions to Trade, that Work be not wanting to the Industrious; as also provide encouragements for Industry, that Laborers be not wanting to the work."¹⁰³ States, in other words, ought to encourage industriousness however they could, and discouraging the young from entering any profession, including the ministry, only threatened to enervate the laboring population.

This framework scaffolded Wase's argument that school learning was a spur rather than a hindrance to the labor of the population and so should not be restrained. He embraced the imperative to augment labor as the path to national enrichment but thought that the exclusive focus on those professions that directly produced the "nutritive juyces of the commonwealth," as Petty described them, stunted the growth of productivity. In the words of one schoolmaster who lauded him, Wase sought to save "from contempt the Labours of the learned Commonwealth."¹⁰⁴ He came to the rescue of "Learning" by distinguishing it from the manual and mercantile labor that his contemporaries elevated, while insisting that learning was not "an enemy to trade, but by strict injunctions commands Labour."¹⁰⁵

Wase found theological warrants in scripture and apostolic example for the relationship he drew between labor and learning. He cited Paul, in 2 Thessalonians 3:10–12 and Titus 3:14, respectively, commanding that "if any would not work, neither should he eat," and "let our's also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses," to establish his point about a learning that could command labor. Rather than

¹⁰⁰ Wase, *Considerations Concerning Free-Schools*, 34.

¹⁰¹ Letter from William Speed, 20 August 1675, Christopher Wase Papers, MS 390/2, fol. 91r, Corpus Christi College Library.

¹⁰² "Certaine humble Propositions wth Reasons," n.d., Christopher Wase Papers, MS 390/3, fols. 213–15, Corpus Christi College Library.

¹⁰³ Wase, *Considerations Concerning Free-Schools*, 52.

¹⁰⁴ Letter from William Bland, 29 June 1675, Christopher Wase Papers, MS 390/2, fol. 97r, Corpus Christi College Library.

¹⁰⁵ Wase, *Considerations Concerning Free-Schools*, 12.

legitimizing learning as a form of labor, as did the Interregnum churchmen who redescribed it as “apprenticeship,” Wase insisted that both learning and labor materially depended on one another, and so scholars and artisans ought to respect each other.¹⁰⁶ He evoked scripture to flip the significance of the apostolic precedent that How and others had raised to establish their arguments for the legitimacy of laboring preachers. Wase referenced Jesus, “the author of our profession,” who set an example in that he did “not disown a Parentage conversant about an honest Art” but instead surrounded himself with artisans. Though not laborers, scholars of all kinds ought never to hold themselves above those who provided for them.¹⁰⁷

In Wase’s scheme of political economy, learning must never be stinted lest the state needlessly hinder trade. Even supposedly impractical, contemplative learning augmented the labor of the population insofar as it was necessary to foster inventions. The “methodical invention of the Contemplative” had produced devices that “facilitate Labour,” including the calendar, globe, mariner’s chart, and compass.¹⁰⁸ In Wase’s abstract formulation, while contemplative learning, like clerical learning, was not labor, it was necessary to augment labor and therefore deserved unlimited encouragement. He arrived at the relationship between learning and labor and the principle of political economy it propped up, however, through the historical narrative of a continuous ecclesiastical commitment to contemplative learning inherited from before the Reformation, using scriptural precedent to bolster his claim that learning spurred and directed labor without being reducible to it. It was precisely because the free school carried on the imperative to train the ministers for a work that “still abides” that it could not be reduced to an economically optimal proportion, and it was because it would inculcate a sort of learning that had a value beyond the monetary that it would ultimately spur invention.¹⁰⁹ Wase’s conception of productive learning that could not be reduced to productive labor advanced an innovative political economy made possible by a historical vision of the mission of the church and a theological commitment to contemplation and the schools that fostered it. Fragments of that same vision were scattered among the responses of country schoolmasters he surveyed.

CONCLUSION

Wase’s defense provoked at least one critical response from an influential contemporary, the clothier and merchant Thomas Firmin, whose own innovative vision for the religious education of England’s youths differed sharply from his. The first edition of Firmin’s *Some Proposals for the Employment of the Poor*, which appeared in 1678, the same year as Wase’s *Considerations*, was a description and defense of the “School in the nature of a work-house” he had established in London to teach poor youths to spin textiles. Three years later, and after receiving substantial backing from prominent city merchants, he offered an expanded edition to which he added a section to respond to contrary arguments that young people should be brought up in a

¹⁰⁶ Wase, 12.

¹⁰⁷ Wase, 12.

¹⁰⁸ Wase, 17.

¹⁰⁹ Wase, 110.

more comprehensive curriculum of school learning.¹¹⁰ In his response to “some Discourses that I have met with of late,” Firmin rejected the need for general education in arithmetic or in Latin, directly countering, “It is very well known, that at this time, there is hardly Employment for one half of the Clergymen that are in England.”¹¹¹ He saw no need for learning in languages or math that he deemed relevant only to the ministry when the children might be taught “some other Useful art.”¹¹² Firmin’s skepticism of education to prepare a learned ministry made sense within his own heterodox religious vision. He was a committed critic of the doctrine of the Trinity and its place in Anglican orthodoxy, which he derided as an unintelligible provocation to ceaseless controversy. He distributed the irenic catechism of John Worthington, *A Form of Sound Words*, to the children and poor parents while they were not spinning.¹¹³

Wase was, however, defending what in his eyes was a useful art. Other contemporaries agreed that the minister’s mission to teach Christian principles advanced the school’s imperative to raise industrious husbandmen and manufacturers. Richard Haines in 1678 explained that the “working-almshouses” he proposed would be uniquely situated to provide “the good Education of Poor Children and others in religious and virtuous Principles, planting in them Habits of Industry, Labour, &c.”¹¹⁴ The work of the minister would augment the work of the employed, and more importantly, their “Habits of Industry.”¹¹⁵ Even a heterodox theologian and shrewd political economist like John Locke insisted that his own 1697 scheme for poor relief through “working-school” service could instill “industry” while also teaching religion and morality, since the students would “be obliged to come constantly to church every Sunday along with their school-masters or dames.”¹¹⁶

Schools remained battlegrounds in debates over the established church, the pastoral care it could provide, and its role in making children idle pedants or industrious laborers in the national economy. In 1723, when Bernard Mandeville and the strident Whig critics Thomas Gordon and John Trenchard launched a full-throated critique of the charity schools established by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, their attack was accompanied by a set of economic principles that undermined any connection between school learning and the labor of productive employments. They lambasted the charity schools as dens of clerical—particularly Jacobite—

¹¹⁰ Clayton and Morrice Accounts, Including Subscription to Firmin’s Project, 8 June 1680, CLC/B/050/C/001/MS05286, London Metropolitan Archives.

¹¹¹ Firmin, *Some Proposals for the Employment of the Poor*, 6.

¹¹² Firmin, 6.

¹¹³ Stephen Nye, *The Life of Mr. Thomas Firmin, Late Citizen of London Written by One of His Most Intimate Acquaintance* [. . .] (London, 1698), 51. Firmin’s school also inspired the political economist John Houghton to seek support from Robert Clayton, one of Firmin’s backers, for a school to train children in silk carding; see Part of a Letter from John Houghton to Robert Clayton, [1679?], CLC/B/050/A/038/MS24953, London Metropolitan Archives.

¹¹⁴ Richard Haines, *Provision for the poor; or, Reasons for the erecting of a working-hospital in every county as the most necessary and onely effectual expedient to promote the linnen manufactory, with comfortable maintenance for all poor and distressed people in citie and cuntry* [. . .] (London, 1678), 3. See also Richard Haines, *Proposals for Building, in Every County, a Working-Almshouse or Hospital* [. . .] (London, 1677), 12.

¹¹⁵ Richard Haines, *Provision for the Poor*, 3.

¹¹⁶ John Locke, “Draft of a Representation Containing a Scheme of Methods for the Employment of the Poor; Proposed by Mr. Locke the 26th October 1697,” in *John Locke: Political Writings*, ed. David Wootton (Indianapolis, 2003), 446–61, at 455.

indoctrination but also charged them as economically ill-conceived.¹¹⁷ Gordon and Trenchard identified “Artificers, Manufacturers, and Husbandmen” as the origin of all wealth and insisted that the literacy and arithmetic learned in schools only made the workers insolent.¹¹⁸ The minister William Hendley countered that it was not in particular productive labor but all kinds of “Trade” that “makes a Nation opulent and flourishing, and there cannot be too many Hands employed in it, if they be not wanted any where else.”¹¹⁹ London schools like Christ’s Hospital, he said, had proven this principle by training able sailors and navigators through education in arithmetic and Christian principles. The debate was carried out at the contentious pitch of ecclesiastical politics of the day. Hendley had been arrested in 1719 for raising funds for charity schools outside his parish, under suspicion that he might be collecting donations for the Jacobite cause. His sensational pamphlet described his ordeal charged against the local Whig authorities in London: “If such men had their full Scope, all the Clergy would be whip’d as Vagrants, and confin’d to hard Labour.”¹²⁰

The labor that the clergy could legitimately claim to perform continued to be controversial. If that debate helps to explicate implicit connections between labor, proportion, and production in the protean discourse of political economy, it also helps us understand something about how churchmen like Wase and later Hendley justified a national clergy. Wase asserted to anyone who sought to reduce the maintenance for the ministry that “the same work abide[d]” from the Reformation, but his was not a backward-looking defense of bygone conceptions of the clergy.¹²¹ Theologians and teachers cultivated the “contemplative learning” that spurred the invention that “facilitates labour.”¹²² Catechists and schoolmasters instilled the “Piety and letters” that prepared their children for trades.¹²³ The learned ministry made their own distinct contribution to cultivating the “Useful arts” that Firmin contrasted them against.¹²⁴ The late seventeenth century saw innovative arguments on behalf of an established ministry that highlighted their “utility” for their maintenance of the social order, their teaching of manners, and their alleviation of poverty.¹²⁵ Useful labor and the education that taught it was particularly valued, often as an alternative

¹¹⁷ By the late 1710s, the charity schools had become closely associated with the established Church and the Tories’ influence through the closed vestries of many parishes; see Craig Rose, “Seminaries of Faction and Rebellion: Jacobites, Whigs, and the London Charity Schools, 1716–1724,” *Historical Journal* 34, no. 4 (1991): 831–55, at 853–55.

¹¹⁸ Cato [Thomas Gordon and John Trenchard], “Of Charity-Schools,” *British Journal*, 15 June 1723.

¹¹⁹ William Hendley, *A Defence of the charity-schools* [. . .] (London, 1725), 29.

¹²⁰ [William Hendley and Daniel Defoe], *Charity Still a Christian Virtue: Or, an Impartial Account of the Trial and Conviction of the Reverend Mr. Hendley* [. . .] (London, 1719). For the authorship of this pamphlet, see P. N. Furbank and W. R. Owens, “Defoe, William Hendley, and Charity Still a Christian Virtue (1719),” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 56, no. 3 (1993): 327–30.

¹²¹ Wase, *Considerations Concerning Free-Schools*, 110.

¹²² Wase, 17.

¹²³ Wase, 53.

¹²⁴ Firmin, *Some Proposals for the Employment of the Poor*, 6.

¹²⁵ William Bulman, “Secular Sacerdotalism in the Anglican Enlightenment, 1660–1740,” in *Let There Be Enlightenment: The Religious and Mystical Sources of Rationality*, ed. Dan Edelstein and Anton M. Matytsin (Baltimore, 2018), 205–26; Brent S. Sirota, *Christian Monitors: The Church of England and the Age of Benevolence, 1680–1730* (New Haven, 2014), 9; Anton M. Matytsin, “Reason and Utility in French Religious Apologetics,” in Bulman and Ingram, *God in the Enlightenment*, 63–82.

to clerical education in the status quo. Wase defended the established clergy and their education within a narrow conception of useful knowledge, as learning that could conduce to material enrichment and invention. He engaged theological questions about the necessity of tithes and upkeep for pastoral education, answered them with scriptural precedents, and found his way to innovative economic argument for public maintenance of education. The priesthood could be elevated even on such profane foundations.

A century after Wase's publication appeared, Adam Smith drew the precedent of his own laissez-faire conception of a market for pastoral service back to the Civil War independents, whose theological opposition to simony and whose discernment of the Spirit in mechanic preachers was lost in Smith's own economic logic.¹²⁶ It was the contention over their objections to the learned ministry that inspired new ways of conceiving preaching and pastoral care as a kind of labor that fit within an early framework for thinking about the nation's economy. Wase's insistence on a relationship between clerical learning, the conditions for "methodical invention," and the edification of industrious students shows an alternate path through contemporary political economy that offered a productive public role for the ministry.¹²⁷ This was far from the private, personal religion that Smith took as the normative form for an increasingly commercial society.

Smith divorced pastoral care from public service but followed Wase by elevating "contemplation," the domain reserved for men of "some rank" set apart from laboring life, as a prerequisite for "useful" knowledge that could make labor more productive.¹²⁸ Education in learning that could not be taught on the job was the function of schools that should, in Smith's view, be publicly maintained. He would have "elementary parts of geometry and mechanics" taught to children of all backgrounds in parish schools, since this learning could be relevant to any "common trade" they might enter. This education could be a counterweight to the division of labor that "benumb[ed] the understanding" of those workers engaged in repetitive tasks and blunted the "ingenuity" and "invention" of the common people.¹²⁹

Smith took this education out of the purview of the clergy, but he still saw a religious significance in teaching those subjects. Even the rudiments of reading, writing, and mathematics inured the poor against "delusions of enthusiasm and superstition," made them "more decent and orderly" because they felt more respected, and helped them see through "interested complaints of faction and sedition."¹³⁰ The division of labor dulled the moral sentiments of working people just as it degraded their ingenuity, according to Smith, but education in the arts and sciences could counteract that decline. While "religious instruction" in the status quo was concerned exclusively with preparing parishioners to enter heaven as good Christians rather than live their lives as good citizens, it was education in "science" that was ultimately "the

¹²⁶ Gordon Graham describes Smith's "philosophy of religion" independent of any robust theological commitments, and his reflection on ecclesiology reconstructed here fits that description. Gordon Graham, "Adam Smith and Religion," in *Adam Smith: His Life, Thought, and Legacy*, ed. Ryan Patrick Hanley (Princeton, 2016), 305–20, at 305–8, 312.

¹²⁷ Wase, *Considerations Concerning Free-Schools*, 17.

¹²⁸ Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, 842–43.

¹²⁹ Smith, 841.

¹³⁰ Smith, 846.

great antidote to the poison of enthusiasm and superstition.”¹³¹ Smith relegated the clergy’s role to the private concerns of the next world and their status to private transactions of a market; his arguments for the material and religious value of education that should not be reduced to labor traded on the market, however, had been articulated in Wase’s defense of free schools and the learned clergy.

¹³¹ Smith, 846. For the central place of combatting “superstition” in Smith’s advocacy for general education to shape moral sentiments, see Emma Rothschild, *Economic Sentiments: Adam Smith, Condorcet, and the Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA, 2001), 98.