

THE
CURATE OF WEDNESBURY
AND
HIS VICAR.

Πρόλερον, Τέλειρον.

“I will a round unvarnish’d Tale deliver.”

“Nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in Malice.”

BIRMINGHAM:

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TO

The Honest Inhabitants of Wednesbury, particularly,

AND

TO THOSE IN GENERAL WHO DARE PREFER

TRUTH TO FALSEHOOD,

AND ARE THE VINDICATED CHAMPIONS OF

WOUNDED INNOCENCE,

THE FOLLOWING SHEETS ARE ADDRESSED,

By JOHN ATCHERLEY,

CURATE OF WEDNESBURY.

AUDI ALTERAM PARTEM.

THE
CURATE OF WEDNESBURY,

&c. &c.



TO THE PUBLIC.

THE following sheets would long ere this have appeared had it not been from a spirit of forbearance on one hand, and a strong desire on the other, not to expose to public censure the imprudent, not to say malevolent, conduct of any individual on earth, much more that of a brother clergyman. And that the sum of my wishes might be accomplished, overtures have been made, and those recommended by no less a personage than the venerable and highly respected Bishop of the diocese, whose views must have originated in the best of motives, the re-establishment of my good name, and the reconciliation of the contending parties. But these overtures were rejected in a *magisterial* manner; and the reason may, perhaps, be discovered through the medium of the following correspondence; and which is the only means I have now left to shew to the world how innocent I am of the charges brought against me by wicked men;—charges, to quell the progress of which, it was my first care to call in my Vicar's aid; but this could not be granted. Perhaps it was my Vicar's misfortune to be too dependent, or perhaps his

conduct had brought him into the power of the people, whose exertions and study, I hope, have been concentrated for some better end than the diabolical purpose of ruining more effectually his unmolested and unprotected Curate. I then appealed to my Diocesan, who, it will be found, however desirous he might be, could not *effectually* relieve me, because I was not a *Licensed Curate*. Does not this seem then to justify the idea of a *Court of Honor* in the Church, to which the poor and oppressed clergyman might the more easily have recourse, to vindicate his innocence, when slanderously accused, and to redress his wrongs when attacked by the unfeeling stroke of unrelenting malice? And if the Bishop cannot *protect* the suffering Curate during the interval between taking a curacy and procuring a licence, it is time this power was given him; for without it the Curate, however unoffending in word or deed, is left open to the attacks of, and may fall an easy prey to, the most worthless and abandoned wretches that can disgrace society—for he cannot resign. If this was simply an imaginary case, a case which the imagination says is within the bounds of possibility to happen, it would be noble humanity to prevent its happening. But, who is there within his Majesty's dominions, who does not lament the reality of such cases? None, but those by whose wicked *power* they are brought before the public eye. Whether these, the persecutions I have met with, in the faithful discharge of my important duty, confirm the above assertions, and whether they be such as to deserve the general commiseration, as effected by the same power just alluded to, the reader will judge from the following correspondence.

But first, let me inform the reader, that on being presented to a trifling piece of preferment near Shrewsbury, I had to pass through Wednesbury, and having been formerly Curate there, I was strongly solicited to return, and informed that Mr. Haden had written to me, stating how happy he should be to restore me to my *former* situation. This letter I believe was lost in the Romney, which ship had letters for the Princess of Orange, of which I was then Chaplain. To the desire of the inhabitants, as well as that of the Vicar of this place, I was induced to accede, not only from the flattering reception I was likely to meet with, but from an attachment to a young lady of that place. I wrote to the Admiralty for my discharge from his Majesty's navy, and indeed attended there in person. When I obtained permission to return to the country, I came to Wednesbury, and informed Mr. Haden of my arrival, and that I was at liberty to take charge of his parish again. In answer to which I received the following letter:

LETTER I.

“Tettenhall, January 18, 1805.

“I received your letter last night with much pleasure, and entertain the hope, that the time is very far distant before we shall part again. You have said nothing about the Salary, but (to prevent mistakes) I presume we are to go upon the same terms as before. Mrs. and Miss Haden unite in compliments with,

“Dear Sir,

“Most sincerely your's,

“A. B. HADEN.”

Letter 1. Illustrated.

MY salary had been before, and therefore from the preceding letter was to be again, most undoubtedly 50*l.* per ann. together with the benefit of the church-yard, and other perquisites to the amount of eight pounds more. But mark the consequence, gentle reader.—The church-yard is now let by the Vicar, for, I believe, two pounds per annum who *conscientiously* receives the rent—the sorry boon of another’s right; and of the other perquisites I have in a great measure been deprived. My original agreement with the Vicar of Wednesbury, he has proved to be for twelve months, for when I was first his Curate he withheld from me my salary till long after the twelve months had expired, to defray any additional expences that might necessarily and unavoidably happen in providing for the duty during that term. Do not the words therefore of his letter, “I presume we must go on upon the same terms as before,” constitute a bargain for the full term of twelve months? I ask this question, because Mr. Haden seems to think he has a right to turn off his Curate whenever he pleases, and that by paying up his salary to the time, he chooses to say, “in my church you shall no longer preach,” he is justified in refusing to pay the farther claims of the Curate, up to the full end and term of the original agreement.

To Mr. Haden’s proposals I acceded by acknowledging the receipt of the last letter, and remained in charge of Wednesbury without anything transpiring of an unpleasant nature, till early in the spring; when I perceived the church-yard stocked with sheep, the property of a Mr. Brevit. I wrote to my Vicar on the subject, but he did not think proper to return me an

answer; and the sum of two pounds I then thought too trifling an object to quarrel about. Therefore, without enforcing my right, I remained undisturbed till Easter, when I insisted on the usual allowance of wine, which had been improperly curtailed from the sacrament.—My demand was refused in a very unbecoming manner, for which I intended then, and did afterwards proceed, agreeably to the wishes of my Vicar, to put the churchwardens in the ecclesiastical court. On the Monday following a strong opposition was made to the continuance of these men in office; and this opposition was alledged entirely, tho' unjustly to me. For the fact was this, these men had been in office so long, and had become so cruel and oppressive to those whom they should protect, that it was thought proper to remove them. Their cruelty to a Mr. Foster, a schoolmaster, a man of an amiable disposition, and considerable merit as a teacher; and their barbarity to another inoffensive man, viz. the governor of the workhouse, brought down upon them the indignation of the parish; and therefore it was agreed that they should be dismissed on the next Easter-Monday. When this resolution was made, I was at sea, and knew nothing of the circumstance. That this is true, the promoters of the opposition have testified. I returned unexpectedly to the parish, and just time enough to behold the distressed situation of the governor and his wife. On the 24th of December I returned from Shrewsbury, and on the following day, *during divine service*, the church wardens entered the workhouse with constables, bailiffs, and a multitude of men equally *pious* with themselves, and actually turned the governor and his wife, (who were sojourners in this iron-hearted land) into the snow-

covered street. This, of course, increased the displeasure they had already incurred, and when Easter-Monday arrived they artfully endeavoured to make me appear the cause of the opposition they had met with. They endeavoured to make the narrow and sordid minds in the parish believe that I was about to ruin them by expence.— That I intended to have a table of benefactions put in the church, (which, by the bye, ought to be done;) that I intended to lay an information against the parish, for not having the king's arms in the church, and many other things of which I had no idea. It is true, I did intend to punish the churchwardens, but not the parish ; and I knew it was my Vicars's wish it should be so. They had suffered the church, which is a beautiful structure, to become an easy prey to voracious time. The pulpit has literally streamed with rain, while I have been employed there in my duty; and I have stood exposed there to the rude attacks of winter. These things I could not suffer, and when I saw the church-yard wall partly in ruins, and looked at the duty of every churchwarden, and contemplated their solemn admission into office, I shuddered, and asked myself, how I could associate with such men, who thus disgraced the authority they possessed in the church to which I belonged? My conscience told me only to be civil to them, and nothing more. I obeyed its dictates; I *was* civil to them, but that would not do, I must be their *obedient servant*, as my predecessors had also been. But I had an independent mind, which rebuked them when I was their minister before, and I found it more necessary now to shew that independence. They perceived it unshaken, and kindly promised to reward me for it. They promised to “do me a

kindness." I have not received a purse of money, nor any thing valuable; nor indeed, do I expect any thing of value; I am not a worldly-minded man, I would gladly have released them from their promise, and accepted, instead of any pecuniary reward for my integrity, their exertions to stop the mouth of one of their *obedient servants*, whose mouth is the trumpet of calumny. This man is the parish beadle.—A very few days after the masters of this man had discovered that I could not be subdued, he very kindly undertook "to reward me;" which he accomplished in the following manner:

On Easter-Thursday, which will be found to be the subject of some of the following letters; as I was walking with my intended wife, I was followed in my walks by the eye of premeditated mischief; for soon afterwards, the beadle asserted, and supported his assertion, by tendering the wager of a guinea, that I was seen not only in company, but improperly connected with a woman of the name of Dickinson, a person whom I had never seen, as clearly appeared upon investigation. Now, as I do not like to receive favours, without making some return, I requested this man might be dismissed, or give up his authority. But this was resisted by the churchwardens, who thought the beadle a useful man; particularly at this conjuncture, when green-eyed malice was in the very act of pointing her keen envenomed shafts at my peace, and hence their answer, they could not conceive that they had any thing to do with my character. Nay, indeed, one of them said he would keep "the beadle in *his* office after they had seen *me* out." This was an alarming expression, and I recollected that about nine months before, a brother clergyman that held the office I now hold, had been accused of the like crime, and

compelled to live in solitude, there, shunned by innocence, to hide his head. I therefore thought proper to inform Mr. Haden of what had happened. He wrote to me, in answer, as follows, as near as I can recollect, for I sent the letter to the Bishop.

LETTER II.

Tettenhall, 1805.

DEAR SIR,

I AM sorry there has been any attack made upon your reputation, and peace of mind. Every one knows what an infamous fellow Joseph Harrison is, and I think it a pity you took any notice of what he said; as the case now stands, I think you had better consult Mr. Crowther, who will advise you either to bring an action, or abandon the business altogether.

Observations on Letter II.

Joseph Harrison is the parish beadle.

In Letter 12, the reader will find Mr. Haden condemns me for taking the advice of any person but his own.

Mr. Haden's apathy and inattention to his Curate hurt me much; and what increased my uneasiness was, I did not hear *from* him, nor *of* him, till (I think) the 4th of June, when I was informed that he intended to visit Wednesbury on the following Sunday. I wrote to him on the next day requesting he would assist me with a sermon. His answer follows:—

LETTER III.

REV. SIR,

I AM sorry that *reports* should induce you to give any credit to the circumstance asserted. Had it been in my power to attend next week at Wednesbury, I should have written and said so, to prevent mistakes. The fact is, I am in daily expectation of a letter to call me to the visitation at Leicester, when I shall take the opportunity of spending a week or ten days at Saddington; so that I cannot say when I shall be able to attend at Wednesbury, however ardently I wish it. I shall attend at Lichfield next Tuesday, when it may perhaps be in my power to say something decisive on the subject. I wish very much to see you respecting the very unfortunate disputes between you and the churchwardens, and also respecting the circumstance alluded to by the beadle (Harrison) with which I was openly attacked by your neighbour Moreton at our last visitation at Wolverhampton, when I assured the clergy, I would make every necessary enquiry as soon as I could go over to Wednesbury, and call the parties face to face.

Your's in great haste,

A. B. HADEN.

*Tettenhall, June 6, 1805.**Observations on Letter III.*

ON the receipt of this letter, my eyes began to open, and I saw through a dispersing mist, one of the wonderful works of distorted nature, which hitherto my eyes had not seen. Mr. Haden certainly did promise to visit Wednesbury on the Sunday I have mentioned. And if this

gentleman had *ardently*, as he expresses himself, or for a moment entertained the least wish to visit Wednesbury, he surely might have gratified, and very easily too, *that desire*, for the distance between Wednesbury and his place of abode is only seven miles. Besides, his engagements at home could not be very pressing, for we find, he was enabled to devote ten days to pleasure, while his Curate's character was cruelly suffering, and while he must be sensible of the breach of promise he had made the Clergy at Wolverhampton, "that he would go to Wednesbury and investigate the business." Add to this, the circumstance of his being compelled to pass through Wednesbury on his way to Saddington, and the reader will not hesitate to say, he did not intend to fulfil the promise he had made. One hour would have been sufficient time for the full hearing of the affair alluded to. He might have written to me to collect the parties, which I most readily and gladly would have done.— But he was silent,—And why he was so, the reader will presently discover.

On the Tuesday following, I met my Rev. Vicar at Lichfield, and had much conversation with him on the subject that brought me there. The result was, he would undertake to have the beadle punished, or would himself put the churchwardens in the court. I left Lichfield with some degree of satisfaction; this was on the 11th of June, the Bishop's visitation. On the 13th of the same month I received the following letter from Mr. Haden:

LETTER IV.

DEAR SIR,

VERY soon after I saw you, the Bishop sent Mott for me respecting your very unfortunate business, and after

weighing all the circumstances of the case, recommended that you should take to your new preferment, and reside upon it, which would completely remove you from that neighbourhood, where too many persons take sides against you. Mott thought the plan a good one, because you will get rid of the accusation and your enemies without an investigation, which would have proved extremely expensive, and have fallen upon you. I have then to request that you will write to your Curate, and I will endeavour to procure an assistant between this time and Michaelmas; you might make it convenient to remove sooner, provided I get one to take care of Wednesbury. I assured the Bishop that I did not believe the report, and spoke as to the credibility of the witnesses against you. I go on Tuesday next to Leicester; as soon as I return, I will come over to Wednesbury, and give you two sermons.

Your's sincerely,

A. B. HADEN.

Tettenhall, June 12, 1805.

Observations on Letter IV.

I READ the above letter with astonishment, for I did not perceive, nor could I credit, that imbecility in the venerable Bishop which could dictate such advice; nor could I conceive how Mr. Mott, who is far from the infirmities *of age*, acquiesce in such nonsense. I therefore determined to visit my illuminated Vicar, and converse with him on the subject. On the 15th day of June I walked over to Tettenhall, and was honoured with an interview; when I entered the room Miss Haden was present, but after the usual compliments had passed, she withdrew,

leaving her father and myself alone. I was eager to proceed to business, I told Mr. Haden that my surprise was great, occasioned by his letter of the 12th instant; and as to the advice contained in it, I thought it weak and such as I could not take. It was not my intention to leave the Curacy of Wednesbury, under the present circumstances, if I could possibly help it. How sir, said I, can the Bishop reconcile to himself his giving me up to be persecuted by wicked men, which he certainly will do by removing me hence? He does not think it persecution, said he; he thinks it an act of lenity that you are not suspended, but allowed to retire to your preferment. My reply was, I never thought the Bishop the man he is now represented to be. He conversed with me as a friend when he ordained me; and his friendly counsel I ever since have cherished; but the advice contained in *your* letter is *weak*, and *his* determination inconsiderate and *cruel*. Mr. Haden replied, why sir, I am sorry to say, the Bishop gives *credit* to the report, notwithstanding all *my* endeavours to convince him of *your* innocence, and the *vileness* of your *enemies* characters, and therefore he is certainly lenient. But sir, said I, he is not *lenient*, because there is no room for lenity. He can have no ground to believe me deserving of punishment: Mr. Haden said, yes he has; he has received a letter which has fixed his mind on the subject, and the last words he spoke to me were a positive charge that I should get another Curate. I wished to know from whom he received that letter, Mr. Haden could not tell me, it was *anonymous*. Do you know the contents? said I. Oh yes, Mr. Haden replied, it stated just what your letter stated to me; I expressed some surprise at the Bishop paying any the least attention to an anonymous writer. Mr. Haden

gave his shoulders an *Italian* shrug, and said, it is so, and I am very sorry for it. Here followed a long conversation about the churchwardens, a Mr. Hawe and a Mr. Addison, both of whom I condemned; the latter I thought likely to be concerned in the above mentioned letter. Mr. Haden thought not, but hinted at a neighbouring Clergyman, as the man. Of the first, Mr. Haden had a very bad opinion; he thought him a man full of malice and revenge, and he had found by experience, how great a Billingsgate a lady nearly allied to him could be. I was of opinion that Mr. Haden had better come over to Wednesbury and investigate the business himself, and censure those who merited censure. *Me!* exclaimed he, it is as much as my *life* is worth to come among *them*. What cause Mr. Haden had to be more alarmed then than at the time of the visitation at Wolverhampton, I know not; there may be a difference in a man's valour before and after an invigorating dinner; and to this difference I may have attributed Mr. Haden's boldness; but he was equally brave once in a morning. A very worthy friend of mine represented to him how cruelly I had been treated; to which Mr. Haden replied, I do believe he has been used very ill, but if I interfere they will pull my head off my shoulders.—But I am digressing.—Mr. Haden seemed determined not to visit his parish, and expressed a strong desire to retain me in my present situation; for which purpose he gave me a petition to get signed by the inhabitants, as the only likely means to appease the wrath of the Bishop. He recommended me likewise to obtain a certificate from the magnetic Miss Bayley, testifying that it was *her* (which was really the case) I was walking with at the very time I was accused of being with a cyprian nymph. I thanked him, and after

some irrelevant conversation, I departed, much musing on what had passed. The petition I carried to Mr. Crowther, the gentleman mentioned in Letter II.; he investigated the business, and stated it as his opinion, that Mr. Haden's testimony *alone*, in a business so very clear, would be sufficient to satisfy the Bishop's mind. I forwarded this opinion, the statement of facts, and Miss Bayley's letter, to Mr. Watkins of Wednesbury, on whom Mr. Haden was to call on his way to Saddington, he did call and received my packet; when he arrived at Saddington, he sent me a letter of which the following is a copy:

LETTER V.

DEAR SIR,

I RECEIVED your packet from Mr. Watkins, as I passed through Wednesbury, and am sorry to find that you have not pursued the only method in my opinion to induce the Bishop to countermand his directions for your removal from the Curacy of that place. When his lordship communicated his sentiments to me, I took the opportunity of assuring him, that the persons who made and supported the charge against you, were not entitled to any credit, unless supported by much better testimony than their own; and that for my own part I did not believe it. This assertion by no means satisfied his lordship, and therefore, as I told you at Tettenhall, the result was that I must look out for another Curate. This being the case, I think nothing but a certificate signed by as many of the inhabitants of Wednesbury as can possibly be procured, can prevail with the Bishop to withdraw his directions as to your dismissal.—Miss Bayley's letter, and your's to me, may accompany the certificate; but I cannot *vouch* even

then for their success. However you may rest assured, I shall do every thing in my power to serve you. I cannot agree with Mr. Crowther in opinion, that soliciting the signatures of the inhabitants would be in any respect humiliating, or degrading. It is true, if you was guilty of the charge, it would be asking them to beg you off from punishment or disgrace; but if innocent, it is a testimony due from them to you in support of your character. These are my sentiments on the subject, and therefore I have to hope you will procure the certificate against my return; and I will gladly forward it to the Bishop. We intend leaving this place on Monday morning, and shall spend a few days with my brother in Derby on our way home.

Your's sincerely,

Saddington, June 21, 1806.

A. B. HADEN.

Observations on Letter V.

THIS letter had every appearance of friendship, but appearances are deceitful; *fronti nulla fides*: I had already suffered by them, and I was now somewhat more acquainted with the creative powers of nature, in her whimsical moments, than I was six months before. I was therefore determined not to trust to appearances. I reflected on the trouble I should have in getting the petition signed, and, after all, Mr. Haden seemed to *doubt* my success. Surely, said I, the Bishop's wrath, which has been unjustly raised, cannot cruelly continue unappeased, and unappeasable; I will write to him myself, and state the result of the investigation that has taken place; and thereby at least endeavour to know from himself, what I am to expect. I wrote to him, and in his lordship's usual punctual manner, received his answer. Reader, dost thou

love truth, and hate falsehood? dost thou abhor crafty cowardice, and admire the candour of the brave? hast thou one spark of patriotic fire in thy composition? If thou hast, digest well what thou hast read; and then read the following letter:

LETTER VI.

REV. SIR, *Hill-Street, June 24, 1805.*

I HAVE received no complaint concerning you, nor any intimation of the matter alluded to in your letter, but from yourself. Unless therefore something be represented to me upon the subject, of course I shall not *immediately* require an alteration in the Cure of Wednesbury.

I am, Rev. Sir, your obedient servant,

J. LICH. & COV.

READER, thou art indignant! but view calumniators beyond the reach of punishment, and thou wilt be still more indignant, and naturally ask, whether the glory of our country can long remain, if her honest Clergy are to be so treated? Let reason answer; and thou, oh reader! contemplate still Mr. Haden's friendship. He requests me to obtain as many signatures of the inhabitants to this petition as I possibly can. For what purpose? To bury it in oblivion! to get me removed, sacrifice the honour of his Bishop, and the reputation of his Curate. This is the Vicar of Wednesbury's friendship; he certainly would neither have sent the petition, nor Miss Baylay's letter to the Bishop; for his lordship was quite in the dark on the subject. No, he would have put them on the fire; the Bishop's *wrath* would have remained unappeased, and I should have received a letter of *condolence* and

commiseration, and a picture of Mr. Haden's distressed mind at the thoughts of parting. This would have been the case; but fortunately I wrote to the Bishop and obtained his answer, which confounded my friendly Vicar; and lest his *friendship* should induce him to take any step to procure my removal, I wrote a petition myself differing from Mr. Haden's a little, and particularly in being addressed to the Bishop direct, and not through him. I did not omit writing to Mr. Haden on the subject of the Bishop's letter; I told him I had received a very pleasant letter from the Bishop, of which he took no notice till the 12th day of July; on which day, he and his son called upon me, and requested a sight of the Bishop's letter; I put it into his hands, he read it, and observed upon it, that I had no business to write to the Bishop at all, and that the Bishop was very wrong in writing to *me*, but through *him*.—This I conceived *bold* language:—I replied, that I wrote to the Bishop myself, because *you* seemed not inclined to do it, and because *you* threw cold water upon my warmest hopes. Cold water, sir, replied Mr. Haden, you have plunged me in hot water, for all my kindness and trouble.—I have got my foot in it prettily now. I did not understand him; he explained, you have made me look ridiculous in the eyes of the Bishop, my *particular* friend. I should be sorry to sever friend from friend, said I; and if the Bishop is your *particular* friend, why did you not forward to him the evidence of my guilt or innocence, and request he would comply with the wishes of the parish, and suffer me to remain Curate of Wednesbury? for though indeed *I* may have plunged you in *hot* water, yet it was undesigned; but what have *you* done to me? Why, you have deliberately and intentionally *scalded* me to death;

he answered, because you did not get the petition signed, that would have enabled me to state the wishes of the parish: I then told him without this he knew very well the wishes of the parish, and the Bishop would give him credit if he stated them. Yes, sir, said he, I know the wishes of the parish; I know the inhabitants wish you removed, and you could not get the petition signed. I replied, you are very incorrect indeed in what you now state. No, sir, I am not, said Mr. Haden, I have collected the wishes of the inhabitants myself; and I am bound in honour to fulfill the promise I made the chancellor, and give the parish a Curate whom they shall choose. *I* am that man, said I, and the Bishop is not disposed to thwart their desires. Mr. Haden was enraged, took up the Bishop's letter, and observed, that he was not supposed to know its contents, and should therefore proceed, as he had been directed, unless the Bishop's orders were countermanded. When the Vicar's rage had almost spent itself, I took the liberty to ask him whether he meant to say, he knew not the contents of *that letter* he had just read? He recollected himself, and in reply said, he would write to the Bishop. Do so, Mr. Haden, said I; and you will obtain an answer from his lordship consistent with himself; I shall also write to him. The Vicar begged I would not think he was in a passion:— I bowed;—we parted.

On July the 16th, I delivered my petition to the inhabitants who eagerly received it, and joyfully signed it. It is as follows, and signed by 500 inhabitants:

WE whose names are hereunto subscribed, unbiassed by power, unrestrained by fear, and guided only by truth, and principal inhabitants of the parish of Wednesbury, with the exceptions of a servile and unprincipled few, do

testify, that as far as we know and believe, the conduct of the Rev. John Atcherley, during his residence among us, has been sober, pious, and exemplary; and we therefore, in the most respectful and humble manner, request his lordship, the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, will be pleased to continue him in the Curacy of Wednesbury, whatever may be the wish, or desire, and misrepresentation of wicked men. And we beg leave to assure his lordship, that in making this request, we are influenced only by a sincere regard for the defence of wounded innocence, for the cause of religion, and a wish to disappoint the malignant misrepresentations of falsehood; founded on dark, designing, and deliberate mischief. And for no other reason, but because Mr. Atcherley was desirous of doing his duty, by enforcing, in the mildest way, as a Clergyman and a Christian, decency and good order in the parish.

On the 29th of the same month, I received the following letter from Mr. Haden:

LETTER VII.

REV. SIR,

I HAVE received a petition signed by almost all the respectable inhabitants in Wednesbury, requesting your dismissal from the Curacy. In answer to which, I have informed them, that it is to take place at Michaelmas next.

I am, Rev. Sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

A. B. HADEN.

Tettenhall, July 28, 1805.

Observations on Letter VII.

THIS letter commenced with directing me to apply to a Mr. Earp, for my salary; and then proceeds to the statement of the abominable falsehood, that a petition had been signed by almost *all the respectable* inhabitants, requesting my dismissal from the Curacy. Eleven men only signed that petition, of whom, I can only assure the reader, that I verily believe they are the *least respectable*, in point of morality, in the parish.

The following is my answer to the last letter.

LETTER VIII.

REV. SIR,

I HAD your letter, and will apply as you direct for my salary. And, with respect to the latter part of it, I beg leave to inform you, that I have just received a certificate in testimony of my moral conduct and good behaviour, together with a petition, earnestly requesting my continuance in the Curacy of Wednesbury, signed by almost every person of consideration in the Parish; and to which it is my intention at present to accede, and in which I shall hope to have your approbation:—nay, I the more particularly wish it, because, as I am an enemy to quarrels, it would at once put my mind at ease, and save me the painful task of laying before my Diocesan, whom I am ever bound to respect, your letters, together with the certificate and petition above alluded to.

I am, Rev, Sir,

Without presumption, dissimulation, or hypocrisy,

Your friend and servant,

JOHN ATCHERLEY.

Wednesbury, Aug. 1805.

P.S. I shall wait your answer, five days.

Observations on Letter VIII

THIS letter had no effect on Mr. Haden that I could discover. I waited the five days. My compassion induced me to wait near three weeks, in hopes he would see his folly. After waiting so long in vain, I enclosed my petition and certificate to the Bishop, with Mr. Haden's letters, and the following one of my own.

LETTER IX.

MY LORD,

I SHOULD not have troubled your Lordship again on the subject of Wednesbury Curacy, had I not had information, and, I believe, from good authority, that Mr. Haden had actually engaged a Curate, to take possession at Michaelmas. Now, as I have not had proper notice to leave the situation, I am thrown into an awkward predicament. Besides, presuming on the authority of your letter, which says, "You have not heard any charge against me, nor were you inclined to remove me from Wednesbury." I supposed that the wish of Mr. Haden, or rather that of a few of the most worthless and immoral part of the inhabitants, had been done away. But hearing the above, and knowing no real cause why I should be removed, and, particularly in a disgraceful way, I beg leave to lay before your Lordship the enclosed letter and certificate. The one to shew the duplicity and inconsistency of the Vicar, and the other, as a testimony of the moral conduct of the Curate; and to beg at the same time, your Lordship will have the goodness to investigate the business still more closely, in order that I

may be cleared from the stigma, that is threatening to crush my innocence, under the false pretensions of guilt. To your tribunal then I appeal, for 'tis *there* only, I believe, I can have, or even hope for justice. I have the honor to be, my Lord,

With all due deference and respect,

Your Lordship's most obedient and
persecuted servant,

JOHN ATCHERLEY.

Eccleshall, Aug. 21, 1805.

Observations on Letter IX.

AFTER the Bishop had read the above letter, he asked me whether I was licensed. I answered in the negative. He observed that as *that* was the case, he knew not how he could interfere. I replied, My Lord, I presume you have power to punish your clergy, who disgrace their profession. I am one of your Lordship's Clergy, and stand charged with the commission of an abominable act. I wish your Lordship to enquire, whether the charge is well or ill founded. The Bishop mildly replied, I cannot institute such an enquiry, for in fact there is no charge against you, of any nature, that I know of, but from yourself. My Lord, I answered, Mr. Haden says there is, and that an anonymous writer has so satisfied you of its truth, as to make you insist on my leaving the curacy. The Bishop seemed surprised, (as well he might) and said, he could only account for it, from Mr. Haden's ill state of health. I told the Bishop that Mr. Haden's health was very good, and that I was persecuted because I was zealous in my duty. The Bishop then asked me how he could interfere,

for he did not himself see how he could? I thought he might punish the beadle, for against him there *was* a complaint.—And I thought he might write to Mr. Haden, and state, that it was not his wish to remove me. Mr. Haden will shew your letter, said I, to the churchwardens, under whose influence he acts, and I think, neither he, nor they will dare to oppose your wishes. That I can do, said the Bishop; and then wrote and read to me as follows:—“It is by no means my wish that Mr. Atcherley should be removed from the situation he holds in Wednesbury, except something be proved against him.”

A Mr. Inman called on me, August 11th, and informed me, that he had taken the curacy of Wednesbury. I shewed him Mr. Haden’s friendly letter, and the Bishop’s.—He went away disgusted.

The Bishop’s letter had not the desired effect.—Mr. Haden still continued to look out for another Curate. I thought proper therefore to address his Lordship again; in which letter I stated several facts; but as they might militate more than I could wish against even Mr. Haden, my greatest enemy, I forbear, from elevated motives, to insert them here; except the concluding part, as follows:—

MY LORD,

When I saw you at Eccleshall, I thought I saw a disposition in you to serve me; but you thought you had not power. I thought you had. I bowed, however, as I ever shall, to your Lordship’s superior judgment, and lament that *that* disposition has not prevented my being cruelly smitten by the lash of persecuting calumny. The letter you addressed to Mr. Haden in my favor, he seems to treat with contempt, for I have not heard from him since. He

has been in Wednesbury, but he did not deign to visit his Curate. I shall, I think, soon be in the hands of the world; but my cause is a good one, and I shall appear with it, in the unadorned language of simple truth. With every sentiment of respect and regard, I remain,

Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

JOHN ATCHERLEY.

Wednesbury, Sep. 24, 1805.

P. S. Your Lordship will recollect, Mr. Haden states how very ardent his desire was that I should remain Curate, of Wednesbury;—and how very *determined* you were not to mitigate the sentence you had passed, even though you had every assurance of my innocence. The evidence, to prove which, he has withheld, in a manner reprobated by every person. When a man tells one untruth, he must fabricate many falsehoods to support it. This is Mr. Haden's case. He intends for me to quit next Sunday. He says in a letter I have just now received, that another Curate will take my charge. I ask your advice—what am I to do ?

On October the 8th, after having given up all hopes of receiving an answer to the above letter, I received the following,

Durham, October 2, 1805.

REV. SIR,

I HAVE received your letter; but it is unnecessary for me to enter upon the subject of it, as it is wholly out of my power to grant you any *effectual* protection.

I am, Rev. Sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

J. LICHFIELD & COVENTRY.

TO my last letter I did not receive an immediate answer, and having little hope of obtaining that redress from my Bishop which I thought myself warranted in expecting, I conceived I had a title to seek it from the world. I therefore began to collect and arrange my letters and set in order to lay them before the public. One important letter was in the hands of Mr. Haden.—I wrote to him, and requested, as he had not made that use of it for which he received it, he would return it to me. He took no notice of my letter. I addressed him a second time, to the same effect, and with the same success, and still no answer. I wrote to him a third time as follows:

LETTER XI.

REV. SIR,

I SHOULD not trouble you, nor myself, so much on the subject of Miss Baylay's letter, if it was not of importance to me to obtain it again. It is no small breach of good manners to withhold it from me.—But that, I fancy, gives you little concern. You may conceive that letter to be valuable to me, and therefore are determined to keep it. If that be your determination, tell me so, and thereby save me the trouble of writing to you, and yourself the expence of postage.

I remain, Rev. Sir,

Your's, &c.

JOHN ATCHERLEY.

Wednesbury Sep. 20, 1805.

LETTER XII.

SIR,

I HAVE received your letter respecting Miss Baylay's note, which, at her particular request, I shall take the liberty to destroy. She tells me that she has been very uneasy ever since she wrote it, and that her uncle and aunt were by no means pleased she should take such a step without their cognizance. It is true, I did promise to send it to the Bishop, and should have done so, had you gone by my directions; but as you preferred the advice of other people to *mine*, I was at liberty to make use of it, or not, as necessity might require it. As the case now stands, that note is quite done with; because it is not wanted to convince either his Lordship or myself as to your innocence, respecting the report raised in prejudice against your moral character. I intend coming to Wednesbury on Saturday the 28th instant, when I shall pay you the money due for your care of that Curacy; and on the next day take the whole of the duty upon myself. I have got another gentleman to succeed you in the Curacy, and am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. B. HADEN.

*Tettenhall, Sept. 20, 1805.**Illustrations of Letter XII*

OF this Miss Baylay, I shall say as little as I can help. The note she sent me, was intended to convince the Bishop, that I was walking with *her* at the time I was accused of being in company with a woman of *ill-fame*. I

was walking with Miss Baylay, and by her own appointment. During my long intercourse with her, I behaved with the greatest delicacy. And for two reasons, because I felt myself equally as ill disposed to violate the honor of a man and the duties of a Christian, as I sincerely respected and admired her.

My Rev. Vicar seems hurt at my preferring the advice of *other* people to *his*. He must allude, I am sure, to Mr. Crowther and his brother, respectable attornies. I refer the reader to letter 2d, where he will see what reason Mr. Haden has to be offended on that head.

Mr. Haden says, Miss Baylay's note is not wanted to convince the Bishop of my innocence.—Until he proves that he has been assured by the Bishop, that he thinks I am not guilty of the charge alledged against me, he must stand condemned by every honourable man. In his letter from Saddington, he states his doubts, whether *that note*, and *all* my other evidence, would convince the Bishop of my *innocence*.

The evidence I forwarded to Mr. H. he has withheld; and he knows, that the Bishop has no information on the subject, but from myself. And yet that note is not wanted. The fact is, Mr Haden finds himself foiled; and therefore, as the note can be of no service to him, he is determined no one else shall benefit by it. My other observations on this letter, I communicated to him on the day I received it.—They are in the letter that follows:—

LETTER XIII.

REV. SIR,

I WROTE to you this morning, requesting you would

return me the note I received from Miss Baylay. I find by your letter just now received, that you are determined to keep it, in defiance of every rule of right. You confess you did promise to send it to the Bishop.—Now I am sure you never intended to fulfil this promise, any more than many other promises you have disgracefully broken. And how ridiculous is the reason you assign for breaking this! You say, if I had gone by your directions, you would have sent it; but as I prefer the advice of other people to your's, you are at liberty to make use of it, or not, as necessity might require it: and, as the case now stands, that note is quite done with, because it is not wanted to convince either his Lordship or yourself, as to my innocence, respecting the report raised in prejudice against my moral character. How much of falsehood and nonsense is here! You would not send the note in question, because I did not go by your direction. This is false:—I did go by your direction, and obtained the signatures of almost all the parish to my petition; for which you are greatly sorry and alarmed. Your commanding officers, in one department of the church, wish me to be removed, and you have not courage to resist their wishes. You thought they would have influence enough to prevent my success in applying to the parish. And therefore you did not scruple giving me the direction I have followed, and in which I have succeeded. As to the next assertion of your's, I confess there is scarcely a man in the neighbourhood, whose counsel I esteem less valuable than your's. Weak men sometimes direct well.—You directed me well. But, Sir, I am my own counsellor in most things; and instead of considering myself *bound* to act in all things by your direction, and bow to your opinion, I shall consider myself degraded and injured, by having my

ability, or integrity, put on a level with your's. But you build too much, Mr. Haden, on your imaginary greatness, when you say, that, because I will presume to think and act for myself, I can have no claims on your promise. You are at liberty, you say, to make use, or not, of the note in question, as necessity might require it; and this liberty you say, I have given you, *O mirabili dictu*, by preferring wisdom to folly. The next extraordinary paragraph in your letter is that in which you declare Miss Baylay's note not to be wanted to convince his Lordship of my innocence, respecting the report raised in prejudice against my moral character. By what spirit of divination did you discover this? It was a lying spirit that told you so; I do want it to convince his Lordship, (i. e.) the Bishop, of my innocence; and I want also to convince another great man of my innocence. And, sir, I want also to insert a copy of it in a pamphlet I am preparing for the press. You will therefore, I hope, not take the unpardonable liberty, you say you are about to take; I hope you will not destroy the important evidence contained in Miss Baylay's note. If she really has desired you to do so, have compassion on her, and do it not; for if you do, she must explain her motives to the world; which, I fancy she will much dislike, &c. &c,

[Here I shall omit a few lines, which, Mr. Haden in mercy to Miss Baylay has sufficiently proclaimed to the world, by shewing the letter in every company he had access to.]

Your assistance on Sunday the 29th. instant, I shall accept; and when I am disposed to relinquish my charge of this parish, I will give you proper notice of my intention. But sir, I have no such intention at present; and should you be disposed continually to favour the inclinations of

those worthless men, who wish me hence, you will give me proper notice to leave your Curacy. And, pray sir, do not imagine that I am so weak, as to be shouldered out at a moment's notice, or coward enough to suffer any man to rob me of my rights.

I remain, Rev. Sir, your's, &c.

JOHN ATCHERLEY.

Wednesbury, Sept. 20, 1805.

P. S. Mr. Haden will be pleased to look at the dates of letters; by doing so, it will appear that he directed me to obtain the signatures of the inhabitants on the 21st day of June, which was after he received my packet from Mr. Watkins.

Mr. Haden will also be pleased to inform me what day next week will be most agreeable to him to attend some neighbouring clergymen, to investigate charges against me, and against himself.

TO this letter I waited for an answer with the utmost anxiety and impatience from day to day, and still no answer, nor any hopes of any. And why? Surely my request was that which the lowest amongst the sons of men might have made, and been allowed in a Christian land. But this was not to be granted. I was not to be heard in my defence; the *sentence* was already passed, and I was in the most despotic manner to be driven from my home, and from myself without a character, but that of an abandoned wretch, fit only for the company of the profane.

O Tempora! O Mores! To this however I could not tamely accede; and recollecting that I still lived in a land that boasted of civil laws, as pure and as equal, as its

women are virtuous and fair, I resolved still to continue exercising the duties of my office, as Curate of Wednesbury, till my conduct was investigated, or I was regularly discharged from the Cure, and I shall insist on one or both being done; for, if Mr. Haden still remains inflexible to all that is Christian, and all that is humane, I shall call a meeting myself, and of such men as have too sincere a regard for truth to act contrary to its dictates; and I hereby solemnly declare, that whatever may be the result, the whole shall be published, to the world.

If I am a guilty culprit, I call not for mercy, but if I am innocent, why should I be suffered to sink under the hand of tyranny and oppression? And by whom?—A brother clergyman, apparently associated with an impious crew, who seem to delight in the butchery of clerical reputation, and would gladly vilify the church, by wantonly calumniating one of its innocent, unoffending ministers, whose sole crime has been a conscientious discharge of his duty. With this determination then to continue the Cure of Wednesbury, I intended, as usual, on Sunday the 6th of October, when I met Mr. Haden in the vestry, I delicately asked him, if he intended taking the *whole* of the duty? he answered in the affirmative. I made my bow and retired.

On the Sunday following, I again attended, and met with a gentleman there, a *real gentleman*, a Mr. Cormouls, just as he was about to begin the Service; I told him I was the Curate of Wednesbury, and that I was disposed to take the duty myself. He replied, I came here to oblige Mr. Haden, but if you demand the desk, of course I shall not resist. I told him I did demand the desk. We walked together into the vestry, and after some conversation there, we agreed that he should preach, and I should read

the prayers. It was so, and after the morning Service, the clerk gave notice, that Mr. Haden had discharged me from the Curacy of Wednesbury, and requested the inhabitants would apply to *him* for any occasional duty that might be wanted.

In reply I begged leave to assure *that congregation*, that I was not discharged from my trust of the parish of Wednesbury; that I had received no *proper notice* to resign it, and therefore I was determined to retain it. In the afternoon I took the whole duty myself, my coadjutor in the morning not being present. After the Service I was again surprised by the notice the clerk read in the morning.

I addressed the congregation, as follows :

I am sorry the Church should become a theatre for the discussion of any matter unconnected with the important duties of our sacred office. I am sorry this Church should become a theatre to be trod by *falsehood*, a theatre for contention and contradiction; but it is so, and I am very sorry that I must contradict *that* which you have just now heard from the mouth of this my clerk.

I am not *discharged* by Mr. Haden, I have had no proper *notice* to leave the Curacy. Besides, I am here by agreement with Mr. Haden for twelve months, which agreement he has declared he *would not suffer me* to violate. And add to this, I am here by the permission of the Bishop, who has written to Mr. Haden on the subject; and I will tell you what he said.

It is by no means my wish that Mr. Atcherley should be removed from the situation he now holds in Wednesbury, unless something be proved against him.

These are the words of the Bishop, and on them I think I may securely rest, and continue to exercise my duty amongst you, in a manner *that I hope will be approved of* in heaven.

HERE then, I shall beg leave to close my Narrative and my Pamphlet, leaving the world to ruminate on the conduct of all the parties; and to judge whether I am well or ill treated; whether mine is not the treatment which too many Curates receive; whether that treatment does not produce the apathy we mourn in them, and whether this apathy would continue, if there was an honorable tribunal to which they might appeal. And lastly, whether they would not curb the licentiousness of those people by whom they are at present governed. For these suffering people, I hope the remedy I have mentioned in the address will be adopted;—and, with respect to myself, I most sincerely hope, that amongst the number of those who may read the preceding chain of facts, there will be some one found amongst the literati honorable enough to take up his pen in the cause of truth, and rescue innocence from the bitter invectives of malice, and the unfeeling gripe of premeditated revenge,—such as would put even the darkest part of India to the blush; nay, such as would make tyranny itself, at the very moment of executing vengeance, draw in its iron hand, and say—Am I a man about to do such things? Surely not—the most savage tenants of the forest are kinder to each other.

Heartily tired with contention, and especially with a man on whom reason seems to have no power, but interest to attain the sole dominion, I shall only further trouble the reader with a copy of the notice I sent Mr. Haden to quit his Curacy, and to which it is my intention most scrupulously to adhere.

REV. SIR,

A PIECE of new preferment, obliges me, however painful the task, to give you notice to quit the Curacy of Wednesbury, after the expiration of six months, from the 25th day of next December. But, as it is probable my services may be wanted sooner elsewhere, and if it is congenial to your wishes, you will oblige me by permitting me to quit the said Curacy after the expiration of three months from the date above mentioned.

JOHN ATCHERLEY.

Before I take my final leave, I beg to assure you, I shall ever bear in my mind, a strong sense of that disposition which you have uniformly evinced, towards rendering me obnoxious to the people whom you authorized me to instruct.

Nov 2, 1805.



HERE I did intend to close my narrative and my pamphlet, but finding Mr. Haden actively employed in misrepresenting my behaviour, during my unfortunate connection with him, I thought it my duty once more to request the Bishop's interference, which I did, and informed him, that any of the neighbouring Clergy of *respectability* would investigate the business which had already caused him so much trouble.—The Bishop was now at Durham. Before I obtained his answer, I was informed by one of the Churchwardens, that he was authorised by my Vicar to say, that I had taken liberties with the Bishop's name:—that it was the Bishop's wish for me to be removed; and that he was in possession of a copy

of a letter, written by his Lordship, to this effect. Upon this I addressed the Bishop again, and informed him what steps Mr. Haden was taking to ruin my character; and I also mentioned his improper conduct on the Sunday the Sermon was preached for the benefit of the Sunday Schools. I received the two following letters in answer to my two last:

Durham, Nov. 2, 1805.

REV. SIR,

Mr. HADEN has signified to me, that he intends immediately to send me a formal nomination of a Curate, in order that he may be licensed to Wednesbury. Upon receiving this nomination, it will become my duty to grant my license, as I understand, that the Clerk to be nominated is of unexceptionable character. If the Clergy will accept Curacies without a license, they can have no security as to continuance in their Cures. And you remember that I mentioned this to you long ago. I am truly sorry for your own sake, that you have resisted so long, and take the liberty of advising you not to do so any longer. There are many Curacies to be obtained, in different parts of the kingdom, as you will find upon enquiry; and if your resistance upon this occasion be known and much talked of, you may depend upon it, that you will experience more difficulty in obtaining a Curacy. I give you this advice, as the best that presents itself to me.—Act upon it discreetly, as if it proceeded from your own sense of the moderations that becomes a Clergyman.—Lay aside all resentment and retire.

I am, Rev. Sir,

Your faithful humble servant,

J. LICHFIELD & COVENTRY.

Durham, Nov. 11, 1805.

REV. SIR,

I HAVE stated to you several times, that I cannot give any Clergyman *security* in his Curacy, who has not been licensed by me, in consequence of a nomination by the incumbent of the parish.—And it appears to be my duty to acquiesce in licensing a Curate to Wednesbury, upon a nomination from Mr. Haden, provided there should be no objection to the person that may be so nominated.

You should not have engaged in the Curacy without a license.

I am, Rev. Sir,

Your faithful humble servant,

J. LICHFIELD & COVENTRY.

Observations.

THIS letter evidently shews that the Bishop is sensible of the persecution I suffer, and that he is much inclined to protect me were it in his power, on *legal* grounds. It shews, also, how much a Court of Equity, and of Honour, is wanted in the Church. “You should not have engaged in the Curacy without a license.”—What does this imply? A sincere sorrow of heart, that I am not within the limits of his jurisdiction, or—I forbear to anticipate what his Lordship thinks of my antagonist—perhaps *well*—perhaps ill. I must, however, observe, that few Curates are licensed to their Cures, *prior* to the visitation following the time

they take possession; at which period it was not even hinted that I ought to do so, or, I certainly should. And why was it not hinted? Why—an evil spirit was busy disseminating its poison through the hearts of my enemies, which must be gratified.

To the Bishop's last two letters I replied as follows:

MY LORD,

IMMEDIATELY upon the receipt of your letter, dated Nov. 2, I was determined to act upon that advice, to which I have ever paid the most profound regard. Though I cannot help thinking, my Lord, that had your advice been directed to Mr. Haden, not to have resisted me in continuing the duty of Wednesbury to the end of the term he had engaged me for, (viz.) till Christmas, perhaps it would have been then equally as well as just; and, therefore, I cannot help informing your Lordship, that, as, nothing has, or can be proved against me, as an immoral man, (for had this been the case, I should have been persecuted indeed), I am determined to continue here till the expiration of the term above-mentioned, and then to enforce the payment of my salary; for I am well aware, that the law, to which however unwilling I am to appeal, will protect me; though those, whose business it is to be the guardians of innocence, have deserted me. You say, my Lord, that, because I am not licensed, you cannot protect me; but though this should be the case, yet the having or not having a license, does not invalidate my right to the salary agreed for, and duly earned. You know, my Lord, that I am ordained, and you heard also my name regularly called over, at your Lordship's visitation, as Curate of Wednesbury.—Which circumstance, independent of a

license, certainly made me one of your family, and, consequently put me under your Lordship's protection, so far, at least, as to shield my character from suffering wrongfully, from the arrows of unfounded malice, and premeditated revenge. I have said it, and I say it again, my Lord, that it is in your power to have my business investigated, either by yourself or by deputy, and it is so much the more your Lordship's duty to do so, as you are assured of the undue,—yea, the unpardonable liberty Mr. Haden took in representing your Lordship to have *said* and *done* what you never thought of. Who, in your Lordship's diocese beside, and especially amongst the Clergy, would have presumed to have acted so?—But if seems that *vice*, in gigantic strides, may pass unheeded by, be uninvestigated, and consequently unpunished; whilst *virtue* is dragged to an *ipse dixit* tribunal; is condemned unheard, and left to seek consolation in despair, and that happiness in a partial world, which misery gives, and is the portion of a broken heart. You say, my Lord, that you are truly sorry for my own sake that I have resisted so long, &c. (Refer to the Bishop's letter, Nov. 2.) What am I to conclude from this? Am I to consider it as a negative dismissal from your Lordship's diocese, so that I may still have the chance of surreptitiously getting into another, where your Lordship would not follow me? But surely, my Lord, if I am not fit for your Lordship's diocese, it would be unworthy of you to suffer me to officiate in that of another. May I once more request, then, my Lord, that you will of your great goodness vouchsafe me a candid hearing either by yourself, or by some other discerning Clergyman of your Lordship's diocese? by which means alone, I am well aware you can be convinced whether I have acted

discreetly, or with that *moderation* which becomes a Clergyman. If your Lordship persists in refusing me this fair and candid request, I must seek consolation elsewhere. For, my Lord, there is an eye above, that sees the heart of man, which no doubt views my case, and will one day give me that justice which I in vain seek for on earth.

I am, my Lord, however ill treated in this vile place, “where sinners of either sex are safe, transgress what laws they may,” with all due deference,

Your Lordship’s most obedient servant,

JOHN ATCHERLEY.

P. S. Your Lordship will recollect I took possession of this Curacy at a time, when it was impossible for me to be licensed, and if I had not taken possession when I did, the Church would have been unserved.

The following is the Bishop’s answer:

Durham, Nov. 18, 1805.

SO far from refusing to see you, I wish to have an opportunity of speaking to you on the subject of your letter. I propose to be at Eccleshall Castle on the 23d of this month, and shall be ready to see you on Tuesday the 26th of this month, at eleven o’clock in the forenoon. However, I think it proper to premise, that, in my opinion it is impossible for you to retain the Curacy of Wednesbury against Mr. Haden’s inclination; and that those persons are not your friends, who advise you to attempt it.

I am, Rev. Sir,

Your faithful humble servant,

J. LICHFIELD & COVENTRY.

When I mentioned that there were many Curacies to be obtained in different parts of the kingdom, I by no means meant to except my diocese, or to exclude you from it.

AT the Bishop's request I went to Eccleshall, and the conversation turned upon what was the best method of settling the dispute in question. The Bishop's ideas were, that it would be much better and more satisfactorily terminated by some neighbouring clergy, than if carried into a court of law. Several clergymen were therefore mentioned, one of whom was the Vicar of Penn, and to whom the Bishop wrote the next day, requesting he would have the goodness to use his best endeavours to bring the business, between the contending parties, to an amicable conclusion. In obedience to which, Mr. Pape immediately wrote to me, mentioning, in the politest way possible, his Lordship's wish. I did not wait a moment, but went directly to Penn, and gave Mr. Pape the following answer:—

“That I was very happy to find myself in such hands, and consequently should readily and most willingly accede to any proposition he should make.”

Mr. Pape was much pleased, and wrote to Mr. Haden, to whom he communicated the Bishop's pleasure in the same manner he had done to me; but to which he did not, after waiting some days, receive the same kind of satisfactory answer; and on its being read to me, I felt much mortified; because it compelled me, as it were, to

resume that determination of appealing to the world, which I should have gladly laid aside; could but my *conduct* have been investigated, and my innocence established in any other way.

POSTSCRIPT.



THAT my resentment of the wrongs I have sustained has not carried me beyond the boundaries of Christian forbearance and moderation, has, I most ardently hope, appeared in the foregoing sheets. And I cannot but think, that there exists no one on earth, who, having read my little Narrative, will say that I have been actuated by any spirit at all allied to revenge. My design in appealing to the world is to vindicate my character against the attacks of insatiate malice, and its confederate forces.

This appeal I certainly should not make, but for the reason I have just stated; and to counteract their ever active exertions I have no other resource. Every other method that prudence could dictate has been unsuccessfully attempted, though recommended by the Bishop of this Diocese; who, I am sorry to say it, after I had put my pamphlet into the hands my printer, strongly, advised me not to publish it. To his Lordship's advice I certainly should have acceded, had he complied with the fair proposals contained in the following letter:

MY LORD,

Wednesbury, Jan. 3, 1806.

INCLOSED I forward a copy of two of your Lordship's letters* which I intend to publish; and, in reply to your last, I can only assure your Lordship, that to act

conformably to your desire, is always the first wish of my heart.

You strongly advise me then against the publication of my Pamphlet; this, my Lord, shall be complied with on the following conditions, viz.

Your Lordship must insist on Mr. Haden's submitting to a public investigation of his and my conduct in the late disagreeable altercations, before at least five respectable clergymen; one chosen by your Lordship, two by him, and two by me; and whose decision shall be published in three different papers, viz. two provincial and one London.

This agreed to, I shall immediately withdraw my intended publication, and to the result I shall bow obedience.

This is a request, that, my Lord, for many, reasons I have a right to demand; and more particularly, because I not only feel my honour wounded, but my character aspersed in such a way, that I shall certainly lose a situation, I thought myself secure in of 120*l.* per annum, by officious misrepresentations of my conduct to the inhabitants; amongst whom, I did hope, it would have been my lot to have quietly resided for many years.

I need not tell you, my Lord, to whom I am indebted for this second exertion to ruin me most effectually; you do know, or at least ought to know the man: and I think it high time your Lordship should put a stop to, or at least check, the current of his malevolence.

I am, my Lord, &c.

JOHN ATCHERLEY.

This electronic version of the Rev John Atcherley's pamphlet was produced for the Atcherley.org.uk website in 2016, using photographs of the original work (held at the [William Salt Library](#) in Stafford) kindly taken by Martin James of [Family Heritage Search](#) which were converted to text using [ABBYY FineReader](#) before being corrected. Although the general layout of the original has been broadly followed, it is not identical and this version is 44 pages in length (in addition to the title and dedication pages) compared with the original's 48. The errata from the original have been incorporated into this version, and typographical errors found in the original have also been corrected. In addition, spaces between words and punctuation (such as semi-colons and question marks) have been removed. Otherwise, spelling and punctuation remain as in the original pamphlet.