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**Dr Abraham Gregory, Prebendary of Gloucester Cathedral**

by S. J. A. Evans and S. Eward  
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# Dr. Abraham Gregory, a Seventeenth-Century Prebendary of Gloucester Cathedral

By SEIRIOL EVANS and SUZANNE EWARD

ABRAHAM GREGORY was the son of Francis Gregory, 'plebeius', of Oxford and was born at Old Woodstock on 23 April 1643.<sup>1</sup> Nothing is known of his home background or of his schooltime. He had an older brother John,<sup>2</sup> and from what is known of his subsequent career, as well as that of Abraham, it is a safe conjecture that they came from a cultured home.

Abraham next appears, aged 17, as usher in the College School at Gloucester (now the King's School), where John was the master. The year was 1660 and the Gloucester city council agreed that Abraham should be paid £5 out of the chamber of the city.<sup>3</sup> No doubt the cathedral and the close or college, with its school, which had been taken over by the city during the Commonwealth period, had not yet been returned to dean Brough<sup>4</sup> and the reinstated prebendaries. In the same year, on 7 December, Abraham matriculated at Oriel College, Oxford, as a poor boy. He graduated B.A. there, and returned to Gloucester to continue as usher of the College School.<sup>5</sup> On 29 September 1662, describing himself as a schoolmaster, and aged 20, he applied for a licence to marry Frances Pritchard of Gloucester, also aged 20. It is not known where they were married. In 1664 he must have received ordination, though far short of the canonical age, since he was instituted to the vicarage of Sandhurst in that year.

It was an age of pluralism in the Church of England, and it need cause no surprise to find that Abraham was able to hold several benefices in plurality between 1664 and his death in 1690.<sup>6</sup> But some explanation should be attempted to show how a poor clerk, apparently without influential friends, should be able to acquire so much preferment. The key to the situation is to be found in his appointment as a royal chaplain to Charles II. Pluralism in the Church was controlled by a statute of 21 Henry VIII which, after laying down a general rule that a clergyman who was in possession of a

1. In a deposition which he made 13 December 1677 (Glos. RO, GDR 221), Abraham stated that he was born at Wootton in the diocese of Oxford, and had for about two years been rector of St Mary de Crypt in Gloucester. Old Woodstock was a hamlet in Wootton parish.

2. John Gregory was archdeacon of Gloucester from 1671 to 1678. Both he and Oliver Gregory their nephew were exhibitioners at Charterhouse, so this may have been Abraham's school also, although another brother, Francis, was educated at Westminster, and became an usher there.

3. J. N. Langston, *Headmasters and Ushers of the King's (College) School, Gloucester, 1541-1841* (1928), 210. Abraham was presumably paid by the city chamber because the cathedral and its revenues were still in the possession of the Corporation. In 1661 the dean and chapter had been reinstated and were able to pay John and Abraham Gregory, the two masters of the school, a joint salary of £24 13s. 4d.

4. William Brough had been appointed dean of Gloucester by Charles I at Oxford in 1643 but was not installed. He was later sequestered by Parliament for Arminianism, and for his malignancy against the members, especially the lawyers amongst them. At the Restoration he was installed Dean. The cathedral owes to him the magnificent silver-gilt communion service, and the case of the Chaire organ, which carries his arms.

5. He then lived in the Common Kitchen (now 3 Millers Green, Gloucester), as the tenant of George Wall the younger. The account books show that the dean and chapter paid him a salary as usher throughout the years 1661 to 1671.

6. Having subscribed to the Act of Uniformity on 13 August 1662, he became successively vicar of Sandhurst (Glos.), August 1664; rector of Cowley (Glos.), June 1670; prebendary of Gloucester, July 1671; canon of Lincoln, 1672; vicar of Churcham, September 1673; rector of St Mary de Crypt, Gloucester, December 1675; rector of Cromhall, May 1679, and the same year canon and precentor of Llandaff. He presumably never resided Lincoln or Llandaff.

benefice of the value of £8 a year or more must forfeit it on institution to any other benefice with cure of souls, then proceeded to enact a long list of exceptions. Among these were the royal chaplains, who might hold two benefices with cure of souls in plurality and one or more 'dignities' as well. The canons of 1604 (No. 41) added among other things that the recipient of such preferment must have attained the degree of master of arts; and that, no doubt, is why Abraham proceeded to this degree at Cambridge, by royal letters patent in 1665.

After that his fortune, though a modest one, was made, by the ecclesiastical preferments of the time. He became rector of Cowley in 1670, and while holding this was made by the lord chancellor, prebendary (we should say residentiary canon) of Gloucester in 1671, becoming Doctor of Divinity in 1677. He made Gloucester his home, living in the prebendal house now known as Little Cloister House, built over the little cloister on the north side of the cathedral; there he lived for the rest of his life, together with his wife Frances and a numerous growing family.

Abraham was only 28 when he took up his appointment at the cathedral. As a royal chaplain he must have been an ardent supporter of the monarchy and a high churchman. He would have stood for the divine right of kings, for passive obedience, and for the book of common prayer and its services. He would have been opposed to the toleration of the dissenters and Roman Catholics, and the use of extempore prayer in church. From the scattered references in the chapter act books it must be inferred that he was a stickler for constitutional procedure, pernicky and contentious over what he thought were his rights, and an aggressive opponent to those whose political and religious opinions were contrary to his own.

The chapter which he joined in 1671 was presided over by Thomas Vyner D.D.,<sup>7</sup> a young man aged only 41, described by Fosbrooke<sup>8</sup> as 'a man of family'—as indeed he must have been, for after acquiring no less than four preferments between 1652 and 1667 (including in 1665 the second prebendal stall at Gloucester), he was appointed to one of the much coveted canonries at St George's, Windsor, in 1670, and was finally installed dean of Gloucester in July 1671. What mischance overtook Vyner we do not know, but he died at Gloucester two years later at the age of 44.

Vyner's successor in the deanery was Robert Frampton, a Royalist indeed, one who had fought for his king at Hambleton Hill. He was already a prebendary of Gloucester when he was appointed to the deanery in 1673. In 1680 he was advanced to the bishopric. He would have been a man after Abraham's own heart. Not only was he devoted to the house of Stuart, but he was, above all, a Church of England man and a high churchman. He was in sympathy with the seven bishops who stood trial for refusing to allow king James's second Declaration of Indulgence to be read in the churches of their dioceses; but he was not among their number, because through an accident he was prevented from being present at the Lambeth meeting when the decision to refuse was taken. Archbishop Sancroft remarked that he was sure 'Robert of Gloster and his black mare were on the gallop',<sup>9</sup> but the bishops could not wait for him. He was in time, however, to be one of the non-jurors who refused the oath of allegiance to William and Mary, and was deprived of his bishopric in 1689. As will be seen, Abraham was of the same persuasion.

Among Abraham's other colleagues on the Gloucester chapter was Thomas Marshall, dean in 1681.<sup>10</sup> He again was a royalist who had borne arms for the king in the defence of Oxford at his own expense, but he was also a scholar in oriental languages, and became rector of Lincoln College in 1672. He again would have understood Abraham's predilections.

So also would William Jane<sup>11</sup> (1685–1707) who succeeded Marshall as dean and was still in office when Abraham Gregory died. He was regius professor of divinity at Oxford in 1680 and framed the

7. Brother of Sir Robert Vyner, a goldsmith and lord mayor of London, who gave some books to the cathedral library. He was a friend of Samuel Pepys.

8. T. D. Fosbrooke, *An original history of the city of Gloucester* (1819).

9. S. C. Carpenter, *Eighteenth century Church and people* (1959).

10. Author of a treatise on Anglo-Saxon and Gothic versions of the gospel, a copy of which he gave to the cathedral library. As a young man he was a soldier in the regiment of Henry, earl of Dover, and fought in the royalist cause.

11. He defended *Eikon Basilike* against Milton.

Oxford Declaration in favour of passive obedience, from which so much trouble arose in the university. As prolocutor of the lower house of Convocation he procured the defeat of the 'comprehension scheme' in 1689. This was the scheme by which all dissenters were to be 'comprehended' into the Church of England. The alternative to 'comprehension' was 'toleration', and this was what eventually came about with progressive abolition of the penalties for non-conformity. Dean Jane would have been in sympathy with Abraham Gregory, but he was often away from Gloucester.

It remains to mention the chief protagonist on the other side. This was Edward Fowler, who was made a prebendary of Gloucester cathedral in 1675.

Since the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 there had been a continual persecution of protestant dissenters, but by 1670 a minority of protestants<sup>12</sup> had obtained seats in Parliament and the Whig party was formed to oppose both the cavaliers and the court. It drew support from the lower classes of puritans, the shop keepers and tradesmen, but also touched those of higher rank who favoured latitudinarian views and the rationalism of the times. Within the Church of England a similar spirit was abroad—the low church party of liberal churchmen rather than puritans, advanced toleration of the unprivileged dissenters, and thus, politically, the low churchmen and the Whigs coalesced. To this party Fowler belonged.

On the other hand the Tory party—as they were soon to be called—was the party of the land-owners and the clergy. They stood for non-resistance to the king, for divine right and the authority of the church in politics and society. The bishops and high church clergy were the backbone of the party, and in his later years Charles II governed with their help.

Abraham Gregory was a high churchman, a king's man, and if he had lived longer would probably have been a Jacobite. Edward Fowler was a low churchman and a Whig. By 1650 he had become a clerk in Corpus Christi College, Oxford, where, says Anthony à Wood, 'he was well endowed with the spirit and gifted with extempore prayer'. His moral writings commended him to archbishop Gilbert Sheldon<sup>13</sup> who brought him to London in 1675 to All Hallows, Bread St. In the same year he was made prebendary of Gloucester cathedral. It is easy to imagine the distaste with which Abraham Gregory would view the arrival of such a colleague, and evidence of the tension between them soon appeared in the following incident.

The apex of the vault of Gloucester quire is some 20 feet higher than the roof of the nave; thus part of the west wall of the quire rising above the nave roof is taken up with a six-light window which, in 1679, was still filled with medieval glass which had somehow escaped the iconoclasm of the 16th century. The glass was painted with a representation of the Holy Trinity. This was evidently similar to the late 15th-century representations in manuscripts of that date, and is described by Fowler himself as follows:

'It was the old Popish Picture of the Trinity: God the Father represented by an Old man with a very long Grey Beard, and a huge beam of Light above his head: God the Son, by a Crucifix between his knees: and God the Holy Ghost, by a Dove with spread wings, under his beard.'<sup>14</sup>

Fowler, the low church protestant, was deeply shocked by this picture and determined to get rid of it. Waiting until his period of residence came round in 1679, he moved in chapter a resolution that the window should be destroyed. His deep and sincere objection to its subject is set out in the preface to a sermon delivered in the cathedral on 7 August 1681, which is a kind of apologia for the action he had taken in

'The destroying of an Idol, that even moderate Papists have condemned, and some of the better sort of Heathens also; to wit a Corporeal Representation of the Great God, and which one would wonder should have any Patrons, besides the monstrous Sect of Anthropomorphites'.<sup>15</sup>

12. At this time the name 'protestant' had a political rather than a religious significance.

13. Sheldon had been prebendary of the fourth stall at Gloucester from 1633 until the time of the civil wars.

14. Preface to *A Sermon preached before the Judges, in the time of the assizes in the Cathedral Church at Gloucester, on Sunday Aug. 7. 1681.*

15. *Ibid.*

He describes also in the preface how on this occasion he had the chapter clerk and his assistants excluded from the chapter meeting 'because I would have the matter carried as privately as might be'. He feared that if it became known that the chapter had been so tardy in destroying this popish picture, it might lead to suspicions that they had Romish sympathies, a real and dangerous possibility in the aftermath of Titus Oates and the Popish Plot. He then took the prebendaries to view this scandalous thing, and after that his motion 'was readily entertained by the Chapter, and the Idol cheerfully voted down'. By that time he had worked the prebendaries up into such a state of enthusiastic iconoclasm that, although the motion had provided that the window should be taken down by a glazier, Fowler goes on to say that

'for a great reason, which I think fit to conceal till provok'd to publish it, it was readily consented to, that it should be immediately broken . . . Whereupon the greater number of the Chapter went together to the place to countenance the action, and it was done by my hand'.

What was the great reason which he thought fit to conceal? Was it that the dean, Robert Frampton, was not present in chapter? It is known that on hearing what had been done Frampton was very angry. Or was it that Fowler, knowing that Abraham Gregory was violently opposed to such destruction and had voted against it in chapter, would certainly move the bishop and dean to have it stopped if it were not done at once?

Fowler must now have entered the winding stair at the west end of the nave by which entry could be obtained on to the lead-covered nave roof. Walking along by the parapet he could arrive at the gutter that passes under the window and would thus be within easy reach of the glass itself. He used a long pole for the business, and he would need this in order to smash the upper lights. The prebendaries meanwhile had assembled to witness this violent procedure, presumably standing at the west end of the quire. They were Dr Thomas Washbourn, subdean; Abraham Gregory, treasurer; Nathaniel Hodges, and Dr Ralph Cudworth:<sup>16</sup> but gone were Fowler's hopes for secrecy, for they were not alone. Gregory's account of the scene speaks of the window being 'dashed to pieces in the sight of many, and some strangers of quality, then in the Church'. So they all gazed upwards with horror as the fragments of medieval glass were scattered around them on the pavement, and they saw, framed in the empty tracery, the fanatical face of Mr Fowler.

The uproar of protest was not long in making itself heard. Fowler himself admits that

'When it came to be known abroad there was a hideous noise and clamour made by some few people; who are I dare say the first Protestants that ever concern'd themselves about such a vile relique of Popish Superstition.'

He must have been surprised at the storm his precipitate behaviour let loose.

Dr Abraham Gregory, as soon as he could, recorded his fury and detestation of Fowler's actions. He seized the chapter act book and wrote down his protest, but discovered later that his lines had most scandalously been crossed out, so that they were illegible. He then got hold of the chapter's register of leases,<sup>17</sup> to which as treasurer he would have had access; and therein can be read today his long and detailed protest at the irregularity of these arbitrary proceedings.

He reveals that the original motion by Dr Fowler was never entered in the chapter act book, the chapter clerk having refused to have anything to do with it, since he 'was turned out of the Chapter House', and to register an act of which he had no personal knowledge would be 'against his oath and duty'. Some time later, however, at the reiterated request of Dr Fowler, who 'earnestly by leter upon leter prest it, doubting his being questioned', a memorandum was entered in the act book, not by the chapter clerk, but by prebendary Hodges in 'his private hand', which reads as follows:

'Memorandum that upon the 23d of June 1679 at a Chapter where were present Dr Washbourn Subdean (having the Dean's proxy), Dr Abraham Gregory Treasurer, Nathaniel Hodges, Edward

16. Ralph Cudworth was one of the Cambridge Platonists, another of whom, Henry More, is (according to Fosbrooke) supposed to have refused a prebend in 1675, so that Edward Fowler might have it.

17. Register of leases of the dean and chapter, deposited in the Gloucestershire Record Office, D936/E16.

Fowler, Dr Cudworth Prebends of the Cathedral Church of Gloucester, it was ordered by a majority, *Every one consenting then present (Dr Gregory only excepted)*<sup>18</sup> that a certain scandalous picture of the Holy Trinity being in the west window of the Quire of the said Church, should be removed, and other glasse put into the place.

Tho: Washbourn:<sup>19</sup>

Nath: Hodges.<sup>20</sup>

Dr Gregory's long protest begins by declaring the whole affair illegal. The dean was absent, and his proxy given to the subdean gave no licence for a vote on this subject because it was not known that Fowler would raise it. The chapter clerk was not present by whose hand, or the dean's, an act should be entered and subscribed. His next point is that

'neither any of their predecessors in that Church since H. ye 8th nor any of the Scotch souldiers (that did much mischief to the windows in the Church and Cloysters) during the late wars, had been angry at or scandalis'd with it. And therefore hee thought it too high a gratification of the fanaticall party, out of a sudden zeal to beat it down'.

Furthermore

'the glasse was up so high, and stood in so private a place, that not one in a thousand that came into the Church either did, or easily could see it: and that hee had lived a member of that Church well nigh 20 years, but never knew one person offended with it before. Though hee himselfe had taken notice of it'.

It is important to remember that at this time Dr Gregory was treasurer of the cathedral, for another point he makes is that

'the order in truth was, that the Treasurer should remove [the glass], but because hee would not promise to do it, Mr fowler said, I will go and do it presently myselfe, and so did. The next Sunday the Conventicle-preacher<sup>21</sup> urgd, that now it was evident the establisht church needed a more thorough reformation, since its own members confest the dreggs of popery were remaining in it'.

But the most telling point of Abraham's argument lay in his submission that if in conscience they thought themselves bound to break the window, then they ought in conscience to destroy their common seal also, because it bore exactly the same representation of the Holy Trinity<sup>22</sup> as the glass in the window:

18. The words in italics have been crossed out in the chapter act book. They are supplied from Abraham Gregory's copy of the memorandum in the register of leases. It is clear that someone was anxious to conceal Abraham's objection to the proposal made by Mr Fowler in chapter.

19. Thomas Washbourn was senior prebendary, a Worcestershire man, whose brother William was also a prebendary. Their mother was Eleanor Lygon. Thomas was nominated to a prebend in Gloucester cathedral in 1643 and is said to have been installed by night because of the civil war. He was a poet and published his *Divine Poems* in 1684.

20. Nathaniel Hodges, student of Christ Church, Oxford, and professor of Moral Theology, was installed prebendary in 1673. Entries in the bishops' visitation records and the chapter act books show him on several occasions supporting Edward Fowler and opposed to Abraham Gregory.

21. This was certainly James Forbes who had been presbyterian minister in the cathedral during the Commonwealth. He was evicted at the Restoration and in 1677 was holding a conventicle in Sampson Bacon's house 'behind the ffryers'. Abraham Gregory, then rector of St Mary de Crypt, deposed before Richard Parsons, the chancellor of the diocese, that Forbes, though a parishioner, had never received the sacrament in the parish church. Before this Forbes had been allowed to hold services for his congregation in the great hall of Edward Fletcher's house in the college (now Little Cloister House), as is evidenced by Fletcher's will, dated 20 February 1659/60, of which the dean and chapter possess a transcript. Eventually Forbes kept his conventicle on the site of the Unitarian Chapel in Eastgate Street (which has recently so disgracefully been demolished), and there he was buried. By permission of the dean and chapter his remains were reburied in the south walk of the cathedral cloister on 21 December 1966.

22. After the Reformation the cathedral was re-dedicated to the Holy and Indivisible Trinity, and the chapter seal here referred to must have been struck then. On 23 November 1720 the chapter ordered that this old common seal should be broken and that a new seal 'on which is engraved the Arms of this Church be from this time used'.

'nay rather to break their seal; since the window being under the locks and keyes of the Church, no body could come to adore it; but the impression put to every lease and writing that passeth the seal, goes abroad into many hands, and at their pleasure may bee worshipt by them'.

This was indeed a Parthian shot, because if there were no seal, there could be no new leases of property, and the better part of the prebendaries' income came from the entry fines paid for new leases.

But, of course, it was all too late. Nothing could put the window back, and relationships in the college could hardly be harmonious after what had occurred.<sup>23</sup> Perhaps Abraham, being a litigious person, may have enjoyed a sour satisfaction at the troubles which Fowler's aggressive Whiggism brought upon him. Public opinion took long to forget the breaking of the window, and gossip ascribed the act to all kinds of seditious motives. In an attempt to dispel these rumours Fowler published his version of the deed in his preface to the sermon, quoted above, preached in the cathedral before the judges of assize two years after the event. From this preface it seems clear that an unsuccessful attempt had been made to persuade the grand jury to present him for trial at the assize. His voluminous writings were all polemical, and his *Design for Christianity* (1671) was attacked by both Baxter and Bunyan as a 'mixture of Popery, Socinianism and Quakerism'. Fowler's reply entitled *Dirt wiped off* hardly sounds conciliatory.

In 1683 Fowler got into trouble with the city of Gloucester when he preached two sermons in the cathedral; the first of these gave great offence to the mayor and common council, who voted next day that

'Whereas Edward Fowler . . . hath been frequently taken notice of, by the Mayor, Aldermen, Sheriffs, and Common Council of this City, in his Sermons here, to Countenance Sedition and Faction, and to preach those things which tend to the Disturbance of Well-affected men of this City: It is therefore ordered by this House, that when and as often as he preacheth at the Cathedral Church in this City, that the Mayor and Aldermen and Common Council of this City shall not go thither with the Sword in their Formalities; but shall go to some other Church in this City; to hear some Loyal Orthodox Divine, and to be paid at the Charge of the City.'

Fowler was much upset at this censure and published both the sermons with a dedicatory epistle to Robert Frampton, bishop of Gloucester, in which he represents himself as being persecuted for proclaiming unpalatable evangelical truth. In 1685 he was put on trial for Whiggism in Doctors Commons and was suspended for infringing the canons, but in the long run this did him little harm.

The Revolution of 1688 reversed the fortunes of both Gregory and Fowler. The Whigs and low churchmen now triumphed with the change of dynasty; the king's men and high churchmen, including Abraham Gregory, were in eclipse. Edward Fowler was made bishop of Gloucester in 1691, the year after Abraham's death.

But there was one last scene in which Abraham Gregory made his protest on behalf of his sovereign and against the usurper. The dramatic account of this occasion is best given in the very words which the chapter clerk, Mr Lambe, wrote in the chapter act book. The entry is dated 18 February 1688/9.

'At which time and place Mr Subdeane pronounced against Mr Stephen Jefferies Organist of this Church his second monition to depart this Church, for that he the said Stephen Jefferies did upon Thursday last in the morning (being the Thanksgiving Day) immediately after the Sermon ended and the Blessing given play over upon the Organ a Common Ballad in the hearing of fiftene hundred or two thousand people to the great scandall of Religion, prophanation of the Church, and greivous offence of all good Christians. And farther because tho' Dr Gregory (the senior Prebend of this Church) did immediately express his great detestation of the same to Mr Deighton then Chanter of this Church, and Mr John Tyler the senior singingman of the Quire, informing them

23. Presumably Abraham, as treasurer, also refused to authorise payment for repairing the broken window, for an entry in the account-book for 1679 recording payment of 15 shillings to 'John Painter glassier' is the only one not written in Abraham's own hand.

of the unspeakable scandall that universally was taken at it, and that they imediately acquainted ye said Stephen Jefferies therewith: yet he the said Stephen Jefferies in direct despite to Religion, and affront to the said Dr Gregory, did after Evening Prayer, assoone as the last Amen was ended, in the presence and hearing of all the Congregation, fall upon the same straine, and on the Organ plaid over the same common ballad again: insomuch that the young gentlewomen invited one another to dance; the strangers cryed it were better that the Organs were pull'd downe then that they should be so used; and all sorts declared that the D and Chapt could never remove the scandall, if they did not imediately turne away so insolent and prophane a person out of the Church.

George Bull Subdean  
Abr: Gregory Thesaur.'

The thanksgiving day upon which this outburst occurred was the day appointed by the Convention Parliament for a public thanksgiving to God 'for making the Prince of Orange the instrument of the Kingdom's delivery from Popery and arbitrary government'.<sup>24</sup> The occasion was evidently much to the taste of the Gloucester citizenry. Stephen Jefferies,<sup>25</sup> who so improperly played 'a common ballad' after both services gave expression to their feelings, for that ballad was almost certainly 'Lilliburlero',<sup>26</sup> the haunting tune of which danced king James out of three kingdoms and brought in William of Orange. Abraham's feelings as he heard it were very different, and must be imagined. All his loyalties were crumbling. His sovereign, his church, and even the discipline of the cathedral college were in disarray. The Glorious Revolution had destroyed his citadel.

Abraham Gregory had sworn allegiance to king James and his indignant protest on this occasion is indicative of his resolution never to countenance William of Orange whom he regarded as a usurper. Anyhow, though only 47, he was near his end. Anthony à Wood notes the date of his death 'at his own house' on 29 July 1690, and adds 'tho he had been some time in prison for disaffection to the government of King William III'. This (if true, for the chapter records do not imply any absence from the cathedral), suggests that he had refused to take the oath to William and Mary which was ordered by the Convention Parliament in February 1689. Perhaps he was released on account of sickness to die at home, for the prisons of that time were no health resorts. He was a stout defender of his principles, and the long Latin epitaph on his gravestone in the east cloister speaks of his unwavering loyalty to the Church of England, and adds, in brackets, *Hinc illae Lacrymae*.

Three days before his death 'being weak and sick in my body but of sound and disposing mind' he executed his will, declaring almost with his last breath his loyal adherence to the faith which he had defended so passionately throughout his life.

'I hope to dye a true Catholick Christian according as the Church of England by law establish't in conformity to the primitive Church of Christ understands that denomination.'

His eldest son, John, was appointed executor and was charged with the administration of a trust of 'All the money that shall be found . . . in a certain elme box nailed down to one of the shelves in my studdy'. With this capital John was to purchase a property, and whenever the rent in hand amounted to £8, to make an interest-free loan of it to 'some poore honest tradsman of Gloucester and of the Burrough of New Woodstock . . . throughly agreeing to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England'.

Although Abraham died at the early age of 47, he had acquired a considerable amount of property. He gave his wife a life interest in land in Sandhurst, which would pass eventually to John, who as

24. A. Bryant, *Pepys, the Saviour of the Navy* (1938), 374.

25. Stephen Jefferies (1662–1712), organist of Gloucester cathedral 1682–1710. Previously a chorister and assistant organist of Salisbury cathedral. He composed one of the tunes played by the chimes of Gloucester cathedral.

26. The tune first appeared in 1687 set to satirical verses by Thomas Wharton ridiculing the earl of Tyrconnel and the Irish Roman Catholics. It is still used by the Orange party in Ireland.

executor was charged with the difficult task of administering bequests to his two brothers and three sisters, none of whom except Anne were yet of age. She received outright the leasehold inn called the Portcullis in Westgate Street, but was charged with certain payments to Abraham's mother-in-law, Emma Tyther,<sup>27</sup> whose annuity of £4 was to be stopped if she brought any action at law or was otherwise troublesome 'concerning certayne old goods which she made over to mee at the time of my marriage'.

John was made responsible for the education of the rest of the children. He was to provide for Edward at school and at university from the rents of property in Hare Lane, and to pay Thomas an annuity of £10 till the overseers agreed that he might be given his portion left him in the will of £250. Both Thomas and Edward were pupils at the College School, Gloucester. Elizabeth, who must have been nearly 'out of her time', was to share with John the responsibility for the youngest sister Margaret. Each of them would receive, on coming of age, their portion of £250. What strikes one is that Abraham left his wife with none of the responsibility for the children which, one would have thought, would be properly hers. But her death occurred only 3 years later, and she may have been at this time an invalid.

Abraham's will, like so many wills of the period when no professional lawyers were involved, must have provided material for a plethora of family quarrels. The overseers were intended as a final court of appeal and John must have been glad to have at the back of him Edward Gregory of Chatham, Esq., and his uncle, John Gregory who was archdeacon of Gloucester.<sup>28</sup>

Fortunately an inventory of Abraham Gregory's goods and chattels, made at the time of his death, has survived. It gives us a description of the rooms and accommodation at Little Cloister House as it was in the late 17th century, and notes the furniture and fittings in each room. The valuation shows that Abraham's property in the city and county was worth a considerable amount and that his house was comfortable and well equipped.<sup>29</sup> He was also a thrifty person; the contents of the 'elme box' mentioned in his will, amounted to £127 6s., and there was £54 in another box. It is tantalizing to read of 'a landskipp and 20 pictures' in the parlour worth £6 13s. 4d. and not to be told their subjects or who painted them. The plate weighed 300 ozs, there were 17 gold rings (probably mourning rings), two watches and a clock as well as a 'weather glasse'. His possessions also included 'two swords and belts, a pike, two buff coats, pistolls and other arms' worth £6 13s. 4d.<sup>30</sup> There was also a 'Birding piece and a ffowling Piece £2 10s'. His books were valued at £20. His dining-room was hung with tapestry. In a low room, presumably outside the dwelling house, he kept '2 Piggs' and bees; the pigs were valued at £2, the bees at 6s. 8d. His stable<sup>31</sup> had three horses in it; together with saddlery they came to £10. There was one coach with harness and an old coach as well as a wheeled cart. The whole valuation when added up came to £1,729 5s. 6d.

27. The apparent discrepancy of Abraham's mother-in-law being called Emma Tyther while his wife's maiden name was Frances Pritchard, is explained by the marriage on 19 November 1648, at St Michael's church, Gloucester, of 'Robert Tither' of the parish of St Nicholas, and 'Emma Prichards relict Thomae Prichards gen. nup. defunct'. Frances's baptism does not seem to have been at St Michael's. Letters of administration of the goods of Emma Tyther, widow, late of St John's parish, were committed to John Gregory of the city of Gloucester, her grandson, gent., 10 March 1698/9, but she does not seem to have been buried at St John's.

28. A family-tree of the Gregory family is given in *The visitation of the County of Gloucester, 1682-3* (1884). Abraham's children and other relatives can be identified from this.

29. Although Abraham's father was described as 'plebeius', Abraham himself, his brother John and their descendants, were gentlemen and bore a coat-of-arms. This was 'Or, two bars azure, in chief a lion passant of the second'; the crest was 'a demi-boar gules collared or'. The arms are depicted on Abraham's tombstone.

30. Abraham was an infant at the time of the civil wars and could not have needed this military accoutrement for himself. It may be relevant that at Chester between 1618 and 1639 the dean and chapter kept a 'light horse' and a man to ride it, wearing a buff coat, sword, cap, belt, dragoone and knapsack, as the cathedral's quota to the militia. (R. V. H. Burne, *Chester Cathedral*, 1958).

31. The extent of the curtilage of Abraham's house is uncertain. He claimed that the garden belonging to 3 Millers Green was part of his prebendal property. In 1680 he conducted a heated and lengthy dispute about its ownership with chancellor Richard Parsons, tenant of No 3. (See our article 'The Common Kitchen' in *Trans. B.G.A.S.*, xci).

Abraham Gregory's portrait, the property of the dean and chapter, now hangs in the prebendal residence at 7 College Green. It shows a youngish man with a thoughtful expression, wearing the academic gown and bands of a 17th-century divine. It is perhaps not too sentimental to suppose that he would have appreciated our attempt to vindicate his loyalty to the causes which dominated his life.

*November 1976*