



**The Venerable Luke Heslop, DD (1738–1825)**

**Minister of St Marylebone (1803 – 1821)**

**Rector of St Marylebone (1821 – 1825)**

**Protégé and Pluralist**

Heslop was born and baptised on St. Luke's Day, 18th October 1738, the youngest of a numerous family, at Middleham, in the north of Yorkshire. He was admitted a sizar at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge on 30th May 1760 and subsequently appointed Chapel Clerk on 31st October. Heslop was elected a Sterne Scholar on 19th October 1764, a Spencer Scholar in November 1764, and a fellow of his college on 26th January 1769.

In 1764 he was listed as Senior Wrangler of Bene't College. Graduating in 1764, Heslop was awarded his MA in 1767 and a BD in 1775. In 1771, Heslop was an unsuccessful candidate for the professorship of chemistry, but served as Moderator of the Public Schools in 1772 and 1773.

Dr. John Green, Bishop of Lincoln, his ecclesiastical patron, a former Master of Corpus Christi, appointed Heslop his Examining Chaplain and on 2nd September 1778. Heslop was collated by him to the archdeaconry of Buckingham, together with a prebendal stall at Lincoln to which he added the prebendal stall of Holborn at St Paul's (of which the Bishop of Lincoln has become Dean) on 28th September 1776 as well as becoming Vicar of St. Peter-le-Poor in the City London which carried with it the rectory of Adstock in Buckinghamshire. Heslop lived at Adstock for twenty-five years, where he served as the local magistrate and, in addition to the rectory of Adstock, Heslop held, during the latter part of the period, the small rectory of Addington.

It was whilst in Buckinghamshire that Heslop met the Duke of Portland. In 1803, Heslop was presented by the duke, then Prime Minister, to the valuable rectory of Bothall in Northumberland, with which Heslop also held the small rectory of Fulmer in Buckinghamshire in plurality. These livings, however, Heslop surrendered on being presented by his ducal patron as Minister of St. Marylebone, and also, as a make-weight compensation for the resignation of Bothall, to the vicarage of St. Augustine's in Bristol, the presentation to which was, at that time, in the hands of the Crown.

Heslop did not settle in Marylebone until 1809, but he soon devoted himself to his notoriously extensive parish. Although he was over 70 when he came to St Marylebone, a parish of more than 100,000 people, Heslop was instrumental in not seeking to propagate even more proprietary chapels throughout his vast parish and he took the very bold step of yielding his own rights by dividing his single parish into separate parishes, ceding what would have been his patronage rights over these new livings to the Crown.

Few men ever held successively more church preferments, yet he died a comparatively poor man at 27 Nottingham Place, Marylebone, on 23rd June 1825, aged 86 and was buried in the crypt of his new parish church (whose construction he had overseen). Heslop was known for his remarkably vigorous constitution, and for eighty years he never suffered from ill-health. In 1773, Heslop had married Dorothy, daughter of Dr. Reeve, a physician; she died at Bury on 28th December 1827. Heslop was survived not only by his wife, but by a son, and a daughter married to Henry Partridge, Esq. of Hockham Hall, Norfolk. Heslop was the oldest senior wrangler and the oldest archdeacon of all his contemporaries.

## Heslop's obituary *from* the Gentleman's Magazine of January 1826

In the discharge of the ministerial duties of Marylebone, Dr. Heslop was ever ready to do more than could be looked for, either from his age or his station. His heart was ever kind, and his ear ever open, to the calls of distress when brought before him; and the poor who went to him with their own little tales of want or difficulty will bear their testimony, that they always found him attentive to their complaints, and ready both himself to give and also to procure for them proper relief. In private life, whoever knew him, will recollect the perfect urbanity and affability of his manners. In person tall and commanding, his appearance was that of a highly dignified and venerable clergyman. Such was the extraordinary vigour of his constitution, that for the first eighty years of his life, he was never confined a single day by sickness, nor ever had recourse to medical remedies or advice: a rare exemption this from the ills which flesh is generally heir to; yet such an uninterrupted enjoyment of health, throughout so extended a period, must be attributed in part, at least, to his own proper and temperate use of the blessing itself: he never knew what it was to have an headache. During this long archdeaconship he published several charges to his clergy, marked by sound practical advice: whilst resident in his living in Bucks, two short "Exhortations to habitual and devout Communicants; and whilst at Bothall, two sermons preached at the assizes, and at the visitation of the Bishop of Durham. At different periods he also published some pamphlets on the prices of corn, the value of land, &c. &c. To the very end of his life he continued extremely fond of all matters relating to calculation, and was constantly employing himself with a pen in his hand. He was throughout life indefatigable. His remains were accompanied on foot (by the parochial clergy) to the new church of St. Marylebone.

Few men, even during a long life, have held successively more various church preferment than Dr. Heslop. But the emoluments of all of them together did not allow him to amass wealth. Instead of having to record of Dr. Heslop, as was once said of a certain church dignitary, and may perchance be said of another — that he died "shamefully rich" — to the surprise of all who misjudged his public means, and knew not the private demands upon it, the late Rector of Marylebone died poor.

### **Publications**

In addition to having pamphlets and sermons dedicated to him by admirers, Heslop published the following:

Two Sermons and a Charge, 1807

Observations on the Statute of 31 Geo. II, c. 29, concerning the Assize of Bread, 1799, 4to

A Comparative Statement of the Food produced from Arable and Grass Land and the returns from each, with Observations on Inclosures and the Effect of an Act for Enclosing Commons, 1801, 4to

Observations on the Duty of Property, 1805