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Tractarian Pastor: Edward Monro of Harrow Weald

II. The Pastor's Gifts and Duties; The Pastor in an Industrial Society

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I

The Oxford Movement, with its emphasis on the authority of the church and on sacramental Christianity, focussed attention on the vocation and spirituality of the ordained agents of the church and the authorized ministers of its sacraments. It is not true that the general revival of professionalism among the clergy in the generation after 1830 was simply a result of the Tractarian revival even in diffused form; for there were effective parish priests unconnected with, and even opposed to, Anglo-Catholic principles.⁹¹ Nevertheless, the spread of Tractarian religion among the parish clergy was an important element in renewing the pastoral profession. The notion that the clergyman might be "non-resident, a sportsman, a farmer, neglectful of all study, a violent politician, a *bon vivant* or a courtier"⁹² was utterly repulsive to the Tractarians, and it is undoubtedly true that Tractarian influence contributed much to the change in habits and the general reputation of the ordinary clergyman between 1830 and 1860.⁹³

Edward Monro wrote nearly as much about the agents of parochial work as he did about the work itself. He was in no doubt that the parish priest was a professional man, with an exceptionally demanding calling quite distinct from that of other professional men. "No vocation," he wrote in 1850,

is so great and elevated as ours. We deal with man in his highest capacities: the statesman applies himself to his social life, the orator to his rational powers, the poet to his imagination, and the philosopher to his moral being; the physician, the historian, the logician all apply themselves to some one or other part of his nature; it is our lot, while we may use the weapons of all these, to have committed to our keeping . . . the heart and soul of an immortal being.⁹⁴

91. E.g. the two Evangelicals, W. W. Champneys and William Cadman (see G. R. Balleine, *A History of the Evangelical Party* [London: Longmans, 1933]), pp. 237f. Also see S. C. Carpenter, *Church and People, 1789-1889* (London: S.P.C.K., 1933), pp. 390ff.; C. K. F. Brown, *A History of the English Clergy* (London: Faith Press, 1953), pp. 144ff.

92. Brown, *History of the English Clergy*, pp. 147f.

93. Cf. Desmond Bowen, "Anglo-Catholicism in Victorian England," *Canadian Journal of Theology*, 12 (1966), 39; Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, I (London: A. & C. Black, 1966), pp. 230f.

94. E. Monro, *Parochial Work* (Oxford and London: J. H. Parker, 1850), p. 259.

Monro did not believe that good parish priests could be made by training or discipline. The pastoral nature was essentially a gift of God, a "genius" as he called it in his last important book *Pastoral Life*, a quality of personality which was recognizable but difficult to define.⁹⁵ The man who possessed this gift

will go into a cottage, and with saying *very little*, not "reading the Bible aloud," *doing* scarcely anything, not giving a *penny*, will come out having done a work and effected a result, which other men who have not that power, with an hour's hard work at the same cottage, reading half an Epistle through, lending tracts in large print fresh from the Christian Knowledge Society, talking, arguing, reasoning, and giving half-a-crown to boot, will not effect.⁹⁶

In pages full of touching and often humorous recollections, Monro analyzed the ingredients of pastoral "genius." The first two elements determined the parson's relationship with the context of pastoral conversation; Monro called them the "pictorial power" and the "historical power."

The "pictorial power" was the capacity to understand a parishioner in relation to his physical and geographical surroundings, and to view those surroundings sympathetically, as far as possible from the viewpoint of the parishioner himself. "The seeing of a boy in these relations, loving him through them, viewing his character through them, brings him and his case before the eye as a *picture*: and that enables a man to *understand* him, to bear with his faults."⁹⁷ Without the pictorial power, the visiting priest might well be overwhelmed by the vulgarity or coarseness of a poor family, by the dirt and untidiness of the house, or even by the mud on the lane; his personal reaction to these matters would then vitiate his pastoral effectiveness.

The "historical power" was the capacity to understand a parishioner in relation to his past, in temporal perspective. "You do not consider your summons, your visit, the funeral, as isolated parochial duties, but as parts of a whole, acts of a history."⁹⁸ Illustrating his point by telling the story of a visit to an old lady, he went on: "You *cannot* go to pay her an ordinary visit as if she were like anybody else. She must come before your eye with the *background* of the past; she must come up at each visit as the person who was mixed up with other days and other things."⁹⁹

In the pastoral "genius" Monro included a flair for creative planning and the talent for executing plans once made.¹⁰⁰ Included too was the quality of "elasticity," the gift of spontaneous response to new or difficult situations, the capacity to invent novel means to overcome obstacles. These obstacles might be physically revolting, "foetid atmosphere, intense vulgarity, coarseness and sin, filth and disease."¹⁰¹ Elasticity was also required to prevent slavish adherence to routine and tradition, when new pastoral approaches were clearly needed, as, for example, among farm labourers in the haying season.¹⁰²

95. Cf. E. Monro, *Pastoral Life* (London: Henry Hammons, 1862), p. 36.

96. *Ibid.*, pp. 36f.

97. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

98. *Ibid.*, pp. 44f.

99. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

100. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 47ff.

101. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

102. "Tractarian Pastor: Edward Monro of Harrow Weald, I," *Canadian Journal of Theology*, 13 (1967), p. 250.

Closely connected with "elasticity" were the last two marks of pastoral "genius" listed by Monro: the capacities to know human nature and to love human beings.¹⁰³ Knowledge of human nature was not an accomplishment, certainly not an intellectual achievement. Like all the elements in the "genius" it was a "tact or instinct, a natural turn which some have."¹⁰⁴ It warned the pastor when direct argument should be replaced by indirect, when a subject should be raised in conversation or when it should be left unmentioned. Monro used the example of a farmer who had been negligent of church attendance and rebellious about his Christian duties. He must be drawn back into the fold; but instinctively the true pastor knew a direct approach was futile, perhaps harmful. In obedience to this instinct

you talk to him about his work, you lend him a book, you borrow one of his; and by degrees, you see him at church; an instinct again tells you to take no notice of it to him: still less to speak of it to another, who might let him know that you had remarked it. You talk to him the next time you see him about what you did before, the growth of parsnips or some such general topic, and you succeed.¹⁰⁵

Love of human beings, like knowledge of human character, was a gift, the greatest pastoral gift of all. Love "ever leads a man to believe the best, never *a priori* to suspect"; it is "the cause, the motive spring, of *sympathy*."¹⁰⁶ This gift of sympathetic identification with others was clearly one which Monro himself had in abundance. It was strikingly apparent in his association with railway navvies, colliers, and haymakers, and led him easily to put himself in the position of those among whom he was called to work. Thus, for example, he did not condemn the haymakers' abandonment of church services during the summer months; by putting himself in their place, he could understand the economic incentive and the corporate excitement which kept them in the fields all day long in the haying season.¹⁰⁷ The essence of pastoral love, in Monro's view, was sympathy based on a sense of identification between priest and people. It was a characteristic firmly rooted in the example of Christ himself:

Christ would not love in heaven afar, He came
To stand upon our level, yea descend
Beneath the lowest, so that none might think
He had no sympathy with pain and woe.¹⁰⁸

The analysis of the pastor's gifts in *Pastoral Life* was followed by an entertaining and devastating critique of certain faults of character "inconsistent with parochial genius." "Stiffness of manner," for example, was fatal; so was "magisterialism." "Your magisterial clergyman," wrote Monro, when he visited a sick boy,

103. Cf. Monro, *Pastoral Life*, pp. 54ff.

104. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

105. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

106. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

107. Cf. Monro, *Haymakers and Their Habits* (London: Joseph Masters, 1858), pp. 29f.

108. Monro, *The Parish* (Oxford and London: J. H. Parker, 1853), p. 17.

walks straight in without knocking, ascends the staircase heavily without feeling, and frowns on the sufferer and his mother without mercy; saying to the latter, tired as she is with her long night-watch, "My good woman, you really should keep your house tidier. . . . Why do you not value the blessed gift of fresh air? and a dog here, which of course eats some of that you need for the support of your children. This *must* not be—it must not be."¹⁰⁹

Equally bad was "condescension," the perverted form of love which "implies at once a conscious inferiority in the object, and a conscious superiority in oneself." So too was "changeableness," the quality of inconsistency; changeable men could not be depended on, for "to-day they are governed by the sense of the need of self-denial and liberality; to-morrow they have yielded to the dread and expectations of suspicion."¹¹⁰

Although Monro believed a good pastor was born not made, he knew that the pastoral gift needed cultivation if it was to flourish in the Victorian church. Through the years Monro preached a number of sermons and wrote several pamphlets in which he indicated the dangers of contemporary clerical life, and suggested appropriate disciplines to counter those dangers.

Prominent among the pitfalls of country parish life was a too-close association between the parson and the rich and powerful among his parishioners. In one of his first addresses to clergymen Monro warned against "seeking the society of the great, being flattered by the attentions of the noble, and courting the favour of the rich," and he repeated the warning later.¹¹¹ Even the "religious noble" could be "as much the snare of the world as the gayer scenes of more open vice."¹¹² In Monro's view, association with the local aristocracy too often meant separation from the poor; and, although Monro did not advocate that the clergyman be a stranger to "the hospitable manor hall," he was convinced that detachment from local centres of secular power was healthy for the parish priest.¹¹³

Among many of the clergy, especially those of Anglo-Catholic hue, Monro detected a distressing tendency to engage in agitations and disputes, often at great distances from their parishes. Even at the height of the Gorham row Monro opposed such public activity, "which too much compromises the dignity and calmness of the clerical character. The platform, and even the Church Union, pander too much to the love of oratorical display, debate and disputation."¹¹⁴ Participation in agitations not only compromised clerical character; such activity was also wickedly expensive and frequently resulted in parochial neglect. The sums spent by a clergyman on rail tickets to and from London could better be devoted to defraying the costs

109. Monro, *Pastoral Life*, p. 63.

110. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

111. E. Monro, *The Fulfilment of the Ministry: A Sermon Preached Before Some Clergy of the Diocese of Worcester* (Oxford and London: J. H. Parker, 1848), p. 17; cf. Monro, *Parochial Work*, p. 179; *Sermons Principally on the Responsibilities of the Ministerial Office* (Oxford and London: J. H. Parker, 1850), p. 8.

112. Monro, *The Fulfilment of the Ministry*, p. 17.

113. Cf. Monro, *The Parish*, p. 28.

114. Monro, *A Few Words on the Spirit in which Men are Meeting the Present Crisis in the Church* (Oxford and London: J. H. Parker, 1850), p. 7.

of the village school.¹¹⁵ "It is highly painful," wrote Monro in 1850, "to go to parishes where clergymen professing Church principles are living, yet no bell calls to daily service, and they are found on the platform of societies, or on the stage of an agitation meeting."¹¹⁶

Involvement in such meetings was not the only danger to which the Anglo-Catholic clergy were particularly prone. Monro had little sympathy with his fellows who aggressively sought to revive Catholic ceremonial practices. He regarded "hollow aestheticism" as a diversion from pastoral work, and he deplored "a want of manliness in many . . . an attention to minutiae, a singularity of regard for minor points, a frittering away of the power of their minds in conventional expressions and practices which tend to lower the general tone and caste of the man."¹¹⁷ The enthusiasms of the Gothic revival, "building churches and restoring windows," were simply "not the work of the priest."¹¹⁸ Far too many Anglo-Catholics neglected the substance of parish work to indulge in trivial party battles, so that "the only distinction the mass of the parishioners can see between their own high-church clergyman and the low-church minister of an adjoining parish is that the former wears a more clerical dress, uses ecclesiastical terms oftener in his sermons, and makes attempts at a more elaborate church ceremonial."¹¹⁹

Monro preached and wrote at some length about "second motive in the ministry," ways in which the pastor's singleminded service could be perverted and corrupted.¹²⁰ Vanity and hankering after respectability and social acceptance were exposed as possible "second motives." So too was "impurity," a danger to the confessors of female penitents.¹²¹ "Craving for intellectual renown" could also destroy pastoral vocation.¹²² So too could the excessive demands of domestic life; almost invariably

The question rises soon between the two,
Home or the Parish; who is he but knows
How soon the latter sinks to low esteem.¹²³

One of the most prevalent threats to effective parochial work, in Monro's opinion, was the unsystematic nature of many clergymen's lives. In most professions and trades, he wrote, the demands of the employer or the customer or the calling itself required conformity to a set plan of work and regular hours. It was not so with the English clergy; systematic work was rare among parish priests. If the clergyman

115. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

116. Monro, *Parochial Work*, p. 262.

117. Monro, *The Fulfilment of the Ministry*, p. 18; cf. Monro, *Parochial Work*, pp. 176f.

118. *Ibid.*, p. 261.

119. Monro, *A Few Words*, pp. 18f.

120. Cf. Monro, *Sermons Principally on the Responsibilities of the Ministerial Office*, p. 5; *Pastoral Life*, p. 99.

121. Cf. Monro, *Sermons Principally on the Responsibilities of the Ministerial Office*, p. 7.

122. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

123. Monro, *The Parish*, pp. 41f.

be in attendance at the given hours on Sunday, preach two sermons of twenty-five minutes each, which must at least have not been delivered within two years past, baptize, bury, and marry at the hours appointed, he is free alike from the stringency of any definite external law, and from any further expectation from society.¹²⁴

Unlike other men, the parish priest received his income no matter what he did, whether he attended parochial calls, visited the sick and dying, or "is at an archery meeting ten miles off, or is dining out five nights out of the seven."¹²⁵

Against all these dangers Monro suggested safeguards. The first rule in clerical self-discipline, thought Monro, was singlemindedness, a constant refusal to be diverted from the one essential task of parochial work by any extraneous activity, whether social, domestic, or even religious.¹²⁶ An essential means of assuring such singleminded devotion was careful stewardship of time. Monro offered "The Plan of a Day" to assist the parish clergy in developing a systematic approach to their vocation. Within the framework of the two daily services, every hour from 7 A.M. to bed-time was accounted for in this plan, which suggested times for school-visiting, plans for dealing with the average number of sick people in a parish of one thousand persons, a time for the priest's private study, a time for systematic parish visiting, arrangements for individual consultations with members of the parish, and even plans for the operation of night schools and the delivery of evening lectures.¹²⁷ Perhaps only a childless man like Monro could have proposed a scheme which allowed so little time for private life; his "plan" made no provision even for meals!

In writing of clerical discipline, Monro now and then dispensed Anglo-Catholic religious patent medicine. Thus, in one place, he recommended "the Catholic hours" (the monastic offices) as "the scaffolding and support of . . . daily spiritual life."¹²⁸ He sometimes suggested that the clergyman's safeguard was a rigid *religious* self-discipline, involving "the long night prayer, the rigid fast . . . the oft-communion . . . the seldom visit to society."¹²⁹ In one place he even described Holy Orders as an escape from the world, a "refuge," a "calm and placid port," a "vow of self-protection."¹³⁰ In another place he referred to the true pastor as a "standing protest against the life around him . . . [a] living exception."¹³¹

No doubt these passages reflect the suspicion of worldliness which traditionally balances world-acceptance in Christian ethics. As the gift of pastoral care involved sympathetic identification with the life of the pastor's flock, so the discipline of the priestly life demanded detachment from the lures of Satan, lures all too active in a world infected by sin. Yet it was a basic

124. Monro, *Pastoral Life*, p. 69; cf. Monro, *The Fulfilment of the Ministry*, p. 24.

125. Monro, *Pastoral Life*, p. 68.

126. Cf. Monro, *Parochial Work*, pp. 259ff.

127. Cf. Monro, *Pastoral Life*, pp. 73ff. 128. *Ibid.*, pp. 94f.

129. Monro, *The Parish*, p. 39.

130. *Ibid.*, pp. 14f.

131. Monro, *Sermons Principally on the Responsibilities of the Ministerial Office*, pp. 48f.

feature of Monro's appeal that he normally rejoiced in the world he served, in the chances and changes of local parish life, and in the vocation of priesthood itself. John Keble recognized this fundamental happiness when he compared Monro to a "labourer . . . singing or whistling with all his might and main, as people do when they are deep in their task, yet thoroughly enjoying themselves in it."¹³²

II

Edward Monro was a country parson at Harrow Weald in the years when Britain ceased to be a predominantly rural nation. When he wrote *Parochial Work* in 1850, the rural and urban populations of Great Britain were approximately equal; by the time of his removal to Leeds in 1860 more Britons lived under urban conditions than in the countryside. As the nation became urbanized, so it became industrialized; a continually smaller proportion of the population was employed in agriculture whereas more and more people worked in factories, mines, and service occupations.¹³³

As several recent writers have shown, the development of urban industrial society caused churchmen much concern about the moral and religious state of the poor, a class more obviously isolated from the church and religion generally in cities than in the countryside.¹³⁴ This anxiety was fortified by the results of the Religious Census of 1851,¹³⁵ although the earlier movement for church extension in urban areas witnesses to the extent of concern before mid-century. Long before 1850 Evangelical clergymen had worked among the urban poor; and from 1837 Walter F. Hook, perhaps the greatest of all Victorian urban pastors, had laboured among the poor of Leeds.¹³⁶

Distinctive and effective Anglo-Catholic "urban work" did not really begin until the late 1850s, when such ritualist heroes as Charles Lowder and Alexander Mackonochie began their work in London slum parishes.¹³⁷ Keble, the father of the Tractarian pastoral tradition, was quite unfamiliar with urban life and seemed little aware of the changing nature of English society.¹³⁸ This was not true of Pusey who in the 1840s himself endowed an ill-fated parish in a poor section of Leeds, and was very much aware

132. Keble, *Occasional Papers and Reviews* (Oxford and London: J. H. Parker, 1877), p. 338.

133. Cf. S. G. Checkland, *The Rise of Industrial Society in England, 1815-1885* (London: Longmans, 1964), pp. 33, 217f.; B. R. Mitchell and P. Deane, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge: University Press, 1962), p. 60.

134. Cf. G. Kitson Clark, *The Making of Victorian England* (London: Methuen, 1962), ch. 6; K. S. Inglis, *Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), *passim*; Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (London: Odhams, 1963), pp. 60ff.; Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, pp. 325ff.

135. Kitson Clark, *Making of Victorian England*, pp. 148ff; Inglis, *Churches and the Working Classes*, p. 1; K. S. Inglis, "Patterns of Religious Worship in 1851," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 11 (1960), 74-86.

136. Cf. Balleine, *History of the Evangelical Party*, pp. 196ff. On Hook, see W. R. W. Stephens, *The Life and Letters of Walter Farquhar Hook* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1878).

137. F. Warre Cornish, *The English Church in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Macmillan, 1910), II, 19; Michael Reynolds, *Martyr of Ritualism* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965).

138. Battscombe, *John Keble*, p. 134.

of the pastoral problems presented to the church by the cities, mines, and factories of industrial England.¹³⁹ But Pusey's understanding of these matters was remote, not personal; his sympathy with the pastoral needs of the new society radiated from the far-off security of Christ Church.

Until the very last years of his life Edward Monro exercised his pastoral ministry in a traditional rural setting, in the old England of the village and the farm. Yet he saw beyond the boundaries of his environment into the new world of miners and manufacturers, of railways and industrial dispute. Monro understood the new society more acutely than Keble and more immediately than Pusey. He did more than sympathize or even understand. He ventured out of the familiar environment of Harrow Weald to experiment with new ministries to new men. In a group of pamphlets written in the late 1850s he recorded the results of these experiments.¹⁴⁰

Monro's first pastoral contact with the new society occurred very close to home. In the summer of 1857 five hundred railway labourers, or "navvies," descended on Harrow Weald to construct a new line of rail on the London and North Western Railway. As he went about his parish Monro found himself "amid the hum and stir of a busy hive of men who were suddenly swarming and clustering around the banks and temporary workshops around the railroad."¹⁴¹ At this time the inhabitants of Monro's village numbered nine hundred; the addition of the navvies, therefore, meant a 55 per cent increase in the parish population. These new parishioners were far from being a docile group, easily absorbed into the village social structure. Ever since the beginning of the railway age navvies had terrified rural England, descending in large numbers on small communities, drinking hard, often rioting, sometimes removing a few of the local women when they departed.¹⁴² Overworked, ill-housed, constantly exposed to danger and accident, without religion, ignorant of conventional morality, these men were viewed by permanent villagers with "feelings of dislike and dismay."¹⁴³

These were emphatically the feelings of many local parsons. In the early years of railway-building, country clergymen avoided contact with the invaders, except to arrange the burial of those killed in the too-frequent accidents.¹⁴⁴ In 1846, a parliamentary committee remarked on the utter neglect of railway labourers by the usual agents of "general and religious instruction" in the villages of England.¹⁴⁵ In February, 1858, *The Christian Observer* doubted that many clergymen had nerve "even to encounter a

139. Cf. Bowen, "Anglo-Catholicism in Victorian England," 43f.

140. These were the pamphlets collectively entitled *The Church and the Million*. In addition to the three already mentioned (*The "Navvies" and How to Meet Them; The Collier and the Operative and How to Affect Them; Haymakers and Their Habits*), there was an introductory pamphlet, entitled simply *The Church and the Million* (sometimes referred to as *The Literature of the Million*), published in 1854, and a final title, *Durham and the Carpet Weavers: Master and Man* (London: Joseph Masters, 1859).

141. Monro, *The "Navvies,"* p. 4.

142. Cf. Terry Coleman, *The Railway Navvies* (London: Hutchinson, 1965), pp. 21f.

143. *Report of the Select Committee on Railway Labourers* (Parliamentary Papers, 1846, Vol. XIII), 428.

144. Cf. Coleman, *The Railway Navvies*, p. 147.

145. *Report . . . on Railway Labourers*, 435.

'navvy'. Multitudes could as soon rush into a full manned battery as visit a crowded tap-room or the dormitories of a company of this class of persons."¹⁴⁶

The parish priest of Harrow Weald, however, did just these things in the summer of 1857. "I was accidently their minister," he wrote afterwards, "... five hundred . . . intelligent, thinking, inquiring, suspicious beings; and they must be dealt with."¹⁴⁷

Characteristically, Monro's first efforts were made to gain the confidence of the navvies, to become known among them as genuinely sympathetic. He determined to visit them in the places where they naturally congregated: "their lodgings, the tap-room, the pay office, the gangs of work, the sheds and workshops," and even "under hedges and on haystacks" where many of them slept.¹⁴⁸ Within a week of the beginning of the railway work, Monro had visited all these locales. The first visit to the tap-room was a great adventure:

It was late—half-past ten at night: the landlord advised me not to go in: he said the men were drunk and would insult me; that I should do no good. I hesitated; but determined to go. The room was full: shouts of noise, quarrelling and arguing met my ear: some were quite drunk, some smoking, some sitting on the tables, some leaning against the wall. I entered and sat down in the middle of them. . . . At first I was received with a stare, and the noise went on. Presently a man sat on the table by my side, and laying his hand somewhat roughly on my shoulder, asked if I were a Baptist minister. I said "No," and was proceeding further, when a drunken man got up and attacked me with violent language. A young man from a distant corner spoke for me, and two or three demanded a hearing for me. I soon found I had some friends.¹⁴⁹

He talked to the men in their workshops, on Saturday afternoon at the pay office, in their lodgings where over twenty slept in a single room, along the roads where many lay "houseless and shelterless." Gradually the trust of the men grew; Monro became known as "a kind of amphibious 'navvy,' a cross between a Wesleyan tract-distributor and a Roman Catholic priest . . . a sort of odd nondescript—a kind of navvies' friend."¹⁵⁰

When Monro was accepted as a friend, he felt able to open religious subjects of conversation. Having sat down in the tap-room one day, he unhesitatingly took beer when it was offered to him, and then treated the table to a pot himself. After this, he asked for a ten-minute "say," and told the story of the marriage feast at Cana in Galilee. Monro always had a reputation as a superb story-teller, and on this occasion he evidently reduced the tap-room crowd to a "silent and listening audience." Afterwards he was challenged by a drunken man who cried "resist the parson and the humbug of religion," and who denounced the Bible as a bad book and King David as a wicked man. There followed a debate between Monro and this antagonist from which, on his own evidence, Monro emerged as the

146. *The Christian Observer*, February 1858.

147. Monro, *The "Navvies,"* p. 4.

149. *Ibid.*

148. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

150. *Ibid.*, pp. 7f.

clear winner. He described the whole experience, not surprisingly, as a "singular . . . three quarters of an hour."¹⁵¹

As he spent his weekdays among the navvies, Monro planned to draw them to worship on Sunday. He had no illusions that they could be incorporated into the regular parish services and no inhibitions about providing suitable extra-liturgical devotions. The Prayer Book service "as it now is, is beyond the poor; it does not reach them or touch them."¹⁵² Furthermore, navvies, like many working-men, feared rejection by those who by their dress and manner in church seemed "superior." Monro established separate "navvy services," not as a matter of principle (for Monro repudiated the notion that there should be any separation of the poor—navvies or otherwise—from the rest of society) but as a matter of convenience. Thus the services were held in the afternoon, in sheds and barns near the navvies' place of work; navvies were invited, not "under the plea . . . that they are a separate class, but that their convenience is consulted by a shed service as a temporary arrangement." The service was one hour long, and consisted of bits of Evening Prayer, a lesson (usually a New Testament parable), two hymns and an extemporaneous sermon, normally based on the lesson. Monro was pleased by the navvies' response; after six such services he wrote that "each Sunday there has been a full attendance, and indeed an increasing one."¹⁵³

There is no doubt that Monro undertook his pastoral work among the navvies partly to draw them to worship God. He certainly devoted much thought and care on devising modes of worship appropriate to these outcasts of society. This was not, however, his only concern. He recognized some of the secular causes of navvy wretchedness, and he branded them as works of the devil which Christians ought to fight: "Beer; the extreme heat; pugnacity; miserable or no lodgings; the hostility of residents to the newcomers; reports of better pay up the line; the suspicion with which they were received by the resident gentry."¹⁵⁴ Monro provided evening classes in secular and religious instruction, a Bible class in which he deliberately mixed navvies with villagers, and a library of books circulated through the navy lodging-houses.¹⁵⁵ He castigated the hardness of heart of his opulent parishioners, who "smile good-naturedly at your enthusiasm, and refuse to give you sixpence to help you in your undertaking, or perhaps worse—will openly assail you for your folly, charge you with restlessness and love of excitement, and call it the 'navvy rage.'" Such a man "will assail you because you attempt to evangelise . . . God's creatures, who are more intelligent than himself, and without whose hard, sweat-wrung labour he would neither take a journey nor have made his fortune."¹⁵⁶

Far from damaging parish life by interrupting the ordinary routine of pastoral care, temporary concentration on the navvies really benefited the

151. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

154. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

152. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

155. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 16f.

153. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

156. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

whole parish. Sometimes the familiar round of routine parish visits and ordinary services anaesthetized villagers to the Word of God. The navy mission, with its special worship and its concentration on service to people outside normal parish life, could shock regular parishioners back to life; it could even provide the villagers themselves with the "opportunity of finding some whom they may feed, clothe or visit, and by doing so find Christ."¹⁵⁷ Monro was not blind to the need for order and regularity in parochial work. Nevertheless in the unusual case of the navvies, as in the annual case of the haymakers, he was prepared to sacrifice routine order to respond spontaneously to obvious pastoral needs as they arose.¹⁵⁸

The railway brought the new society of industrial England to Harrow Weald and gave Monro an opportunity to exercise his pastoral genius on the navvies in his own bailiwick. He was not, however, content with this. Monro was familiar with the Religious Census of 1851, and he had read descriptions of the degrading physical and moral condition of the urban masses.¹⁵⁹ He was fascinated by the "manufacturing population" of the Midlands and the North.¹⁶⁰ In 1858 and 1859 he made excursions out of Harrow Weald, tours of exploration which took him to the depths of a coal mine, and into a factory near Manchester and another in Durham. Less detailed than his record of the advent of the navvies at Harrow Weald, Monro's accounts of his northern trips nevertheless fully display his pastoral concern for people caught up in rapid, and not always peaceful, social change.¹⁶¹ Monro tried to draw the church into new situations as a reconciling community, as a civilizing and moralizing influence, and as an institution in which miners and factory operatives could feel at home. When Monro went down a coal mine or into a factory he retained the capacity to sympathize with those whom he met, the same basic pastoral quality which he constantly displayed among the people of Harrow Weald.

After a vivid account of his descent into a coal mine at Worsley in Lancashire, Monro described the scene at the coal face:

Lines of colliers, half naked, with their eyes peering out of faces begrimed with black dust, were arranged in tiers upon rough planks of wood, resting upon blocks of coal; while every corner of the cavern was crowded by the forms of boys who peered forth from the darkness, to see what strange being it was who, as they had been told, was coming to tell them a tale in the bowels of the earth.

The tale itself was a ghastly one about a young martyr of Roman times who had been torn to bits by a panther, his mother "smiling with joy as her child entered into his chariot of triumph—his everlasting release." According to Monro, it brought tears to the eyes of the miners. Monro told his listeners

157. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

158. For a brief survey of the church's efforts to evangelize the navvies in the years after Monro's experience, see Coleman, *The Railway Navvies*, pp. 152ff.

159. Cf. Monro, *The Church and the Million* (1854), *passim*.

160. Monro, *The Collier and the Operative*, p. 3.

161. These accounts are contained in *The Collier and the Operative and Durham and the Carpet Weavers*.

that he wished he could be an underground chaplain "and work for the eternal destinies and temporal happiness of the thousands who are toiling" in the mines.¹⁶²

Monro's descriptions of his visits to a Lancashire cotton mill and a Durham factory lack the startling, almost romantic, aspect of the trip down the coal mine. Their principal interest lies in his identification of "evils in the system" of factory industry which, he felt, the church ought to help remedy. He was particularly impressed by the total lack of sympathy between master and men, a condition which often worked to the hindrance of both industrial classes. Monro deplored the conflict which often resulted from working-class combination; yet he did not damn the sense of identity and community which such combination provided to working men. He was far from antagonistic to unions. Indeed he regarded them as important sources of *esprit de corps*, in which the essential social virtues of "honour, generosity and gratitude" were exercised among working men, and he looked forward to the day when unions could be made allies rather than adversaries of the church.¹⁶³ To strikes, however, he was opposed. He devoted a large portion of *Durham and the Carpet Weavers: Master and Man* to a discussion of how they might be avoided by regular, and good-tempered, consultation between union representatives and masters.¹⁶⁴ He outlined a scheme for the arbitration of industrial disputes, and implied that clergymen might have some useful part to play in arbitration procedures.¹⁶⁵

In Monro's view, the evil of industrial conflict was at least as much the result of the "inveterate hostility" of mill-owners to their employees as it was the result of unjustified agitation among workers. Monro found it difficult to imagine how conflict could be resolved when the "superior" parties in the disputes (i.e. the owners) continually viewed their men with suspicion.¹⁶⁶ In such circumstances Monro certainly identified himself with the workers, and showed himself quite unwilling to accept the social *status quo*: "The working man deserves our regard from the fact that he is struggling from a condition in society to which in one sense he was not born and to which . . . [he] will be confined by those who are placed in ranks above him. It is to the struggling that we yield sympathy, not to him that has gained his position."¹⁶⁷

There were, of course, other evils in the factory system than those which poisoned class relations. Monro regretted the insecurity engendered by a "great lack of habits of providence or domestic life amongst the men." He was scandalized by the "formidable evil" of sexual immorality, an evil encouraged by "the fact of numbers of young women and young men working with but little espionage in one room, walking home together in the

162. Monro, *The Collier and the Operative*, pp. 11f.

163. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 23f.

164. Cf. Monro, *Durham and the Carpet Weavers*, pp. 13ff.

165. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 16f., 10.

166. Cf. Monro, *The Collier and the Operative*, p. 19.

167. Monro, *Durham and the Carpet Weavers*, p. 19.

evening, and assembling in the roads and lanes in the morning." "Without a strong vigorous religious system at work to enlist their sympathy in the path of virtue," Monro thought that sexual immorality was inevitable to these circumstances, and he believed it to be almost universal from early teen-age.¹⁶⁸

Monro made one observation about the lives of factory operatives which is of particular importance in the development of modern pastoral theology, and which led Monro himself to recommend modification of the traditional parish system to permit new forms of pastoral ministry. He noticed that factory workers led a "double life"; they belonged "to two communities," the domestic and the vocational. "Members of a parish whose operations and ministrations may be ever so active—they are at the same time members of the work of a mill." The parochial ministry, unconnected with the mill or factory, could cope only with the domestic part of their lives. Yet on the whole these people were "more mill-workers than parishioners."¹⁶⁹ "Living within a circumference of two miles distant from their centre of work," wrote Monro, "they belong to perhaps four or six different parishes. Their local parochial connections have virtually broken up. They . . . are compelled to form all their arrangements of hours and days according to the demands of the factory."¹⁷⁰

Without abandoning his conviction that the parochial ministry was important, especially in rural areas, Monro pressed continually in the 1850s for the establishment of chaplaincies to miners and factory operatives, for the appointment of clergymen to care for people where they actually worked, and for the adaptation of church organization to allow for this.¹⁷¹ The church must show herself to be sufficiently "elastic" (one of Monro's favourite words) to permit innovations of these kinds; simple expansion of parochial church capacity would not serve. True to his Tractarian principles, Monro appealed to antiquity: "The Church of the Apostolic and ante-Nicene age found it no part of its essential creed to confine its operations on the increasing population to the limits of the age before."¹⁷²

Monro went beyond advocating the development of industrial chaplaincies. He suggested a non-professional ministry: the ordination of navvies to engage in pastoral work while they earned their daily bread alongside their fellow labourers. Referring to the precedents of St. Paul (who "does not seem to have forsaken his craft long after his body was worn out with apostolic labours") and St. Peter and St. John (who "returned to their fishing boats after the resurrection"), Monro advocated ordaining "men who will still pursue their callings as artizans and labourers." Acutely conscious of the class barrier which existed between the clergy of the Established Church

168. Cf. Monro, *The Collier and the Operative*, pp. 18f.

169. *Ibid.*

170. E. Monro, *Home and Colonial Missions: Two Sermons* (London: Joseph Masters, 1857), p. 22.

171. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 23f.; *The Collier and the Operative*, pp. 11, 13f., 20; *Durham and the Carpet Weavers*, pp. 21ff.

172. Monro, *The Collier and the Operative*, p. 28.

and the poor, Monro thought that an ordained navy could go among his fellows "when I cannot; he can detect false and second motives which are veiled to me; he can apply language which would be unbecoming in another; and he can test sincerity by after conduct, which is beyond my reach."¹⁷³ Although there was much concern, in the nineteenth century, about the exclusion of the working class from the ranks of the clergy, nothing effective was done to alter the image of the clergyman as a "gentleman."¹⁷⁴ As far as I know the proposal for a "tent-making ministry," as put forward by Monro, was never taken seriously in the Victorian church.

Monro's recognition of the inadequacy of the parochial ministry was not unique. Lord Shaftesbury, for example, said as much in 1855, and similar views were expressed frequently during the last half of the century.¹⁷⁵ It is notable that Monro's own views on new types of ministry, as on extra-liturgical services, received a far more enthusiastic reception in the Evangelical paper *The Christian Observer* than they did in High Church circles. No doubt Evangelicals were delighted to notice a well-known Tractarian writer expressing ideas incompatible with the strictest adherence to the parochial system and absolute conformity to the Prayer Book liturgy. One cause for the contemporary failure of the church among the poor, according to one Evangelical reviewer, was the anti-Evangelical suspicion of enthusiasm, a legacy from the long period when "zeal was dealt with as a species of madness which needed a straight-waistcoat and confinement to a particular spot." The reviewer was delighted to find such "power . . . and religious earnestness" in Monro, despite his dubious "doctrinal and ecclesiastical views."¹⁷⁶ Similarly, another Evangelical reviewer was happy "to find persons of . . . Mr. Monro's school in religion" calling for the "peculiar and often irregular services" which such people as navvies required.¹⁷⁷

To Monro, however, the extension of the pastoral ministry beyond the confines of the parish system and the Prayer Book was perfectly compatible with the Catholic tradition. It was an expression of the qualities of "energy, elasticity and love" which ought to shine as the church's "brightest jewels."¹⁷⁸

When Edward Monro died he was described in *The Yorkshire Post* as "perhaps the greatest and most brilliant speaker that can be met with in the annals of the Leeds clergy since the Reformation."¹⁷⁹ Certainly he had the gifts of the popular preacher and teller of tales, and his published stories and allegories achieved considerable popularity.¹⁸⁰ Nevertheless, it is as a pastor

173. Monro, *The "Navvies,"* pp. 21-23.

174. Cf. Inglis, *Churches and the Working Classes,* pp. 40f.

175. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 25f.

176. *The Christian Observer,* June 1858.

177. *Ibid.*, February 1858.

178. Cf. Monro, *The "Navvies,"* p. 17; *The Collier and the Operative,* pp. 27f.

179. Quoted in *The Harrow Gazette and General Advertiser,* January 1, 1867.

180. There are many reports of his addressing attentive audiences for hours on end (e.g. *The Harrow Gazette and General Advertiser,* December 1, 1858; *The Leeds Intelligencer,* March 15, 1862 and February 14, 1863). Two of his tales, *The Combatants* and *Edwin's Fairing,* were republished in the 1890s.

and practising pastoral theologian that Monro deserves a permanent place in Victorian history. In the years of his active ministry, the parish priest was still the principal professional figure of the English countryside, a key person in village social life whose position enabled him, if he were willing and able, to contribute greatly to the welfare of the community. Willingness and ability for this work Monro had in abundance. He not only exercised an effective pastoral ministry; he wrote about the nature and function of a parish priest with sensitivity and originality. He articulated the Tractarian pastoral tradition, and in so doing won the admiration of John Keble himself. To a much greater degree than Keble, Monro recognized the need for "elasticity" as the church attempted to cope with the pastoral needs of a rapidly changing society. His attempts to enrich the pastoral resources of the church won him sympathy from churchmen far removed from Tractarianism. At a time when too many of the clergy were embroiled in controversy about surplices and candles, about marriage with a deceased wife's sister, or the niceties of Gothic architecture, Monro reminded them that their real work was the care of the souls committed to their charge.