

JOHN BRIDGEMAN, BISHOP OF CHESTER, 1619-1652

From an oil painting in the Bishop's Palace at Chester

SOME NOTES ON HINDLEY CHAPPELL¹

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Read 8th December 1910

IT is a far cry to the early years of the fourteenth century, when John of Hindley gave to Cecilia, wife of Henry, son of Hawe, a piece of land with certain common rights, and more especially with "pannage for 10 pigs in the common woods of Hyndeleghe."² These woods would now be difficult to find, and though some of the "waste" and commons, and of the open agricultural land still remains, much of it is now covered with streets, and

¹ Some works quoted from:—

Dr. Halley, *Lancashire, its Puritanism and Nonconformity*, Manchester, 1869, referred to as Halley; *Manuscripts of Lord Kenyon*, H.M. Commission, 1894, referred to as *Kenyon MSS.*; Canon Bridgeman, *History of the Church and Manor of Wigan*, Chetham Society, 15, 16, 17, 18, referred to as *Wigan*; *Commonwealth Church Survey*, Lancs. and Chesh. Record Society, vol. i., referred to as *Survey*; *Hierugia Anglicana*, edition Staley, 1903, referred to as *Hierugia*; Bishop Gastrell, *Notitia Cestriensis*, Chetham Society, xix., xxi., xxii., referred to as *Notitia*; *Deeds relating to Hindley*, Manchester, 1878, referred to as *Deeds*; *Documents relating to Hindley*, Leigh, 1879, referred to as *Documents*.

² Harrison, *Place-Names of the Liverpool District*, 1898, p. 49, states that the name may have signified "the hind or hinder meadowland"—A. Sax. *hindan* and *ledh*; but he gives the preference to an association with the female of the stag (cf. Hartley, Buckley, &c.). "The root of the word *leah* or *lea* is the verb to lie . . . the *leys* were the open forest glades, where the cattle love to lie."—Isaac Taylor, *Words and Places*, p. 360. In the Survey of 1320–1346 Hyndeleghe is mentioned as one of the "members of Newton, held with its members by Robert de Langton, Knt."—Cf. *Chetham Society*, vol. lxxiv., 1868, p. 37.

the population of the whole of Hindley and Abram cannot be less than 33,000, divided amongst six ecclesiastical districts.

By the side of the straggling main street of Hindley, a little removed from the centre of the town, in the midst of a large burying ground, which has more than once been added to, stands a small brown brick building entirely devoid, both inside and out, of any architectural interest. A stranger would pass it by without a thought, except perhaps one of wonder that this important parish of 10,000 souls should not, long ago, have provided itself with a house of God more adequate to its sacred purpose. This is "Hindley Chappell." It was built in the latter half of the eighteenth century. But, though architecturally a blank, it is full of historical interest, for it represents the building, of a century and a quarter earlier, which was the first post-Reformation effort of Church extension in the parish of Wigan; indeed one of the first in the present diocese of Liverpool, and probably one of the latest made in any parish before the Great Rebellion.

Three hundred years ago the parish of Wigan, one of the five ante-Domesday parishes of the diocese of Liverpool, stretched, as it had done for more than 600 years before, from Bickershaw to close to Newburgh, and from the uplands of Haigh to the peaty confines of Rainford. Its mean length was ten miles and its mean breadth six. In comparison with the great population of to-day, it was sparsely inhabited by people who were for the most part tillers of the soil. But in all that great parish, with the exception of the Priory Church at Up-Holland and the little Chapel at Billinge, there was no place of worship for the parishioners but the Church of All Saints, Wigan, which stood, "one Paroch Church amidde the

Towne" (Leland), not very far away from the centre of the parish. Thither from north, south, east, and west the people went, as the tribes to Jerusalem, for their religious duties.¹

Some 270 years ago the first post-Reformation effort was made in this parish of Wigan to bring the Church nearer to the doors of the people. In 1615 Dr. John Bridgeman, Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, became rector of Wigan, then the most valuable benefice in the county after Winwick. In 1619 he also became Bishop of the vast diocese of Chester, which then included the whole of Lancashire and Cheshire, with some additions in Yorkshire and other counties. In 1643 he was ejected from Wigan by the triumphant Puritans, and a few years later his palace and furniture were sold by them. He went out from his preferments for conscience' sake, suffering the loss of all things, like thousands of his brethren, to live the rest of his life in retirement and poverty and sorrow of heart. He died, an old man, about 1652,² before the brighter day dawned. Before he was turned out of Wigan he was party to the planting of a little seed in Hindley, an out-township, distant some three miles from the Parish Church, which has since borne good fruit. He at least approved of a scheme for the building of a parochial chapel to serve for the inhabitants of Hindley, Abram, and part of Aspull. It was built with its little chancel carefully placed, like other English chancels, towards the east, and distinguished by its narrower width and possibly by a screen from the body of the chapel, upon land ("worth about 2s. per annum"³)

¹ Some Hindley rents used to be paid in the sixteenth century "at the aulter in Seynt Kateryn Chapell in the paroch Church of Wigan," or at the "founte stone" there. After the Reformation payments seem to have been made in the porch.

² *Wigan*, p. 440.

³ *Documents*, p. 10.

given by a Hindley landowner—one George Green, who owned the estate called Wooddaggers. He may have been the son of the "George Greene, late of Hindley, tanner, deceased," mentioned in one of the Hindley *Deeds* (1649). At any rate his name deserves to be remembered. The chapel was paid for, partly by the sale of pews, and partly by the voluntary subscriptions of the people of the district, for whom it was intended to serve as a chapel-of-ease. It was built, like the walls of Jerusalem, in troublous times, and it had scarcely been in use a year before it passed into the hands of the Puritans, and they held it for more than twenty years. At length at the Restoration it came back again into the hands of the Churchmen who had built it. This old "Hindley Chappell" was replaced by the present one in 1766.

The Chapel was built in 1641. It could scarcely have been built at a more disturbed and threatening time. In 1640, when the Chapel must have been in building, the Long Parliament had met. Laud, Cosin, Wren, and Windebanke had been impeached. London was in a state of ferment: 15,000 citizens had demanded "the abolition of Episcopacy root and branch." A Parliamentary Committee had been appointed to remove what the Puritans called "scandalous ministers," and many very excellent clergy were turned out of house and home and benefice. In January 1641 the Commons ordered, on their own authority, without a shadow of legal right, that "Commissions should be sent into all counties for the defacing, demolition, and quite taking away" of various "monuments and relics of idolatry" out of the churches—including surplices, hoods, fonts, organs, &c. In some places mob law ruled. Church services were rudely disturbed while the Common Prayer was being read, and books, surplices, communion rails, and other things

were injured or destroyed. Petitions, remonstrances, exaggerations, lampoons, and flysheets abounded. The feeling of the sober-minded Northern Churchmen was expressed in the Cheshire Petition (Feb. 27, 1641). They stated that they feared the introduction of Presbyterian government, which they considered would be far more tyrannical and intolerable than any Episcopal rule could be, and would probably be subversive of the monarchy and destructive of "learning and laws . . . nobility, gentry, and order, if not of Religion." Such were the gloomy anticipations (alas! to be in great measure so soon realised) which filled the hearts of men at that time, and civil war seemed imminent. Yet at that very time "Hindley Chappell" was built. One can but admire the Christian courage and hopefulness of the builders. Then, if ever, pessimism was excusable. But the Hindley Churchmen were no pessimists. They set to work, and built, come what might. What did come very quickly (only a year later) was a catastrophe, which lasted many long and trying years. But the dark cloud rolled away at last, and many a generation since has reaped the benefit of the courage and generosity of those faithful men.

In 1642 or 1643 the Chapel had probably passed out of the hands of the Church into those of the Puritans. Thus early in its life began the Usurpation. But little is known of the history of this period. The Chapel was probably served, during its first year, from Wigan Parish Church. A man named Thomas Tonge is said to have been the first settled minister, and he is reported to have used the Prayer Book at first. But in 1646 he was certainly a Presbyterian, for he was a member of the "Classis," or classical Presbytery, for the parishes of Warrington, Winwick, Leigh, Wigan, Holland, and Prescott. In 1650 the Parliamentary Com-

missioners reported that "Mr. William Williamson, an able godly and painful minister, and of good life and conversation, doth execute the ps̄ite cure." They also considered Hindley Chapel fit to be made a Parish Church, and to have Abram annexed to it, and certain houses in Aspull and Ince. Mr. Williamson died at Hindley, and was succeeded by another Presbyterian, one James Bradshaw, who must not be confounded (as by the late Canon Raines in his notes to Gastrell's *Notitia*, and by others) with an older man of the same name, who was the Presbyterian rector of Wigan, and was ousted by the Independents in 1653. James Bradshaw had to leave Hindley at the day of reckoning in 1662, and he lived afterwards at Rainford (thanks to the forbearance of Bishop Pearson) in peace, if not in plenty, and at last he died of a bruised leg in 1703, in the sixty-seventh year of his age.

After the Restoration the Chapel seems to have stood vacant till the coming of Mr. Wm. Dennis in 1668. He was succeeded by five or six other curates, each staying a longer or a shorter time. This brings us down to 1690. In this year one Thomas Whalley, a Nonconformist, was put in possession of the Chapel by one of the trustees, and held it illegally for several years. The matter was taken into the law courts, and was finally decided in favour of the Church in 1697. John Jackson was appointed to the curacy in 1698, and in the same year the Chapel was consecrated by Bishop Stratford, and probably then obtained parochial rights. The parish registers date from this year, and the succession of clergy has ever since been unbroken.

In his original edition (1836) Baines¹ merely stated that "the Episcopal Chapel built in 1641, and rebuilt in 1766 by a brief to the amount

¹ *Hist. of Lancs.*, vol. iii. p. 567.

of £1291, is a large fabric with a handsome cemetery." But the 2nd edition of Baines (1870), edited by John Harland, F.S.A., and completed by Brooke Herford, states that "the Episcopal Chapel was originally built in 1641 by Puritans, and so was not consecrated." "Owing to the non-consecration of the building, disputes took place about it, the nonconforming party, who had built it, claiming it with its endowments; but finally they were defeated, and built the present Presbyterian Chapel, where, and at Ranford [*sic*] Mr. Bradshaw preached."

In the 3rd edition of Baines (1891), edited by James Croston, F.S.A.,¹ the following account is given: "The Episcopal Chapel . . . was originally built by subscription in 1641, on land given by Mr. George Green, for the ease of the inhabitants of Hindley, and as a place of worship in accordance with the teaching of the Church of England."

"In the 2nd edition of this work the Chapel at Hindley is stated by the Rev. Brooke Herford to have been built by the Nonconformists, who, in consequence, claimed the chapel, with its endowments. This, as we have shown in the text, was disproved at the time of the proceedings in the Duchy Court. He has also fallen into the error of describing Mr. Bradshaw, the Presbyterian minister at Hindley, as having held the rectory of Wigan. There were two persons of the same name.—C." Note to above extract in 3rd edition of Baines.

Now the question, "Who built Hindley Chapel?" will seem to many one of small importance. But truth is never unimportant. The question has antiquarian interest, and importance has been given to it by the fact that it has been differently answered in two editions of a great County History. Moreover, it is of some practical importance for another reason, viz. that it is commonly said by the Hindley Nonconformists to-day, "The Nonconformists built

¹ *Hist. of Lancs.*, vol. iv. p. 309.

and endowed the Chapel, and Churchmen are using it." I propose, therefore, to bestow some little attention upon this point.

It may possibly be objected that a High Churchman may not be qualified to give an unbiassed judgment. At any rate he is as well qualified, so far as that goes, as the Nonconformist Brooke Herford. Probably if I had lived in the seventeenth century, I should have been persecuted by the Puritans as a "scandalous minister," or "an old Malignant,"¹ or as "weak and not well qualified to teach,"² and turned out of house and home; and no doubt had I lived till 1662, I should have rejoiced, with the King, to get my own again, and to see my "paineful" supplanter sent about his business. But, after this lapse of time, it is quite possible to take a calm, dispassionate view. Moreover, it is impossible to read the life of such a man as John Angier of Denton, a nonconforming Puritan, and of many another, without being strongly attracted to the men, and even, in a way, to their system. My object now is, without any prejudice, to try and settle, in accordance with what facts can be ascertained, the purely historical question, "Did the nonconforming Puritans build Hindley Chapel?"

The word "Puritan" is of wide meaning, and would need definition. But, fortunately, Mr. Brooke Herford has defined it for us. He uses it here as equivalent to "non-conformist." There were Puritans who were "conformists," and Puritans who were not. There were Puritans who were "separatists." Mr. Herford states that nonconforming Puritans built "Hindley Chappell." Did they? My reply must be in the negative, and that for four chief reasons: 1, The unlikelihood of their doing it; 2, The judgment of the Duchy

¹ *Survey*, p. 142.

² *Ibid.*, p. 53.

Court in 1697; 3, The position and character of Bishop Bridgeman; and 4, The careful orientation of the chapel. I will deal at length with each of these.

I.—THE INHERENT IMPROBABILITY.

The Puritans were not chapel builders at this period. They loved rather to use a church or a chapel built ready to their hand—as, *e.g.*, Denton, Deane, Horwich, and many another.

The *Notitia* of Bishop Gastrell throws much light upon this subject. He began it in 1714, when he became bishop, and he worked at it till his death in 1725. It is reckoned to be remarkably accurate. It was printed by the Chetham Society in 1850, with most valuable notes by the late Canon Raines. In the table of contents we find a list of 140 chapels existing in 1725 in the Lancashire part of the diocese of Chester. The history of each of these is given, so far as can be, in text and notes.

Of these, 78 were undoubtedly pre-Reformation, and 9 were post-Restoration; 32 of the rest were certainly in existence in 1600, and some of these were probably pre-Reformation,¹ but I cannot be sure. Of the remaining 21 chapels, some were probably built before 1600, but again I cannot be sure. Most of these 21 chapels came into existence between 1600 and 1660. It is, however, a significant fact, which I discovered after some twelve hours of work on the *Notitia*, that, so far as I can ascertain, only 6 (including Hindley) were built between 1640 (the year when the Long Parliament

¹ "At the time of the *Valor* [1534] Lancashire contained sixty rectories or vicarages, and within these parishes there were contained in addition ninety-three chapelries. . . ."—W. A. Shaw, *Victoria County History of Lancashire*, vol. ii. p. 45.

began its work) and 1660. This was the period when the Puritans had full power, and plenty of money once dedicated to God's service.¹ The six chapels were Chowbent (1645), Sankey (built shortly before 1650), Hindley (1641), Elswick (before 1650), Dendron (1644), and Coppull (c. 1657). Taking away Hindley, which is under discussion, we find that Elswick was certainly built by nonconforming Puritans. It is in Dissenting hands now, and always has been. Chowbent and Sankey were also built by Nonconformists, and were used only for that service, until, in the former case in 1722, and in the latter case in 1728, they were handed over by the lord of the manor (who had probably had the chief hand in building them) to the Church. In the case of Coppull, Bishop Gastrell was told in 1715 that the chapel had never been used, as at first designed, for a Dissenting meeting-house. Moreover, Sir Ed. Chisenhall told him that it was built in 1654-55, and that prayers had been read. The Coppull history is rather involved. With regard to our last chapel, Dendron, one would naturally expect from its date, 1644, that it was intended for Puritan use. But this is by no means certain. The founder died before 1650, and by his will he left "£200 to a Sufficient Scholar to read Divine service there every Sunday, and to teach school in it on Week Dayes." He also appointed that the master shall

¹ "The Long Parliament . . . perverted the cathedral and episcopal endowments and the tithes and impropriations of 'malignants' to the payment of its armies. . . ."—Hancock, *The Puritans and the Tithes*, p. 55.

Cf. W. A. Shaw, *History of English Church*, vol. ii. p. 514 *et seq.*, and p. 559 *et seq.* From the sale of dean and chapter lands £516,918 was received. Of this sum £15,633 was spent upon "Augmentations and Stipends settled upon Sundry Ministers and Lecturers." The greater part of the rest of the money went in expenses, and for State purposes, including £164,000 to the "Treasurer of the Navy," £10,000 to the "Treasurer at war," and £35,033 "for the exigencies and contingent services of the late Council of State," &c.

be "a Single man, and be chosen by the Inhabitants . . . with y^e consent of the Rector of Aldingham." This has scarcely the Puritan ring with it.

These, then, are the six chapels built in Lancashire between 1640 and 1660. Somewhat earlier nonconforming Puritans built the old Toxteth Park Chapel, in which Richard Mather ministered before his departure for the New World. They built a school-chapel at Scarisbrick in 1650, which Gastrell does not mention, but which is mentioned by the Survey of 1650,¹ and also by the "Victoria" County History.² As we have seen, they also built Elswick. These three chapels are to-day in Nonconformist hands. They built a little chapel at Tarleton which soon came to an end. The Puritans built chapels in abundance at a later date, when they could no longer maintain possession of the chapels belonging to the Church.³ But the chapels built by them in Lancashire in the early part of the seventeenth century are few and far between.

Further light is thrown upon this point by the Report of the great Puritan Church Survey in Lancashire (1650).⁴ This is well worthy of careful study. The more it is studied the more it will be admired for its thoroughness, its excellent common sense, and its practical wisdom. Many, perhaps we may say most, of its recommendations have since

¹ P. 92.

² Vol. iii. p. 275.

³ "Between 1688 and 1715 commodious meeting-houses were erected in almost all the towns of the county, and in many of the larger villages." —Halley, vol. ii. p. 295. It is sad to find a Nonconformist history, so admirable in many ways as Dr. Halley's, apparently glorying in the dishonest devices, which he admits to be dishonest, to which some of the Puritans resorted after the Restoration.

We find something very different in the *Notitia*, when the Bishop says of Copp, "a Chappell newly erected, viz. an. 1723, near Elswick, which being never Consecrated and in the possession of Dissenters, it was thought more proper to build a new Chappell here yⁿ to seize upon that," and so the new Church chapel was built at Copp apparently in 1724.

⁴ *Record Society, Lanc. and Ches.*, vol. i.

been carried into effect. Higher praise than this it would be hard to give. The inquiry was to be exhaustive; full particulars of the ecclesiastical circumstances of each parish were to be obtained; and amongst other things, the Commissioners were to inquire "where it is fitt for other Churches to be built, and the parishes devided, and part of them appropriated to those new-built Churches."

Confining ourselves now to the present diocese of Liverpool, we find that the Commissioners recommended that nine churches or chapels should be built as follows:—

1. At the Stone Crosse (Lowton), for Lowton, Kenion & some of Golborne.¹
2. Within Woolston, for Willgreave, Martinscroft, Woulston.²
3. In or near Prescott Lane (the main road out of Liverpool) within West Derby, for the use of the Inhabitants there, they being 2 miles distant from any Church or Chapel.³
4. Two new Churches in Sefton Parish, one in or near Ince Blundell, & the other in or neare Litherland; "the want of such Churches being the cause of Loytering & much Ignorance & poperie."⁴
5. One at Lydiate, for Lydiate & part of Downholland.⁵
6. One at Burscough.⁶
7. One at Bickerstaffe, at Hallcroft near Bickerstaffe Hall.⁷
8. One at Skelmersdale, "where a Chappell was formerly."⁸

In these nine cases the Commissioners of 1650 considered churches or chapels necessary. The Puritans were then in the heyday of their power. They made these wise recommendations, but in no one case did they carry them into effect. Even in the pathetic case of Rigby in the parish of

¹ *Survey*, p. 49. Lowton Church built 1732, Golborne Church built 1849.

² *Ibid.*, p. 54. Padgate Church built 1838.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 85. Seaforth Church and Waterloo Christ Church built 1839—others later.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 87. Lydiate Church built 1839.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 91. Church built 1827–32.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 93. Bickerstaffe Church built 1843.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 94. Skelmersdale Church built 1776, cons. 1781.

Kirkham (to go further afield for a moment), where the people were "willinge to contribute towards the erecting of a Chappell there," and prayed that "a Chappell may bee erected," nothing was done till the Church again had her own.¹ Again, when the inhabitants of Lowick and Blawith in Ulverstone parish, offered to build "a Church att their owne chardges, in an indifferent place," to take the place of two inconvenient earlier chapels, nothing was done beyond the mention in the *Survey*.² Now all this makes it the less likely that nonconforming Puritans built Hindley Chapel in 1641. Of course it does not in the least prove that they did not build it, but it adds weight to the improbability of their having done so.

II.—THE JUDGMENT OF THE DUCHY COURT IN 1697.

There was an earlier suit in 1669.

In 1655 during the Usurpation, John Ranicars of Atherton charged his Estate of Stone House with a yearly sum of £6 for ever for ye use of a minister at the Chapel of Hindley. Presently Ellen Ranicars, who had come into possession of his estate, refused to pay this money, and the matter was taken into the Duchy Court of Lancaster in 1669. The Plaintiffs were Edward Green,³ Peter Harrison, Wm. Crook, Wm. Dennys,⁴ John Green, Nathaniel Molyneux, Jeremiah Harrison, Wm. Chetam, and Ralph Prescott.⁵ The Defendants were Ellen Ranicars, Pearce Ranicars,⁶ John Thomason, and Richard Hilton—the two latter being John Ranicar's executors.

¹ Chapel built in 1715.

² Pp. 141, 156.

³ *Documents*, p. 13 (17). Son of the George Green who gave the site for the Chapel in 1641—on a Benefaction Board in the Chapel he is named as co-donor with his father. He also gave the site for the "Mansion House" for the minister, and left £20 towards the endowment (cf. *Documents*, 24-28).

⁴ Minister of the Chapel.

⁵ Father of John Prescott. See *postea*, p. 88.

⁶ Son of Pearce (nephew of John), late husband of Ellen.

The Bill of the Plaintiffs set forth that George Green had given a site for a Chapel and Chapel yard "for the Ease of the neighbourhood," and that upon this at the charge of the plaintiffs, with other of the inhabitants, the Chapel and Chapel yard were made; that ever since service had been held, and sundry sums given towards the maintenance of the Minister; more especially this sum of £6 per ann. left by the late John Ranicars, and that the defendants had declined to pay this charge.

The Bill of the Defendants admitted George Green's gift, John Ranicar's legacy, and also the fact of their own delinquency, and submitted to the decree of the court. The decree was that the money must henceforth be annually paid. The decree (which is printed *in extenso* in Leyland's *Memorials of Hindley*, p. 16 *et seq.*), was made in Trinity Term, 1669.

This decree establishes the fact that George Greene gave the land ("about 30 years" before 1668) for a Chapel of Ease, "wherein the Word of God and sacraments might be duly dispensed," and that the Chapel was built at the cost of certain inhabitants.

Now we come to the lengthy legal proceedings from 1690 to 1697. At the Restoration William Dennis became the minister. He was a priest, and licensed by the Bishop. He was succeeded by several clergy,¹ of whom little seems to be known,

¹ A list of the ministers of the Chapel during the seventeenth century. (Bridgeman, *Wigan*, pp. 778, 779):—

The names of the first curates are not recorded.

1646. Thomas Tonge.

1650. William Williamson, a nonconformist, . . . who died at Hindley.

(?) 1662. James Bradshaw, nonconformist, was ejected in 1662.

1668. William Dennis, an orthodox minister, was licensed by the bishop to the cure.

Dates un- { Rich^d Croston soon resigned.
certain. { . . . Atherton soon resigned.
 { John Woods* resigned in 1677.

1677. Robert Bradshaw, licensed by the bishop.
Samuel Shaw.

c. 1680-1690. James Shaw died in 1690.†

1690-1694. [Thomas Whalley, a nonconformist, who was put into possession of the chapel by one of the trustees, illegally held it for several years.]

1698-1708. John Jackson.

* Leyland, *Memorials*, gives Wood. So also *Documents*, p. 13, where Croston is made to succeed Wood.

† Cf. *Documents*, p. 14 (29), cf. p. 13 (27).

and eventually James Shaw was minister from c. 1680 to 1690, when he died. In the list of "Names of 'Conformable Clergy' and of Chapels and Meeting Places in Lancashire" given in the *Kenyon MSS.*, p. 228 *et seq.*, No. 712 [1689],¹ Hindley Chapel is not mentioned, though Billinge and Holland are. Neither does the name occur in the list of certified Dissenting chapels, though James Bradshaw's Rainford Chapel is mentioned, and several others in the neighbourhood of Wigan.

During Mr. Shaw's lifetime "all and every the inhabiting Protestants within the Chappelry Except James Naylor the Elder generally came to prayers divine service and sermon within the s^d Chappell and none of them declined the same, refused the same (except as aforesaid) during the time of Mr. Shaw's ministry."² When Mr. Shaw died trouble began, and "the most united Chappelrie in these parts is broken so that sev^l p'sons within the said Chappelrie whose ancestors contributed to its errec'on, or who have since purchased seats there to hear divine service, are deprived of the benefit thereof and the end of the Chappell and Donations by this means perverted."³

It so happened that some of the feoffees of the land on which the Chapel stood were Nonconformists and bent upon obtaining the Chapel for Nonconformist use. Their leader was one John Green, who "doth not live in Hindley nor never had any estate there or seat or Pew in the said Chappell . . . but . . . he lives in Wigan which is above two

¹ The Toleration Act was passed on May 24, 1689. All Dissenters who desired to take advantage of it were required to certify their meeting-house to the Bishop, or Archdeacon, or to the Justices of the Peace at the general or quarter sessions for the county, city, or place where the meeting was to be held; so that it might be registered. A fee of 6d. was charged for the certificate.—Gee and Hardy, *Documents*, pp. 664-5.

² Mr. John Prescott's sworn evidence, *Documents*, p. 18 (53).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 10 (80).

miles distant from the same and the deponent [John Prescott] never observed the said John Green come frequently to hear divine service in the same Chappell"; whereas the feoffees who lived within the chapelry "most usually came to divine service and sermon in the said Chappell."¹

On the death of Mr. James Shaw, Mr. John Prescott with others waited on Bishop Stratford at Wigan, and asked for a licence for a Mr. Bristow as minister of the Chapel, and the Bishop promised to grant it. But when they took Mr. Bristow to the Chapel they found it locked, and the Non-conformist feoffees in possession, who absolutely refused any recognition of the Bishop's authority. So Mr. Bristow went his way. But the Dissenting feoffees put in one Thomas Whalley of Wigan,² concerning whom Mr. John Prescott³ gives evidence that he "doth not know of what perswasion in religion [he] . . . is, but believes that he is either

¹ John Prescott, evidence, *Documents*, p. 17 (40-49).

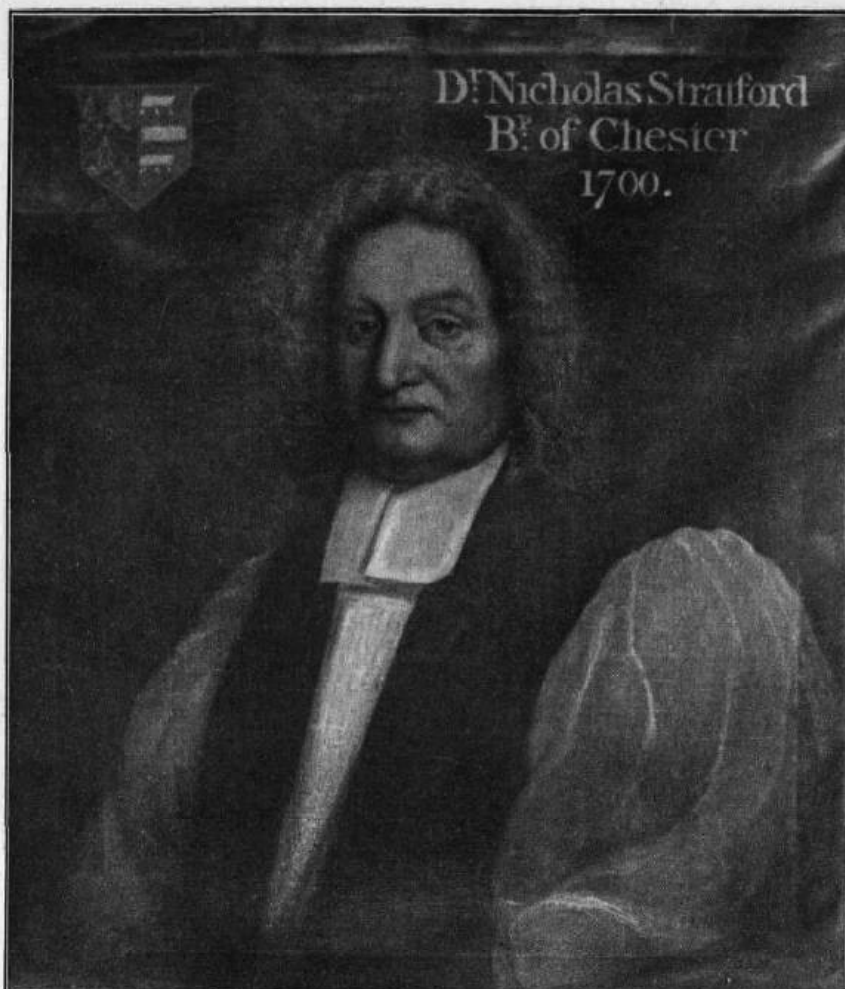
² Cf. *Kenyon MSS.*, p. 270:—

[ROGER KENYON to the BISHOP OF CHESTER.]

802. "1692[-3]. *January 6*, Peel.—There is not any place for Dissenters to meet at, in Hindley, nor was any ever asked to be recorded, by the Justices; neither was the Chapel ever asked of the Justices, by any man, but John Green, who lives three miles from the Chapel. In Wigan, where they have two meeting places for Dissenters, he and 'his Mr. Whalley,' who would be preacher at Hindley, have one, and there is another for Dissenters, who do furiously dissent from each other. Mr. Green, I hear, talks very loud of his powerful friends in London, and mentions several I shame to name. 'God grant King William may truly know who are his truest friends; things would not be ordered in this country as they are.' Mr. Green is very gracious with the Romanists about him; he, indeed, has taken the oath to their Majesties, but for all the noise and clamour the Dissenters make, very few of them have hitherto taken the oath."

Roger Kenyon married Alice, heiress of George Rigby of Peel. He was closely connected with the 9th Earl of Derby, and he acted as Governor of the Isle of Man for him. He was in Parliament when this letter was written.

³ *Documents*, p. 16 (34).



NICHOLAS STRATFORD, BISHOP OF CHESTER, 1689-1707

From an oil painting in the Bishop's Palace at Chester

a Presbyterian or Independant and saith that not long after the said Mr. Whalley was got into possession of the said Chappell to wit upon Sunday the fifth of November 1691 he this Deponent (being then one of the Churchwardens of Wigan) brought a book of Common Prayer to the said Mr. Whalley and delivered the same in the Chappell unto him to be by him read in the said Chappell," but he refused and never used the Prayer Book.¹

In the meantime Mr. John Green "very industriously Laboured" to get the Chapel certified "as a place for the religious worshipping of Dissenters" under the Toleration Act.² He tried first at the Quarter Sessions at Ormskirk, but failed; "some few Daies afterward hee made further application to the Quarter Sessions at Manchester to have his said Certificate recorded, which was there likewise denied him. But that Mr. Green might receive all possible satisfaction the Sessions were adjourned to the Sheriffs' table att Lancaster,³ where were present 28 Justices, who were all of opinion save one⁴ that the Clarke of the place (? Peace) ought not to record Mr. Green's Certificate, nor that Hindley Chappell bee by their allowance ever used as a place for the religious worship of Dissenters."⁵ Nevertheless Mr. Thomas Whalley continued in possession.

So the rector of Wigan (Nicholas Stratford, Bishop of Chester), "unwilling to lose a Chapel⁶

¹ *Documents*, p. 16 (34).

² See note, p. 81.

³ 25 Aug. 1690. *Kenyon MSS.*, p. 245.

⁴ The Hon. Hugh Willoughby (*Kenyon MSS.*, p. 246), afterwards Lord Willoughby of Parham.

⁵ *Documents*, p. 10, cf. *Kenyon MSS.* (744), p. 245.

⁶ *Documents*, p. 30. Bishop Stratford had to fight hard in order to retain possession of various chapels in his great diocese, e.g. Ellenbrook, which had been seized for Dissenting use by Lord Willoughby, concerning which the Bishop writes to Roger Kenyon (1693, Aug. 23), "I am told that my Lord Willoughby regrets that ever he set on foot this controversy, and that he would gladly retreat, if he could see

within his own parish, at his own proper charge issued out a Commission of Pious Uses [in 1691],¹

how he might do so, with safety to his honour."—*Kenyon MSS.*, pp. 275, 417, 418. Wettenhall Chapel in Over Parish was another which had to be fought for. This, though an ancient chapel, had in 1692 been actually registered as a meeting place for Dissenters. The Bishop writes thus to Mr. Lee of Darnhall, who had got the chapel "certified and recorded;"—" . . . a thing which is likely to prove of such mischievous consequence to y^e national Church of which you own yourself to be a member; there being no Parish Church in the nation (nor Cathedral neither) which may not be usurped by the same methods which have been used for obtaining this Chappel." He threatens legal proceedings, and adds, "Nor can I apprehend any reason why you should suppose that Mr. Barnet is in this persecuted, unless you will say that every man is persecuted, who is not quietly suffered to invade another man's rights." *Local Gleanings*, 1875-6, vol. ii. p. 15.

¹ "Commissioners 'to enquire into any abuses of charitable Bequests and to rectify the same' were appointed from time to time under Statutes 39 Eliz. cap. 6 and 43 Eliz. cap. 4 respectively, and the Inquisitions held thereupon, together with the Decrees of the said Commissioners, were returned either into the Court of Chancery, or into the Chancery of the Duchy of Lancaster, and are now preserved in this Office. These occasional Commissions continued to be issued until the reign of George III., and were replaced by the establishment of the permanent Charity Commissioners. There is a Commission and Inquisition relating to a 'charity' at Hindley, co. Lancs., dated 3 William & Mary, 1691. [*Charity Commissions, &c.*, Bundle 61, No. 41.] *Ex inf.* Public Record Office.

"In the reign of Queen Elizabeth great encouragement was given of the establishment of charitable foundations and to the promotion of charitable purposes. The Statute 43 Eliz. c. 4 . . . authorised the Court of Chancery to issue certain commissions to enquire in respect of charitable uses and trusts. The Commissioners were empowered to proceed by summoning a jury of the county in which the property in question was situated for the purpose of inquiring whether there had been any abuse or misappropriation, misapplication, or mistaken application of the funds belonging to Charities. The subject matter on which the Commissioners to be appointed under the Statute were to have jurisdiction was lands, tenements, rents (&c., &c.), . . . a most liberal construction was put on this Statute by the Courts, it being supposed that the Legislature intended thereby to cure all defects and omissions in point of form in instruments by which property was given to charitable purposes."—*Tudor's Charities*, chap. i. sect. 3.

Hence it is evident that the Commission at Wigan in 1691 was a body of considerable legal importance. The following are the names of the Commissioners:—Thomas Bancks, gent., Mayor of Wigan; Sir Thomas Stanley, bart.; Thomas Wainwright, Dr. of Laws, Chancellor to the Bishop of Chester; James Holte, Esq.; Richard Wroe, D.D. [Warden of Manchester, *cf.* p. 86]; Stephen Alcocke, Esq.; Thomas Marsden, Clerk; Thomas Winckley, gent.; Alex-

and obtained a Decree" against the Dissenting feoffees,¹ who however were not satisfied, and appealed.

On March 16, 1692[-3] Bishop Stratford wrote to Roger Kenyon² thus: "A *mandamus* was sent the last weeke to Doctor Pope,³ to register Hindley Chappell. Mr. Greene's frendes here threaten him with such formidable eviles, in case he refuses, that the Doctor seemed to be in some fear; but I thinke I have eased him of his feares, and fully satisfied him that he is in no danger. I intend to bring the *mandamus* down with me, and to have an answer drawn to it in the country, and returne it to London before the next terme. I wish the Commission for Pious Uses might be speedily prosecuted; were the decree of the Commissioners once confirmed by the Chancellor of the Duchy, I hope that would put an end to all our troubles about Hindley Chappell."

But the good Bishop and the other feoffees, "honest men and stout opposers of schism and division,"⁴ had to wait some years longer before this happy consummation was reached. On February 6, 1695-6, Dr. Richard Wroe wrote to Roger Kenyon: "I was with our bishop yesterday, but shall have more time to acquaint him with yours on Weddensday, when his tryall about Hindley Chappell comes on."⁵ Again he wrote on February 11,

ander Radcliffe, gent.; John Lawnder, Thomas Patten, and Robert Markeland, gents. "No names of witnesses or counsel are given. The Document [at the Record Office] consists of the finding of the Jury at the Inquisition, and the Decree of the Commissioners thereupon."—*Ex inf.* Public Record Office.

¹ "John Green, gentleman; Thomas Rycroft, Rich^d Tong, W^m Hulton, Peter Astley, J^{as} Naylor, Thomas Whalley and other exceptants against the Decree of the Comm^{rs} for Pious Uses."—*Documents*, p. 30.

² *Kenyon MSS.*, p. 271.

³ Probably Dr. Walter Pope, Keeper of the Records at Chester in 1667, cf. *Wigan*, pp. 502, 550.

⁴ *Documents*, p. 30.

⁵ *Kenyon MSS.*, p. 401.

1696-7: "The trial about Hindley was heard yesterday before the Chancellor, Lord Chief Baron, and Judge Turton, and lasted nearly four hours, but all on a single point, which was the exception to the decree. It was begun by Jo: Green's counsel, because—if for them—they thought the whole point was determined, namely: whether the erecting an oratory or Chapel was within the power of the Commission for Charitable Uses, 'which we [who] had learned distinctions between Charitable and Pious uses, as well ridiculed.' After all the 'bandying,' the judges took time to consider till Tuesday next."¹ Richard Wroe was curate of Wigan 1679-1681, and became Warden of Manchester College in 1684.

At last, "after a tedious and expensive suit" and various hearings, the Bishop obtained a further decree (Monday, 7th March 1697) from the Honourable Duchy Court at Westminster against John Green and the others. The judges were the Chancellor of the Duchy,² Lord Chief Baron Ward, Mr. Justice Nevil (Common Pleas), and Mr. Justice Turton (King's Bench). The decree of the Commissioners for Charitable Uses was amended in certain particulars; the other parts were ratified and confirmed. Moreover the Clerk of the Court was to "Examine what arrears of money given for the use of a preaching minister at the said Chapel has accrued since the 17th day of March 1661. The trustees are to be accountable for the same."³

¹ *Kenyon MSS.*, p. 415.

² "Lord Willoughby de Eresby (Earl of Lindsay 1701 and Duke of Ancaster and Kesteven 1715) became Chancellor of the Duchy on March 21, 1689, and was succeeded on May 4, 1697, by Thomas, 2nd Earl of Stamford."—*Ex inf.* Duchy of Lancaster Office. Robert (Bertie) Lord Willoughby de Eresby was born October 30, 1660. He died July 26, 1723, aged 62.—*The Complete Peerage*, edited by G. E. C., vol. viii. (1898).

³ *Documents*, p. 31.

In pursuance of this Decree, which was published on the Chapel door, the feoffees and other inhabitants gave notice (June 18, 1698)¹ that a meeting of feoffees and inhabitants would meet in the Chapel or Chapel yard on Thursday, June 23rd, between 9 A.M. and 12 noon, to elect a minister. Notice was also served personally at the houses of feoffees and inhabitants. The meeting was duly held in the Chapel yard; sixty men voted for the Rev. John Jackson, late reader at Wigan, who was elected. Mr. John Green and about a dozen other malcontents attended the meeting in the Chapel yard, but left before the election took place, making their protest against it on the ground that Mr. Thomas Whalley (who had certainly not supplied or preached in the chapel for several years) was already "in." A written protest was also affixed to the Chapel door.² That ended the matter so far as the election of minister went. The Bishop was notified³ of it, and in due course granted his licence to Mr. Jackson, who quietly served the cure till 1708, when he died.

The Chapel was consecrated by Bishop Stratford on November 1, 1698, and the Wardens of Wigan paid in that year "£2, 18s. for eleven yards of baggholland for a surplus for Hindley Chapel at 4s. 6d. per yard and for making it."⁴ Not long after, a statement of accounts was sent to the Duchy Court, according to the decree. John Prescott was appointed receiver on December 23, 1698, and before long the whole was a thing of the past.⁵

It may be said that the decree decided only who

¹ *Documents*, p. 5.

² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁴ *Wigan*, p. 592. At Aughton in 1787 a new surplice cost £2, 15s. It contained 14½ yds. of cloth. These surplices evidently followed the ancient fashion, and were very ample. At Prescott in 1641 the Churchwardens purchased 11½ yds. of "holland cloathe" for a "surplesse," but they paid £3, 4s. for it altogether.

⁵ Details are given in *Documents*, p. 33 *et seq.*

should *use* the Chapel, and nothing as to the question we are now considering, viz., Who *built* it?

But that is not so. The Nonconformists tried to prove that the Chapel was of Puritan or Nonconformist origin. This, in the opinion of the courts, they failed to do. Had they succeeded, the verdict would have been in their favour, and the Chapel would have been secured to them (since Dissenters were then tolerated), as occurred in the case of Toxteth Chapel and some others. That it was secured instead to the Church proves that, in the opinion of the courts, Churchmen (conformists) had built it.

It must be noted carefully that litigation went on from 1690 to 1697, and that the case was argued three times before the Justices of the Peace at Quarter Sessions; once before the Commissioners for Pious and Charitable Uses (substantial men); and, finally, we know not how many times before the Duchy Court at Westminster. It was at last decided by the Chancellor, the Lord Chief Baron, a Judge of the Common Pleas, and a Judge of King's Bench. If ever a case had a fair trial, this had, and the final decision was given only some fifty-six years after the building of the chapel.

The sworn evidence of John Prescott, yeoman, is of great value. His name occurs in various deeds as executor or trustee. He was Churchwarden of Wigan in 1691.¹ He was appointed, as we have seen, receiver of arrears after the decree of 1697. He was evidently a man of standing in Hindley. By his will, dated October 13, 1712, he left 10s. a year to the minister of Hindley Chappell. He was aged about forty-six at the time of the trial. He was the son of Ralph Prescott, one of the plaintiffs in the action of 1669,² who had purchased (from his widow) the pew of Chisenhall Brettargh, one of the original contributors and "undertakers" of the Chapel, and this pew had passed into John's possession on the

¹ *Documents*, p. 16.

² See p. 79.

death of his father. His sworn evidence, a copy of which is preserved at Hindley,¹ is full of interest. He gives the names of sixteen other persons who "have seats and pews within the said Chappel, either by descent from their ancestors, who paid for the building thereof, or by title or derivatives under such persons as purchased the same," all Conformists, and driven away from the Chapel to neighbouring churches, since Thomas Whalley obtained possession.

He swore that he "did well know James Snape, dec^d, in the interrogatory named, and was by and present when the said James Snape, about five years ago, appeared before the Com^{rs} for Charitable Uses in the town hall of Wigan, and being sworne to give his testimony touching the matters in Question, did give in evidence that Mrs. Frances Duckenfield, Adam Aspull, Thomas Chetham, Roger Culcheth, John Guest, John Aspull, John Marsh, Adam Robertson, Thomas Robertson, Robert Greenhalgh, William Sale, Thomas Morres, John Seddon, Chisenall Brettergh, Humphrey Platt, Thomas Lithgoe, John Marsh, and Thurston Snape [were Feoffees and contributors and inhabitants of the said Chappell, and that all and every the persons before named were conformable to the Church of England and the Liturgy thereof. And that although the said Thurston Snape],² late father of him the said James Snape, had been characterised for a Puritan, yet that he was really otherwise, and that he used the prayers of the Church constantly in his own family, all which this depon^t better remembers, and is satisfied therein for that the said James Snape had (before his giving of the said evidence) desired this depon^t to write down the names of the affor^{esd} persons in order to the supplying and refreshing of his memory upon his giving of the said evidence, which this deponent did accordingly, and hath the same notes now in his custody, which enable him to give the account above mentioned."

He swore "that there was a Chancell builded at ye E. End of ye s^d Chappell of Hindley, wich is narrower in proportion than

¹ *Documents*, p. 11 (82). The copy is written on paper, and is endorsed:—

Deposition of Mr. John Prescott
touching Hindley Chappell
Ex^d 12 Aug. 1699 with y^e original

RA. PETER

² These words within brackets are in the original at Hindley, which I inspected on Sept. 27, 1910, but are, most unfortunately, left out in *Documents*, p. 12. There is another bad mistake in *Documents*, p. 9, where the words "Either by Conformable men or in-Conformable funds" are printed for "Either by Conformable men or in Conformable times."

the s^d Chappell itself" (of course this chancel was then standing). "He knew well E^d Greene, son of the donor of ye site and one of the original trustees, and that he was a Conformist, and left £20 towards the maintenance of the minister. He did not remember John Rainacars (who died when he was about seven years old), but he had frequently seen most of the other donors of endowment at divine service in the Chapel, and knew them for Conformists. He swore that he heard Thomas Rigby, a hostile witness before the Com^{rs} for Charitable Uses in ye Town Hall of Wigan, swear that Mr. Tonge, reputed to be the first settled minister at Hindley Chappell, did read the Book of Common Prayer there, and that he remembers this the better because soon afterwards he met John Green in a Public House in Wigan, who offered to bet him £100 that Rigby had done nothing of the kind. He accepted his offer, and then Green drew back, whereupon he said to him, 'you have perhaps instructed him better,' or to that effect."¹

The Petition for Consecration and the Sentence of Consecration² contain some interesting details of information, though they are naturally of less weight than sworn evidence which led to a favourable verdict.

The Petition was signed on behalf of ye inhabitants by John Ranicars, Ch. Warden of Par. Ch. of Wigan, John Prescott, Jas. Cheetham, Jonathan Thomason, and John Marsh, the Feoffees for the land on w^h the Chapel stands, and also by Peter Worthington, John Prescott, and Jos. Cheetham, Feoffees of sundrie legacies, &c. It stated that George Green, Gent., gave the site on w^h, in 1641, the Chapel was built at the cost of the inhabitants, "with the approbation and consent of Doctor Bridgeman, ye then L^d Bp. of Chester and Rector of Wigan"; "That the said Chappell is regularly built, with a Chancell at the East end of it, distinguished from the body of the Chappell, having a Communion table placed therein, and in ye Chappell a reading-desk, pulpitt, seates, with other necessaries and ornaments." (N.B. All this was capable of verification and was not denied.) The Deed of Consecration³ repeats most of this, and also gives the size of the "Chapel or Oratory (which, with the Chancel, contains in itself, from east to west, 19 rods and four thumbs breadth in length, and from north to south 8 rods 1 foot and 5 thumbs breadth in width, or thereabouts)."⁴

¹ *Documents*, p. 18.

² *Wigan*, p. 767 *et seq.*, and Leyland's *Memorials*, p. 20 *et seq.*, and p. 24 *et seq.*

³ *Wigan*, p. 769.

⁴ According to the present-day rod (16½ feet) this Chapel would be some 313 × 133 feet. If "rod" here = "yard," the size would be about 57 × 25 feet, which sounds more likely.

There are other documents preserved at Hindley which are of interest. A *Memorandum* seems to have been part of the Instructions to the Solicitor of the Court of Chancery for the Duchy of Lancaster.¹

"*Memorandum.*—To prove the Distance the Inhabitants of Hindley are from their Parish Church, and their going to Chester to obtain leave from the Bishop (who was also Parson of Wigan) to build a Chapel for the ease of the Inhabitants, which the Bishop gave his consent to, and immediately afterwards they set about the work. The Chapel was finished in 1641 by several Persons in that Town who were called undertakers, and others that have contributed to have seats in the Chapel.

James Snape.²

Th^{os} Hay.

Rob^t Green.

"The Chapel, built in 1641, when the statute of 1st Eliz. enjoined the service of the Church of England, and allowed of no other in any place whatsoever, and severe penalties upon all Parsons, Vicars, Ministers, &c., who refused or used any other form than that which was prescribed by that Act, and upon all persons that procured or maintained them in so doing, and tho the erectors might³ have some other end in it, yet the Law appropriated it to that use that all other Churches and Chapels were that were within the compass of that Act."

"That it was a place for public Worship is Evident, both from the words of the Deed which gives the Land,⁴ and so within the said Act, but if not, yet the very Indowing it makes it a public Chapell, and that the Donors look on it as such and so falls under the Act of 14 c Ch. Sc^d."

Then follow the names of 16 feoffees to George Green, only one of whom is marked "non con"; 20 undertakers, and "the Severall Donors" of site and endowments, from George Green to Mr. Cook. Two of these are marked "non con," but the *Memorandum* observes that "the Gifts were at such times when Conformists were possessed of the Chapell." George Green and John Ranicars are both marked "Con." The *Memorandum* states that the Chappell was finished at the latter end of 1641, and that in 1642 the wars broke out before any minister could be settled. The first sermon was preached by Mr. fogg, the Bishop's Chaplain, the second by Mr. Tidsley. But when the war came on Mr. Tong preached for some time, "we suppose a Non Con. because all other Churches and Chapells were supplied by such then in those days."

¹ *Documents*, p. 19.

² *Cf.* p. 89.

³ This must not be strained to mean that they had.

⁴ This Deed was then, clearly, existing.

Document No. 80, printed on p. 9 of *Documents*, is written on paper worn at the folds. It also is probably an Instruction to Counsel, and, if so, it is, like the last, an *ex parte* statement, and must be valued as such. It states that the "Chapell was erected by and with the allowance and consent of the then Bish. of the Diocese, and the donacōns made (wherewith the same is now endowed) Either by Conformable men or in Conformable times,¹ or both. And y^t this Chappell, according to the intent of its Erection and Endowment, was supplied by conforming orthodox Devines, untill the times of Usurpation, when it (as all other Churches and Chappells) was possest of nonconformists, and soe continued till the year 1662," &c. "The Def^{tes} all appeared at ye last Sitting Lett them show ye Deeds before anything Else be done."

Another document, *The Case of Hindley Chapel, c. 1694*,² apparently, like the last two, Instructions to Counsel, says, "The Chapel being supplied by such men (non-con.) is no more an evidence ag^t it than any other Church or Chappell, but only followed the fate of the Revolution."

On the back of this document are various memoranda, badly written, and now very illegible, being notes made by one of the counsel. From them it appears that it was alleged on behalf of the defendants that Mr. Fogg preached the first sermon, and did not read prayers. The name Tyldesley occurs, and it is mentioned that Mr. Tonge read the prayers.

I hope that all this is sufficient to prove, or at least to afford a very strong presumption, that Mr. Brooke Herford was mistaken in attributing the building and endowing of the Chapel to "Puritans" of "the nonconforming party," as he certainly was doubly mistaken when he added that Mr. (James) Bradshaw, the ejected Independent rector of Wigan, preached in "the present Presbyterian Chapel" at Hindley, which was built for him. The ejected "rector" was quite a different man,³ and the "present Presbyterian Chapel" of Hindley was not built before 1700, only two years before Bradshaw's death in 1702.⁴

¹ Cf. note 2 on p. 89.

² Printed in *Deeds*, p. 17.

³ Though Raines, Notes to *Notitia*, vol. ii., pt. 2, p. 256, and Halley, vol. ii. p. 183 *et seq.*, make the same mistake.

⁴ Cf. Leyland, *Memorials*, p. 65.

III.—THE POSITION AND CHARACTER OF BISHOP BRIDGEMAN.

Bishop Bridgeman, the then rector of Wigan, was not at all the sort of man to allow, if he could help it, a Nonconformist congregation to build a Chapel but three miles distant from his Parish Church. He was, it is true, inclined at one time to be easy with Puritans. The well-known passage in the *Life* of John Angier (p. 526) is proof of this.

Angier was the Episcopally-ordained minister, from September 1630, for about 1½ years, of Ringley Chapel, which was about two miles from Great Lever Hall, where Bishop Bridgeman spent much of his time. Angier seems to have been a saintly man, but he was a staunch nonconformist to the ceremonies. He was frequently complained of to the Bishop, who "sent for him and expostulated with him, it being a kind of affront to preach so near him, only about two miles distant; he admonished him, and exhorted him to conform; he sent for him many times, yet usually gave him very good words, and professed his great respect for him." Then the *Life* goes on to state that Mrs. Bridgeman had been much helped by Angier, and that his interviews with the Bishop usually ended with an invitation to go and see his wife. I am not aware that there is any confirmation of this, but I know no reason for doubting the truth of it, nor yet of Angier's account of his interview with the Bishop before his (final, as it should seem) suspension. Still, it is only fair to point out that it is *ex parte* evidence.—"At last the Bishop said: Mr. Angier, I am disposed to indulge you, but cannot; for my Lord's Grace of Canterbury (Archbishop Laud) hath rebuked me for permitting two Nonconformists, the one within a mile on one hand (good Mr. Horocks at Dean Church), and another on the other, yourself; and I am likely to come into disfavour on this account. As for Mr. Horocks, said he, my hands are bound, I cannot meddle with him (it is thought he meant by reason of some promises to his wife); but as for you, Mr. Angier, you are a young man, and doubtless may get another place; and if you were anywhere at a little further distance, I could better connive at you; for I

study to do you a kindness, but cannot as long as you are thus near me."¹

It is quite clear from this that, however good the Bishop's will might have been towards Non-conformist parishioners at Hindley, it was utterly unlikely that he would have allowed them, ten years later on than his speech to Angier, to build a Chapel so close to his Wigan Church. Moreover, the Bishop, gentle and kind though he was, could be quite decided in his action. He silenced Angier eventually, as he did others. His Wigan lawsuits, his dealings with his people there, with the feoffees at Billinge in 1625, and with the people at Chester, clearly show what manner of man he was. In the *Kenyon MSS.* (p. 25) there is an amusing *draft* of a Petition of the Mayor and Burgesses of Wigan to the King (dated 1619-20). It states that the Bishop "being parson of the rectory of Wigan *in commendam*, worth 1000 marks by the year, claimed the liberties pertaining to the corporation, and committed the Mayor of the said town to prison until he was delivered by a writ

¹ Oliver Heywood, Angier's son-in-law, who wrote his *Life*, adds, "some judged that one reason was, the bishop's sons were at this time [*c.* 1630] on the rising ground, and his connivance might be an obstacle in the way of their preferment." This is an ill-natured suggestion, the mention of which brings no credit to Heywood. Bridgeman was known to be a man "of scrupulous honour and integrity" (*Wigan*, p. 342).

Brook, in his *Lives of the Puritans*, makes the Bishop say, when he refused Mr. Paget's request for his connivance, that he did so lest "he sh^d lose the favour of his prince" (*Wigan*, p. 452). But if Orlando, the Bishop's son, was "on the rising ground," he was, as Halley (vol. i. 314) admits, "an able lawyer, a fluent speaker, and a useful partisan." In 1624 Bishop Bridgeman had refused to allow this Orlando (*Wigan*, p. 282) to accept a Fellowship at Magdalene College, Cambridge (of which he himself had formerly been Fellow), on the ground that fellowships were intended for poorer men who had no other means to live upon. And in the same year he refused to allow him to be elected an Alderman of Wigan because he thought he was too young—about sixteen (*Wigan*, p. 287).

Bishop Bridgeman was not in the least likely to be influenced with regard to his dealings with Angier by any thought of the effect of his action as Bishop upon his son's chances of preferment.

of *habeas corpus*. He also gives out in speeches that the said Mayor is his mayor, and has not authority to whip a dog. The said Mayor, bailiffs, and burgesses pray that they may be permitted to enjoy all their liberties in peace." Green, the defendant in a Wigan mill action, said that if Bridgeman had been hanged when he first came to Wigan "it had been a good turne"!

Besides, Bridgeman was distinctly a "Laudian" Prelate,¹ though less hateful to the Puritans than Laud and Wren and Montague. Sir Edward Deering had introduced a bill for extirpating bishops, &c., yet in his speech against the Remonstrance (Nov. 22, 1641) he stated that none had ever charged the Bishop of Chester, and some others named, with superstition, much less with idolatry.²

But his views on Church arrangements were quite those of Laud. This is shown by his gift of a font to Peterborough Cathedral in 1615 ("for before that tyme they alwayes christened in a bason," after the distinctively Puritan fashion);³ by the manner of his church-building and restoration at Wigan; and also at Chester, where he raised the steps towards the communion table, and (though

¹ Amongst the episcopal equipments mentioned in the *Wigan Ledger* was a scarlet cap.—*Wigan*, p. 237.

² Cf. Lathbury, *Hist. of Eng. Episcopacy*, p. 129.

³ See *Wigan*, p. 186, cf. p. 552. In 1662 the Churchwardens of Wigan provided many new things for the use of the church, and amongst them "2 plates for the communion table in exchange of the chrisning bason" in use in Puritan times. "Under the presbyterian government of Lancashire, basins instead of fonts were provided in all the churches." Cf. *Accounts at Didsbury, 1645*, "Paid for one pewter basson to baptize children of £ 3^s 5^d." (*Halley*, p. 301, note). The basin seems to have been introduced quite early after the Reformation. In an Order of Queen Elizabeth (3rd year), the direction was given "that in parish churches the curates take not upon them to confer baptism in basins, but in the font customably used."—Gee, *Elizabethan Prayer Book*, p. 275; cf. also Various Caroline Episcopal Visitation Questions.

he whitewashed the interior walls¹ and painted the oak stall-work, also partly gilding it) filled the east window with stained glass representing² the Annunciation, Nativity, Circumcision, and Presentation. He was denounced by Prynne:³ "To pass by the other prelates of this See (Chester), I shall give you only a touch of John Bridgeman, the present Bishop of it . . . To comply with the times, he erected divers stone altars in his diocese, and one in the Cathedral at Chester, used in times of popery, which he caused to be digged up out of the ground where it was formerly buried . . . He ordered all the ministers in Chester not only to read prayers, but likewise to preach in their hoods and surplices."

At Wigan,⁴ having seated the Church, he recommended that the men should sit on one side and the women on the other. He seems to have tried, wherever he could, to bring about this arrangement, and Archbishop Neile told him plainly in 1634,⁵ that it would "begett more brabbles, suits in law and phibiçons, then either you or I would be contented to be troubled with." This division of the sexes was essentially "Laudian."

In his Visitation Articles of 1638, Bishop Montague (one of the Puritans' special aversions⁶) inquired: "Do men and women sit together in these seats, indifferently and promiscuously? or (as the fashion was of old) do men sit together upon one side of the church, and women upon the other?"

¹ *Wigan*, p. 447.

² *Ibid.*, p. 449.

³ *The Second Part of the antipathy of the English Lordly Prelacy both to Royal Monarchy and Civil Unity, &c.*, pp. 290, 291. Quoted by *Hierugia*, p. 249.

⁴ *Wigan*, p. 273.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 378.

⁶ "A mere Montaguist is an animal scarce rational," *An Appeal of the Orthodox Ministers of the Church of England against Richard Montague, late Bishop of Chichester, and now Bishop of Norwich*, p. 36, 1641. Quoted by *Hierugia*, iii. p. 250.†

Bridgeman was also a close friend of Laud's;¹ they had been fellow King's Chaplains, and constantly corresponded with one another in familiar terms. It is also clear that Bridgeman was kept up to the mark in Church matters by Laud's influence with Archbishop Neile, and the result is thus stated by Dr. Halley:² "He was at first quite as lenient [as Bishop Morton], and much more quiet, in his dealing with Nonconformist ministers. His leniency and quietness were so offensive to the ecclesiastical authorities, that his Metropolitan sent commissioners to inquire and report upon the state of his diocese. Charged with negligence, he was compelled to become a persecutor, and persecutors from compulsion sometimes do their work more severely than persecutors from choice. . . . Bridgeman loved neither to threaten nor to strike, but when he did strike he did it as effectually as if he loved to do it."

This was not the man to allow a Nonconformist chapel in his own parish. Moreover, the Chapel is said to have been built in 1641. The times, as we have seen, were very evil. Now Bishop Bridgeman was a sincere Royalist, helping the King with money as he was able. He afterwards entertained him and the Prince of Wales in Chester, September 23-28, 1642.³ He would naturally look with great disfavour, not only from the Church point of view as Bishop and rector, but also from a political point of view, upon anything like a Nonconformist chapel, which might be used, as so many of the present-day chapels are used, for political purposes, on what he would consider the wrong side in politics. Hence the more the matter is considered, the less likely does it seem that Bishop Bridgeman would in 1641 give permission to build

¹ See *Wigan*, various letters.

² Vol. i. p. 240.

³ Cf. *Wigan*, pp. 342, 343, 413, 434, 435.

a Nonconformist chapel three miles away from his Parish Church.

It may, of course, be argued that he had not actually resided in Wigan since 1630. Since then he had lived either at Chester or at Great Lever. He complained in a letter to Laud, dated March 1, 1638-9,¹ that since he had ceased to live in Wigan ("being required to reside at Chester"), the Mayor of Wigan had taken advantage of his absence, and had begun "to encroach again," "choosing burgesses for the Parliament, though by charter they are termed the Parson's burgesses." It is possible that the Puritans at Hindley might also do in his absence what they would not have ventured to do had he still been living at Wigan Hall. But at the trial it was clearly shown that the promoters of the Chapel had gone over to Chester to see the Bishop, and to obtain his permission and approbation before they began the work. There was, therefore, no behind-his-back work. He was asked for his permission, and he gave it. He would not have given it to Nonconformists like Angier. Again, it may be argued that he had grown milder with age and broken health,² or that "the times" may have been too strong for him, and that he may have been driven to sanction then what earlier he would have refused. But in 1641 he was only sixty-four (he lived to be seventy-five); "the times" were at least as likely to stiffen his back as to bend it; and broken health often leaves the strength of the will unimpaired. I believe he was asked in a straightforward way to sanction the building of the Chapel for the ease of the inhabitants; that he examined carefully the proposal, and freely gave his consent. Very unfortunately he ceased to keep the Wigan Ledger,³

¹ *Wigan*, p. 417.

² Cf. *Wigan*, pp. 433, 434.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 434.

from which so much information can be obtained, in 1640, so we can learn nothing from that source, and none of his private letters are preserved after this date in his family. He wrote to Laud on March 1, 1638-9,¹ and spoke of the *two* chapels-of-ease abroad in the parish called Holland and Billinge, without making any mention of Hindley Chapel, which clearly had not then been begun.²

No—the more one thinks of Bishop Bridgeman, the more improbable it seems that he would have approved of the building of Hindley Chapel had its promoters been Nonconformists. They, or some of them, may have had, as many Conformists had, Puritan sympathies; but that is a very different matter, just as a “Low Churchman” differs *toto cælo* from a Baptist or Independent. Bishop Potter of Carlisle was an out-and-out Calvinist, and was called “the Puritanical Bishop,” but he was not in any sense a Nonconformist, and he was a great friend of Bishop Bridgeman. Bishop Chaderton,³ again, was “a zealous Puritan,” but he was “strict in enforcing the use of the clerical vestments, and both suspended and deprived some of his Clergy for their disregard of the Rubric.” We are dealing only with Mr. Brooke Herford’s statement that the Chapel was built by Puritans who were Nonconformists.

This may be the best place to deal with a matter of which, curiously enough, Canon Bridgeman takes no notice in his

¹ Cf. *Wigan*, p. 417.

² The Commissioners of 1650 returned that “there is a Chappell lately erected and built in Hindley afforesaid vpon the Charges of many of the Inhabitanes thereof, and some of the Inhabitanes wthin Abram, and also some of the Inhabitanes wthin Aspull.”—*Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, vol. i. p. 61. It was ordered by both Houses of Parliament on May 2, 1646, that £50 per annum out of the revenues sequestered from Bishop Bridgeman should be for the maintenance of the minister of the Chapel of Hindley, annexed to the Church of Wigan.—*Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, vol. xxviii. p. 25.

³ *Notitia*, vol. i. p. 8, Raines’ note.

Church and Manor of Wigan. It is mentioned by Dr. Halley¹ thus: "Issuing from Wigan, the foraging parties of the Royalists plundered the villages and farms which, on their eastern side, were inhabited by Puritans, and carried large quantities of corn and cattle into their own quarters. The villagers, associating and arming in their own defence, solicited the help of their friends in Manchester. They had good reason for doing so. The Cavaliers not only captured their stores, but lost no opportunity of harassing, insulting, and provoking them. 'The carriage,' says the writer of a letter, dated Manchester, Dec^r 17, 1642, 'of the Cavaliers about Wigan was most insolent, yea, blasphemous, for, after they had pulled down the pulpit in Hendon Chappell' (it should be Foot Hindley Chapel) 'and played at cards in the pews and upon the desk, they surprised the Holy Bible, took it away, and afterwards tore it to pieces; and then stuck (up) the leaves of it upon the posts in several places in Wigan, saying, This is the Roundheads' Bible.' . . . In compliance with the urgent entreaty of Hindley and other villages in the neighbourhood, the Captains Bradshaw and Venables marched towards Wigan," &c.

Now, with regard to this passage, it may be said first that Dr. Halley acknowledges his obligation to that rare little book, which he considers was written by John Angier of Denton, *Lancashire's Valley of Achor*.² On turning to p. 16 of this book we read this:—"The Plundering Array issued out of *Wigan*, to provoke the anger and stirre up the courage of the neighbourhood, who, to maintain their Protestantism in their own defence, resolved to be mutually encouraging and assistant: but apprehending themselves too weak, requested two captains out of *Manchester*, with their companies, to Quarter with them for their security; which was granted." It will be observed that the *Valley of Achor* does not mention Hindley at all, though later on it speaks of an engagement near *Houghton* [*i.e.* West Houghton] Common. Moreover, it does not mention the affair of "Hendon" Chapel, which is an entirely unaccountable omission, the affair being much too valuable, from the

¹ Vol. i. p. 351.

² *Lancashire's Valley of Achor is England's Doore of Hope . . .* by a Well-wisher to the peace of the Land, and piety of the Church. London. Printed for Luke Fawne, and are to be sold by Thomas Smith at his Shop in Manchester. 1643.

This tract was reprinted in vol. ii. (1844) of the Chetham Society *Civil War Tracts*, edited by Dr. Ormerod. He mentions that the work has been ascribed to Angier by two authors well versed in the subject, but that, on the other hand, there is no allusion to the work in Angier's *Life* by O. Heywood, nor in any of Heywood's MSS. remains.

point of view of the *Valley of Achor*, to be passed over in silence, had the writer known of it. This story Dr. Halley says he found in a letter contained in a pamphlet entitled *The latest printed Newes from Chichester, Winsor, Winchester, Chester, Manchester, Yorke, &c.*, London, printed for T. Underhill at the Bible in Wood Street, December 22, 1642.¹ So the authority for the story is an anonymous letter in an anonymous pamphlet! I submit that it cannot be seriously used, as Dr. Halley uses it, as though it were well-attested fact.

But, supposing the tale to be true, we gather from it that on December 17, 1642, a year or more after the Chapel was built, it was in the hands of the "Roundheads."

It undoubtedly was in their hands a little later on, and may have been then. But this is quite compatible with the fact that Conformists built it, and certainly proves nothing to the contrary. Events marched fast in those stirring times. At Prescott, in the early part of 1641, the Churchwardens "Pd for 11 yards and a halfe of holland cloathe to be a surplesse, att 5s. 6d. the yard, abatinge 3d. at all and for threade to make the same withall xii. In the whole . . . £3, 4s. od." Very soon afterwards the Puritans sold this surplice for old linen, and, in November 1641, 2s. were spent on pulling down the Communion "rayles." But this does not prove that the congregation whose wardens purchased the surplice were nonconforming Puritans. Again, in April 16, 1639, the salary of the Prescott organist was raised from "6^{li} 13^s 4^d to 8^{li}":² in 1642 the organ was broken up and disposed of in pieces. Events marched fast at Prescott. So it might well have been at Hindley. Consequently I am compelled to put this story on one side as of doubtful truth, and, at any rate, as having very little bearing upon our question, Did nonconforming Puritans build Hindley Chapel?

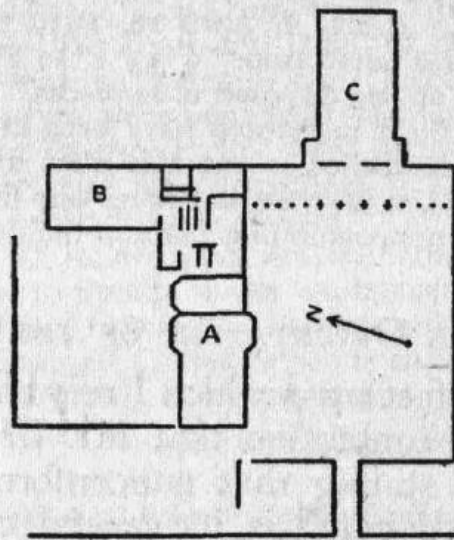
IV.—THE ORIENTATION OF THE CHAPEL.

The fourth fact upon which I rely as adding great weight to my contention that Mr. Brooke Herford is in error in stating that nonconforming Puritans built Hindley Chapel, is its careful orientation. I adduce this fact as corroborative evidence that the Chapel was originally built by Conformists. The axial line of the present Chapel is 6.40 S. of E.

¹ A small portion of this letter is reprinted (p. 63) in *Civil War Tracts of Lancashire*, Chetham Society, vol. ii. (1844. Edited by Dr. George Ormerod).

² *Kenyon MSS.*, p. 57.

This, probably, was the line of the earlier Chapel consecrated in 1698. At any rate we are certain from the Petition for Consecration that there was "a Chancell at the East End of it, distinguished from the body of the Chappell." Would the Puritans of 1641 have been likely to build the Chapel E. and W., and to put a chancel at the east end of it? The Puritans, as we have already seen, were not church builders. But we may learn their feeling with regard to orientation from (1) the original arrangements of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and (2) from the arrangements of the Presbyterian chapels built within easy reach of "Hindley Chappell" in the closing years of the seventeenth century and the early years of the eighteenth. (1) Emmanuel College was built by Sir Walter Mildmay, a powerful Puritan, and was opened in 1586. For many years it was a Puritan college.



EMMANUEL COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

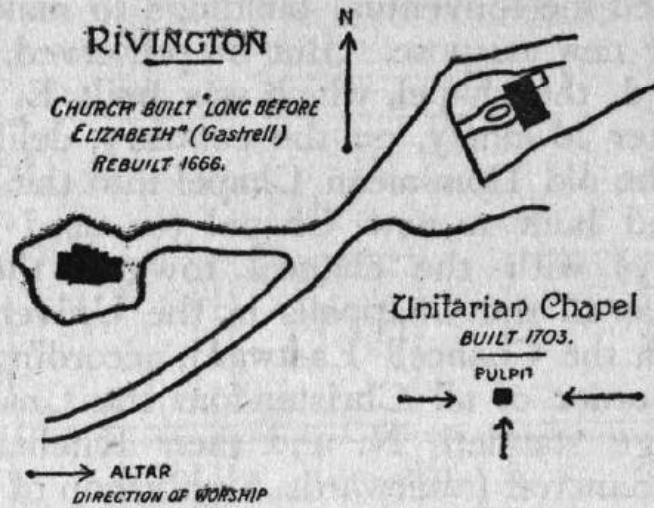
Sketch of Ground Plan. A. The original Dominican Chapel—now the Hall. B. The original Refectory—turned into a Chapel by Mildmay. C. The present Chapel built by Sir Christopher Wren.

It was placed upon the site of the Dominican Friary, and the original buildings were untouched

when the ground came into the founder's hands. A similar case occurred in 1497, when Bishop Alcock of Ely obtained a House of Benedictine Nuns, and founded Jesus College, Cambridge. He remodelled the conventual buildings to make them suit their new purpose. But he preserved, though he altered, the chapel, which was built E. and W. Sir Walter Mildmay, on the contrary, deliberately turned the old Dominican Chapel into the College Hall, and built a new Chapel (or used the old Refectory) with the chancel towards the NW. "Whereas all the Chappells in the University are built with the Chancell Eastward, according to the uniform order of all Christendom the Chancell in yt College standeth N. and their Kitchen Eastward." Sancroft (afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury), who was Master in 1662, speaks of this as "that great mark of singularity, which all the world so talks of," but it clearly shows the Puritan feeling with regard to orientation in 1586, *i.e.* fifty-five years before Hindley Chapel was built. Had the Puritans changed their minds in those fifty-five years? (2) We will next consider the case of the Presbyterian Chapels built at Tunley (1691), Park Lane, Wigan (1697), Hindley (1700), and Rivington (1703)—*i.e.* about the same time after the building of Hindley Chapel as Emmanuel Chapel was before it. What was the feeling of the builders of those chapels with regard to orientation? At least three are built E. and W., but I am satisfied, after careful examination, that the original internal arrangements were such as may be seen to-day unaltered in the very interesting Rivington Chapel—the pulpit being placed in the middle of one of the long sides,¹ and the pews facing it, as the centre, from every point

¹ In speaking of the early Nonconformist chapels, Dr. Halley says: "The pulpit was generally placed against one of the longer walls of the meeting-house."—Vol. ii. p. 298.

of the compass. It is unnecessary to point out how very different this is from the original arrangements of Hindley Chapel—"the chancel turned



towards the east." Consequently we conclude that since, half a century before and half a century after the building of Hindley Chapel, orientation was disregarded by the Puritans, the probability is that they would disregard it in 1641, and the fact that it was carefully observed by the builders of the Chapel seems to afford at any rate a very strong presumption, if not a positive proof, that nonconformist Puritans did not build it, and that Churchmen did. For that Churchmen were careful about orientation both in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is capable of ample proof.

It may, of course, be objected that there were Puritans and Puritans; Puritans like Warden Heyricke, of Manchester, who liked stained glass and carved oak; Puritans like the godly Mr. Bruen, of Bruen Stapleford, who greatly objected to such things, and replaced the ancient glass in his chapel with clear glass; Puritans, again, like the mother of Oliver Heywood, who "obtained leave of the officers" to break the windows of the churches near Bolton; Puritans who broke windows without obtaining any leave; Puritans who kept the Church festivals; and others who put down even the keeping of Christmas with

a high hand. And it has been suggested to me by a learned and thoughtful Roman Catholic friend (private letter, January 9, 1907), that the orientation of Hindley Chapel may be accounted for thus: "Hindley was not only in the diocese of Chester, but in Bishop Bridgeman's own parish, so that he was doubly responsible; and it was just under his eyes, so that, as he was a strict disciplinarian, and something of a Laudian, even the Puritans had to use certain 'protective devices,' such as orientation (you regard them differently; the above is my view), so as to secure the Bishop's consent to the erection of a building for worship. The important matter was the *Minister*, and the one appointed¹ adopted the Presbyterian discipline as soon as it was established. I believe this is a correct statement, but I shall be glad to be put right if not. If it is correct, I think it obvious that the people who built the place were Puritans. They satisfied the Bishop by some purely external compliances, and satisfied themselves by the minister they secured." This is, of course, worth thinking over; and we are not denying that some at any rate of the builders may have been on the Puritan side rather than the Laudian, "Evangelicals" rather than "Puseyites." We only join issue with Mr. Brooke Herford's statement that the builders were Nonconformists. But, after carefully thinking over my learned friend's letter, I cannot say that it convinces me that Mr. Herford is right.

There the Chapel stood at the time of the lawsuit in 1697, with its "Chancell builded at the East End of the s^d Chappell of Hindley, which is narrower in proportion than the s^d Chappell itself."² This fact could not be questioned; it was patent. Now if there was one thing upon which all Puritans were agreed, it was their hatred of Eastward worship. In a schedule annexed to a petition presented to Parliament from the County of Nottingham, complaining of Grievances (1641),³ they objected (7) to "Drawing worship or reverence to external things aforesaid, according to such supposed holiness (at least) to be directed immediately towards the same, as especially in bowing or praying towards the East, bowing to the altar upon approaches, in coming or kneeling to the rail for the Sacrament."

Praying towards the East is here classed with other things against which they steadfastly rebelled.

The same objection is made in the Humble Petition of many of the inhabitants of Kent to the Commons, 1636; in the Articles of Impeachment against Bishop Wren in the same year; in a

¹ We do not know who was the minister appointed in 1641.

² Prescott's evidence, *Documents*, p. 14.

³ Quoted by *Hierugia*, vol. v. pt. iii.

Catalogue of Superstitious Innovations brought into Durham Cathedral (1642), and frequently elsewhere. And if it be said that what the Puritans objected to was not the placing of a building East and West, but the turning to the East at the Creed, and the placing of the seats to face Eastward, it must be replied that, if they objected to turning to the East in prayers in an old church, they would be much more careful in building a new one to give no countenance to what they considered an ancient superstition—"a will worship of man's devising . . . praying with their faces towards the East, thus tying God to a fixed place."¹ Their feeling would be that of Thomas de Laune in 1683:² "Is there not a symbolizing with popery in the places of worship? The places of our worship are either such as were built and consecrated by Papists . . . or such places as we have built by their example, posited E. and W. . . . wh^h we take to be more holy than any other place . . . of all which not one word in all the N. Testament." This was the feeling of the Puritan, and it was the same in 1723, when Bisse wrote his *Decency and Order in Public Worship*, p. 57, where he contrasts it with the feeling of Churchmen:³—"For this reason then [*i.e.* as a symbolical memorial of the rising of the Sun of Righteousness] the form of Christian Church has from the beginning been directed towards the E. For the same reason have the temples of our bodies, when laid in the grave, been placed with the face turned the same way. Hath it been heard that any Church was ever built with its Altar, or any Christian buried with his face towards the West,—a situation contrary to the universal custom of the Church? Good God! That Christians, sects of Christians, should in these days make it superstitious to worship in that bodily posture or direction, which yet they desire to be buried in; and that the grave should teach that uniformity to the dead, which the Church cannot to the living!"

¹ *For God and the King*, 1630; quoted by *Hierugia*, vol. iii. p. 51.

² *Plea for the Nonconformists*, qu. *Hierugia*, vol. iii. p. 254. Thomas de Laune was an Irish Papist who turned Protestant, and became an ardent Baptist, though never a minister or lay preacher. He lived in London, where he wrote and taught in a school. His *Plea* was for many years a standard Baptist apology, but he was imprisoned for writing it in 1683, after it had been publicly burned by the hangman. He died in prison (1685) after fifteen months' captivity, his wife and two children having predeceased him from want of air and food. Several editions of his works were printed, and for the edition of 1706 Defoe wrote a preface in which he complained bitterly of the parsimony of the Nonconformists, who would not subscribe £67 to procure the release of their champion. See *Dictionary of National Biography*.

³ Quoted by *Hierugia*, iii. 205.

No, I cannot bring myself to believe that the builders of Hindley Chapel, had they been "Nonconformists to the Ceremonies"—*i.e.* to kneeling at Communion, the wearing of the surplice, and the using of the Prayer Book, &c.—would have thought the orientation of their Chapel a matter so indifferent that it might be thrown as a sop to their Laudian Bishop in order to secure a favourite minister, concerning whom, it must be carefully noted, we have no information.

Hence I cannot but regard the orientation of the Chapel and its distinct chancel as affording strong corroborative evidence that the builders of it were at least Conformists. The mention in the law court pleadings of the separate chancel turned towards the East seems to show that it was so regarded then in the minds of those who made the plea.

Mr. Brooke Herford seems to base his statement that nonconforming Puritans built the Chapel upon the fact of its non-consecration. But this fact really gives not the slightest foothold to his theory. For one has only to consider the time when the Chapel was built to understand perfectly well why it was not then consecrated. The times were altogether out of joint. Moreover, if it be asked, Why, if Conformists built it, was it not consecrated at once? It may in reply be asked, Why was it not consecrated between 1668 and 1690, when there was no question as to whether or no it belonged to the Church? It may further be asked, Why was not Billinge Chapel consecrated in 1625, when Bishop Bridgeman could find no record of its consecration? He compelled the people to receive the ministrations of a curate in place of a lay reader, who had long been there. Why did he not consecrate the unconsecrated Chapel? At any rate the fact of its non-consecration does not prove that Puritans built it. Why should the same fact prove this at Hindley? Again, when Billinge was rebuilt in 1718, why did not Bishop Gastrell, careful man as he was, consecrate it? There is no question

of Puritan builders or feoffees at Billinge, which was of pre-Reformation origin. But the fact remains that it was not consecrated until 1908, or nearly 400 years after it was built.

Again, Ringley Chapel was undoubtedly built in 1626 by Puritans. It was used for nonconforming worship at any rate by Angier, and "the people loved to have it so." Yet it was consecrated by Bishop Bridgeman in 1634. How easy would it be, did we know as little of its builders as we do of the men who built Hindley Chapel, to argue from the fact of its consecration that it was built by "Laudians"! Yet how fallacious would be the argument. Equally so is Mr. Brooke Herford's theory, based on the non-consecration of Hindley Chapel.

With regard to Consecration it may be interesting to refer to a *Sermon Preached at the Consecration of a Chapel* in 1667 by Dr. South—certainly no Puritan! He has, naturally, much to say about the good of Consecration. But he does not scruple previously to say "that Consecration makes not a place Sacred, any more than Coronation makes a King, but only solemnly declares it so. It is the Gift of the owner of it to God, which makes it to be solely God's, and consequently Sacred . . . the owner's gift of itself alone makes a thing Sacred without the Ceremonies of Consecration."¹

If those interested in Hindley Chapel held such a view as this, we can easily understand that they might very well not be in a hurry about Consecration, until there arose some legal need for it. But it would not prove them to be Puritans.

It is noteworthy that the lack of Consecration was not, so far as we know, used as a plea by the exceptants during the suit before the Duchy Court. This is a salient point.

¹ *Sermons*, vol. i. p. 308 (2nd edition, 1697).

I have endeavoured to prove that Mr. Brooke Herford was in error in ascribing the building of "Hindley Chappell" to nonconforming Puritans. I submit that the four reasons to the contrary, which I have now laid before you, when considered together, are conclusive ones.

OLD RECORDS.—Hindley is particularly rich in these. There are in an oak chest in the Vestry, provided in 1774 at a cost of £3, 9s. 5d.,¹ some 133 indentures, leases, agreements, &c. The most ancient of them are comprised in Bundle 119, consisting of 19 documents dating from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries. There are also various interesting documents bearing upon the disputes as to the ownership of the Chapel in the seventeenth century, and other parish matters. Many copies of interesting documents are in Memorandum Book No. 3. A catalogue of the documents was made in 1848 by J. T. Evans, R^d Pennington being warden. Some of the documents were printed in *Local Gleanings (Lancashire and Cheshire)*, edited by Mr. Earwaker in 1875-6. Others were given in *Deeds relating to Hindley* (Manchester, T. Sowler and Co., 1878), and in *Documents relating to Hindley* (Leigh, Chronicle Office, 1879). Leyland, *Memorials of Hindley*, gives the Decree of the Chancery Court of Lancaster of 1669, and also the Petition for Consecration and Deed of Consecration (1698). Bridgeman, *History of Wigan Church*, gives the two latter of these and some others. The documents are taken good care of, but should be kept in a fireproof safe. It is not easy to account for such an accumulation of early deeds in the Hindley Vestry. Some of them contain matters of interest, especially to local genealogists.²

CHURCHWARDENS' ACCOUNTS.—These begin in 1757, and vestry minutes are in the same books. There are numerous entries of Brief money collected for various other parishes, though the Hindley people of the eighteenth century do not appear to have given lavishly. The average amount of twelve of these collections was a little over 2s. 11d.! This, however,

¹ Cf. Leyland, *Memorials*, p. 36.

² Some interesting words occur in these deeds, e.g. (*Deeds*, p. 6) Badger, i.e. "One who buys corn and other commodities, and carries them elsewhere to sell; an itinerant dealer who acts as a middleman between producer (farmer, fisherman, &c.) and consumer; a cadger, hawker, or huckster. Still common in the dialects."—Murray, *N.E.D.* But Wright, *E.D.D.*, speaks of it as obsolete. It was in use in Hindley in 1709. Cf. *Kenyon MSS.*, pp. 55, 57 (A.D. 1638, when "badgers" were required to be licensed, as hawkers are now).

was better than the 2d. collected under a Brief on October 6 1734, at Milnrow for N. Meols Church! In 1763 a sum of 6d. was paid at Hindley for "a Box to gather the Brief money in." In 1774 some Brief money was stolen, and 9s. 2½d. had to be found to make good the loss, and in 1776 the vestry resolved that Brief collecting from house to house should be done away with, and instead thereof the minister and warden should disburse a suitable amount from the Chapel funds. This must have been a great relief. In 1665, at Up-Holland, "Master Broune, the minister," collected Brief money "himselfe from set to set (seat)"! But the Hindley people seem to have done very well by the Brief which was read in their behalf in 1763. They paid a bill of £2, 12s. 6d. to a Mr. Alcock "when over concerning the Brief," and there was another small payment in 1765 connected with the Brief. But the Brief is stated to have brought in the sum of £1291 towards the cost of the building of the present Chapel in 1766, the rest of the money coming from subscriptions and the sale of pews. The seats were, apparently, sold at public meetings, called by the Cryer, who received 2d. on each occasion for his pains, thus—"Crying Seats, 2d."

The churchwardens' accounts contain many interesting items, which give us some idea of Church life in Hindley during the latter half of the eighteenth century. There was only one bell, but there were "Ringers," who drank much "Ale," at the churchwardens' expense, on such days as November 5, or "the taking of Quebeck," &c. In 1789 the sexton was allowed two guineas a year for ringing the bell and keeping the Chapel yard in decent repair. He was paid extra, 2s. 6d., 3s., and even 4s. 6d., for ringing for "News" or for victories. Thrift was practised, for they mended the pulpit cushion, turned the pulpit cloth, and "necked" a surplice, "gave the Sextones of Wigan for Finding us out a Bell Rope, 2d.," mended the horse-stone, and rebuilt it when it was past mending, and cleaned and painted the dial post. People, who took care of things after this fashion, might very well afford to "geave the workmen when the first stone of this Chapel was Laid 2s.," and to put up a "Lead Weight to Ballance Chancel Door for clapping too with the wind," to spend 2½d. on a "Whip for Thomas Rycroft" (? the "Dogwhipper"¹), and even 2s. 6d. for a Hat for the same

¹ *Dogwhipper*: This official is often mentioned in eighteenth century churchwardens' accounts. Were dogs more numerous then, or more given to church-going? It is not often that the twentieth century dog goes to church, though it occasionally happens. Were the church doors formerly allowed to stand open during service time? The heating arrangements were indifferent: if, in addition, the doors stood open, the churches would indeed be cold places, and one can

man. But £1, 2s. "for an Umberello" in 1791 seems a good deal, and in 1801 they paid 6s. for covering it. They used to cover the coffins of the dead, according to ancient use (so much more reverent than our modern "flowers"), with a Pall or "Bier Cloth," for which once they paid 12s. "for 6 Black and White Pall Bobs." But they sometimes borrowed a Pall from Wigan. There was, apparently, a Font Cover, the "Cheain and Pullies" of which cost 11s. If a good deal of money was paid for "Sparrow Heads" (in 1805 as much as £2, 17s. 8d. for 1592 heads and eggs), at any rate shopkeepers were prohibited from "Sabbath breaking" by "100 advertisements" at a cost of 3s.; and 6d. was paid for an "Act against Profane Swearing," and 8d. for a "Notice for a Publick Fast," 8d. for a "Form of Prayer for the Young Prince" (1764), and as much for a "Prayer for the Young Princess" (1771), and two men got 1s. each "for assisting in putting up King's Armes and the Commandments." The pulpit cushion was mended in 1768, but in 1777 they went in for a new one, which was a splendid affair. "Making the Quishon and case for the feathers" cost, with 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ lbs. of new feathers, 14s. 1d. The covering was of "rich Genoa Velvet" (£2, 10s.), and it was "ornament with gold fringe" (£2, 6s. 9d.).¹ In 1753 4s. 6d. was paid for Cleaning Chapel, Dubing,² Weeding, and Hanging Pulpit Cloths.

In 1773 a "shooc" for the sexton's use cost 3s. 8d. But in 1800 the "shue" cost 5s. 3d. The year before the "hack halm" had cost 9d., and 1s. 9d. was also paid for repairing "hack."

understand Smollett's opinion "that more bodies are lost than souls saved by going to church, in the winter especially." A 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. whip would be a useful weapon against an ordinary small dog, though the consequent yelping might be disturbing to the congregation. But the weapon would have to be used with caution against a large or fierce dog, with whom persuasion might do more than force. The "dogwhipper's" office would call for the exercise of much skill and discretion, and no wonder if he sometimes used dog tongs instead of a whip.

¹ In the 'forties of the seventeenth century at Prescott, "the surplice was sold as old linen, the organ broken up and disposed of in pieces, and the old cross in the churchyard destroyed. The only constructive policy pursued was the purchase of a cushion for the pulpit, the declamations of the 'Godlie and orthodox divine,' who served the cure during the vicar's absence, having evidently been too much for the old cushion to stand!"—Paterson, *History of Prescott*, p. 33. At Wallasey in 1745 a pulpit cushion cost £2, 11s. 7d., a mere trifle when compared with the Hindley expenditure.

² To "dub" is (with other meanings) to clip or trim a hedge or the branches of a tree. It is found in the churchwardens' accounts of Holmes Chapel in 1749.—Wright, *E.D.D.* Murray (*N.E.D.*) gives an example of its use in 1634, and says that "dub" appears in English before 1100.

Who got the 1s. which was spent in 1787 "when looking for Donations"? How was the 7s. 4d. "Spent as Usal of Eeaster Tuesday"? Also we should like to know what was the salary of the "Bobber," whose duty it was to perambulate the aisles during service with a short staff, and if he saw any of the congregation giving way to sleep, to touch or "bob" them on the head with his staff. Things must have come to a pretty pass in 1797 when it was decided that the constable (for whom two staves had been purchased in 1792—5s.) should attend regularly at chapel, and assist to procure good order and decorum on the Lord's Day.

The CHOIR must be separately noticed. It was a body of considerable importance, and sat in the western gallery, in which there were five seats each holding five persons. In 1788 it consisted (including players on instruments) of sixteen men and four women. The farthest seat was allotted to the instruments—apparently four reeds and one "vilincelle." Certainly, as early as 1763 and as late as 1814, we read in the churchwardens' accounts of payments for reeds and strings. In 1763 "Robt. Grime had 5s. for Reeds for the Bassoon for the whole year." He had a new neck for the bassoon (2s.) in the next year, as well as 2s. for reeds. In 1789 he received 10s. for reeds, and "Jas. Bullow, John Bullow and ōrs for Reeds and Strings 10s. od." In 1795 "Jas. Bullow had 4s. od. for Strings, and John Bullow, Robt. Eatoch, and John Laithwaite 4s. 6d. for Reed money, &c." In the next year the payments were to "Robt. Grimes, Reed money, 4s. 6d.; John Bullough, Robt. Eatoch, and John Laithwaite, do., 4s. 6d.; Jas. Bullough, for Strings, 4s." 3s. 6d. was paid for violoncello strings in 1814. The organ came in 1840. Mr. Leyland¹ says that the ordinary instruments were "a violoncello, bassoon, and clarionet; but on great occasions, such as a charity sermon, or one of the Church festivals, fiddles, hautboys, French horns, and I don't know what besides, were put into requisition."

¹ *Memorials*, p. 44.

In the churchwardens' accounts we find payments for singers' "Bords" and the carriage from Liverpool, and for painting them.¹

There is a quaint entry in 1766 (Nov. 24): "Gave the Singers to encourage them to keep up their singing by Jas. Eckersley and Chas. Ditchfield's orders 1s. od." In 1758 they were allowed a guinea "towards Buying Dr. Green's Vol. of Anthems," and 3s. for an anthem book in 1762. In 1765 2s. was given to "some Strange Singers who came of singing to the Chapel." In 1768 5s. was "P^d Mr. Dennil a Fee when consulted relating to the Singers obtaining consent from ye Court to sing Anthems," and in 1774 as much was "Expended on the Chapel Warden and Singers in waiting of his Lordship the Bishop of Chester in Petitioning for to Sing Anthems." In 1783 13s. was spent on "Handels and Purcels Te-deum for Singers."

It may be interesting to compare the Hindley choir arrangements with those of the mother church of Wigan and of the sister chapelries of Billinge and Up-Holland.

In the Parish Church in Bishop Bridgeman's time there was a loft over the old chancel "where the Altar and Rood loft stood in old time (which many yet living do remember).² . . . The organs have stood over the same [old chauncel] where of old the Rood loft was." Parson Fleetwood had caused plain forms to be "framed of the old church timber which they took from the rood loft."³ It is quite possible that he left the lower part of the rood screen standing as a foundation for the organ loft.⁴ Moreover, it is quite possible that

Cf. Churchwardens' accounts at Aughton for similar items.

² *Wigan*, p. 263.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 272.

⁴ *Cf.* Bond and Camm, *Rood Screens and Rood Lofts*, vol. i. p. 99 *et seq.*

the "organs" used to stand in pre-Reformation days in the Rood loft, as they certainly did at Cockersand Abbey—"a paire of grate Orgaynes in ye Rode lofte."¹ At any rate there they were in Bishop Bridgeman's time. They were renewed in 1623 by Mr. Coates, the organ builder, who was to have £35 for his payment beside the tin, and timber, and leather and other materials.² Later in the year Mr. Coates became organist and parish clerk, and his business was not only to play on the organs in time of divine service, "whiles psalms are singing," but also to "teach all those children of the parish freely which shall be sent to him to learn music." Mr. Coates left Wigan in 1626.³ This organ seems to have been "destroyed in the late times of Rebellion, Sacrilege, and confusion."⁴ A new organ was talked of in 1696, but nothing was done.⁵ A western gallery was built in Bishop Stratford's time "for the use only of such persons within the said parish as had and should attain to some competent skill in singing, to the end that by their sitting together, they might the more easily perform their several parts in singing psalms and keep in time to each other."⁶ In 1709 and 1712 Faculties were granted for the erection of an organ loft in the old place, and of an organ—given by the Mr. Welles who was a benefactor to Hindley Chapel, the rector giving the loft. In course of time this was done, in spite of a good deal of hostility, and in 1849, when the Church was rebuilt, the organ was still in this position, and the singers sat in the same loft, which was approached by the old rood-loft stairs in the north turret.⁷ Some of them were boys from the National and Blue Coat

¹ *Local Gleanings, Lancashire and Cheshire*, July 1878. Cf. Kerry's *St. Laurence, Reading*, p. 59.

² *Wigan*, p. 275.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 609.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 607.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 295.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 591.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 687.

Schools, and these wore surplices. The loft and organ were taken down in 1849. I do not find any trace of other instruments besides "organs" in use in Wigan Parish Church.¹

At Billinge the organ is first mentioned in the churchwardens' accounts in 1844. The first mention of other instruments is in 1786, and the last in 1833. The "Bazoon," "Base Viol," "Hotboy," "Violin," and "G flute," and "Hoop" (? oboe) are mentioned. The choir sat in the west gallery.²

At Upholland the organ came in 1808. It was placed in the west gallery, where the singers also sat. It was purchased by subscription (six subscriptions came to £118), and cost (including fixing, curtains, rods, &c.) about £126. £5, 8s. was also paid to R. Lyon for instructing the singers. Other instruments are mentioned in the churchwardens' accounts first in 1783 and last in 1818. They comprise a French horn, hautboy, and bassoon. The two latter continued in use for at least ten years after the arrival of the organ, which was a barrel one. In 1809 there were sixteen members of the choir (males), and hats were purchased for them—three at 6s. each, and thirteen at 3s. 2d.: total, £2, 19s. 2d.³

In studying the history of Hindley Chapel nothing is more noteworthy or worthy of imitation than the way in which the endowment was obtained. The nucleus was the gift of land for a minister's house by Edward Green in 1654.⁴ Then came a little

¹ I cannot find that instruments, other than organs, were in use in the churches of Warrington, Winwick, Prescott, and Farnworth (organ 1804). They were at Ashton and also at Aughton before the organ came (1858).

² Cf. Wickham, "Notes on Billinge," *Trans. Hist. Soc. of Lancs. and Ches.*, 1909.

³ *Ex inform. Vicar.*

⁴ Edward Green gave land for a "Mansion House" for a "place of Habitation" to "the minister or Preacher of God's Word at the Chapel of Hindley" in 1654. This was, of course, in Puritan times, and was apparently the first gift towards the endowment. But the

annual rentcharge left by John Ranicars in 1655. This was followed by a considerable number of legacies and donations of money, land, rentcharges, &c., some of them quite small, and others larger, but all helping to swell the amount. The result has been that the income, which in 1705 was but £28, 6s. 7d., has now reached the respectable sum of £600 per annum (thanks more particularly to the development of the mines). There is a good vicarage house, built in 1810, and paid for by voluntary contributions, the largest being, perhaps, an involuntary one, for the treasurer, Mr. John Pennington, who had already given £30, was left to pay off a bad balance of £300!

The patronage of the living is now in the Rector of Wigan. Samuel Lever (1708-53) was the first incumbent nominated by the rector. Before that the nomination had been with the trustees, or the inhabitants, according to the very common practice during the Commonwealth. With regard to this Bishop Gastrell (Bishop of Chester 1714-25) writes thus in the *Notitia Cestriensis*—"Anno 1708, some of ye principall Inhabitants and Feofees, having pretended to a Right of nominating the Curate, upon farther examination of the matter, Renounced that Right and Signed an Instrument to yt purpose, and soe it continues without dispute in ye Rector of Wigan."¹

same Edward Green left £20 (will dated Feb. 17, 1680) for "the use of a preaching minister at Hindley Chapel." He was then, at any rate, a hearty Conformist, and was one of the plaintiffs in the Case of 1669. The use of the expression "preaching minister" does not prove that he was a Puritan, the same being found in the will of another benefactor (dated Aug. 29, 1678), Thomas Aspul. It is found also in the decree of 1697. The will of John Ranicars (dated Aug. 1655) uses the words "a Minister at the said Chapel"; that of Mary Collyer (dated Oct. 30, 1684) has "orthodox preacher or minister of God's Word and sacraments"; and that of John Prescott (dated Oct. 13, 1712), "the Protestant preaching minister at Hindley Chapel."—See *Documents*, pp. 24, 28, 31, 38, 39.

¹ A full account of the settlement of this Patronage dispute is given in Bridgeman's *Wigan*, p. 602 *et seq.* The matter was amicably arranged



*Reverendus admodum in Christo Pater FRANCISCUS GASTRELL, Episcopus Cestrensis
S. T. P. ex Aede Christi in Academia Oxon.
Nec Cantabrigiensi minus interim charus
Quippe qui utriusq; Jura egregie lucebatur
Veritatis Semper
Indagator Sagacissimus
Vindex acerrimus*

W. Vertue sculpit

FRANCIS GASTRELL, BISHOP OF CHESTER, 1714-1725

From an engraving by George Vertue after an oil painting in the Bishop's Palace at Chester

The Chapel was "restored" in 1880, and every vestige of interest destroyed. Before that unhappy time there was some good early Georgian oakwork, and especially a massive two-decker pulpit, which hid the little sanctuary, and served very well as an iconostasis. Immediately behind it, and over the sanctuary, was the east gallery, which held the organ and choir. Galleries also ran all round the other walls of the Church. The east gallery was the cause, some twenty-five years ago, of confusion to a well-known and highly-respected Cambridge don (now dead), who happened to be preaching the "School Sarmuns." He had preached fluently and well in the morning, but in the evening he became confused, and brought his discourse to an untimely end. He afterwards explained to the vicar that he had suddenly become aware that the singers were looking over his shoulder on to his MS., and it was too much for his nerves! The east gallery has now departed, and also the pulpit.

In 1815 the vestry resolved to apply for a faculty between Rector Finch and the feoffees and others, who visited the rector and came "to a perfect understanding with him upon the whole matter," and did "for ever forego all our pretensions and recede from all claim and Title to the nomination of a minister to the said chappel of Hindley, and shall not oppose this or any Rector of Wigan in appointing a curate to the same." John Prescott (*cf.* p. 88) was one of the signatories to the letter to Bishop Dawes in which the foregoing words occur, on which letter is endorsed a memorandum signed by the curate (Lever) and twenty-eight others to the effect that Mr. Lever had from the reading desk on a certain Sunday requested "the Persons who were desirous to express their consent to the agreement between the Rector and the Feoffees" to "come to ye Comunion-Table and sign the said Agreement," which they did as "Inhabitants having seats and other Persons then present who had formerly pretended a Right and laid a claim to the Nomination of a minister there." The Bishop writes to the rector expressing his satisfaction: "I desir'd nothing more than that it might be vested in the Rector of Wigan; as the surest way to preserve the peace, and keep up the Authority of the Church." He gave orders to his registrar to enter the agreement in his register book, where Bishop Gastrell found it.—"Reg.[ister] B.[ook,] 4." A dispute about the patronage of Billinge in 1765 issued in a law suit, which ended in favour of the rector.

to enable them to enlarge the Chapel. This good resolution shared the fate of many another. At the Vestry Meeting held on Easter Tuesday, 1905, a new chancel was mentioned. So the Hindley people are evidently thinking in the right direction. A new church is badly needed. In 1838 the Chapelry of Abram was severed from Hindley, and Abram Church consecrated. It is soon to give place to a new one. From Abram has been severed the new Parish of Bickershaw, for which a church, provided by the Johnson family in memory of their late father, was consecrated on May 20th, 1905. Hindley has also thrown off two other daughter parishes—Hindley Green (1903) and St. Peter's (1866), from which again the new district of Platt Bridge has been cut off, the new Church of St. Nathaniel being consecrated on June 10, 1905.

All this has grown out of the day of small things of 1641. And so the Church has lengthened her cords, and strengthened her stakes, and provided for the better shepherding of her people. But the mother of these comely daughters remains very much as she was 140 years ago. She ought, surely, soon to be enlarged and beautified, and that with no niggard hand.