

Letters from Tanner MSS.

No. 131. *Bodleian Library.*

Contributed by Rev. W. HARRY ARKWRIGHT.



HO. BROWNE, Archdeacon of Derby, was Vicar of Wirksworth from 1662 to 1689, when he was deprived for refusing the Oath of Allegiance to William III. He was also Vicar of Ashbourne from 1660 to 1669. He was probably appointed to the Archdeaconry of Derby in the latter year.

Archbishop Sheldon was a Derbyshire man.

Bodleian—Tanner MSS. 131.

Page 13.—[Part of letter from John Hackett, Bishop of Lichfield, to Thomas Browne, enclosed by Browne in his letter to the Archbishop.]

“Our Church worke is neither at a stand, nor insues fast, but what is finisht is verie sightly. And within y^e walls nothing more pleasing to God & man, then the singing of a coñon psalm after Sermon, w^{ch} hath charmed the whole auditory to take all y^e praiers & the blessing with them: A reformation that my hart reioyceth in. This is no innovation, it was so in this Church *ab antiquo*, & but of late omitted. It is so in S^t Pauls London to this hower, it was so in Westm: Abby from B^p. Andrewes to B^p. Williams time. But if you goe higher to the primitiue Church for the first 500 years the coñon people did partake at all times in singing the psalm:

it was not omitted anie where, till the midle age, when Latin seruice came in. J dare stake an hundred of the gentry to one, & most learned Clerkes against yours in this case. J partly guess who hath complained to you, by excepting at rithme. Why? are there not twentie anthemns in our Church in rithm? Js that antique hymn of Gregory the great the worse for the rithm, Hora mortis meus flatus intret Jesu tuū latus? O M^r Brown knock at your own conscience, & feed lambs as wel as sheep: let babes haue milke, as wel as men strong meat, gain souls to X^t by all meanes that are lawfull. Too much rigidness brought our late confusions upon us. Both psalm & anthem may do wel in seueral kinds: & let mee inform you, a psalm in meter is more anchient then an antheime in y^e Church of England. The meter-psalms were allowed under K. Ed: the 6 his priuie seale (proued in Parliament); no antheime was set till y^e 10 of 2 Eliz: by D^r Tye, & then by Tallis. Custom took them up, but no antheime was spoken of in Coñon praier booke or Canon, till within these three yeares, & now it giues no coñand, but permission. In your conclusion you say the Deane should haue helpt the departing of the people before the Blessing by discipline. He can not. For if the people of the cittie will neither come to praiers or sermon to the Cathedral, they can not be prevented. Thus I have giuen you large satisfaction. And if J an old Veteranus do not know how to gouern a Church better then one or two malecontents, who are dissatisfied, & quarel at eury thing, God help mee. So J impart my blessing unto you & rest

Your louing brother & assured Frend

JOH: LICH: & COUEN:

Lichfield

April 14

1666

Page 14.—[Letter from Thomas Browne to Archbishop Sheldon enclosing the last.]

May it please Your Grace

My hearty thanks to God, & reioycing for Your Grace's Preservation in the midst of Contagion are inexpressible: Especially considering, how much the Welfare of this Church depends upon Your Grace's. Very unwilling I am to trouble Your Grace with impertinent Letters; but when the Affaires of the Church require it. And now J think it my duty to let Your Grace know, as followeth.

Our B^p in the Absence of the Deane* hath appointed a Coñon Psalme to be sung in the Cathedrall after Sermon instead of y^e Accustomed Anthem. This (J can assure Your Grace) gives great Offence; not onely to the Church's best friends at Lichfield, but also to many both of y^e Gentry & Clergy in this Diocese, especially in this County. Whereupon J presumed (holding a Place in that Church, w^{ch} gives me an Intereste in y^e Ordering of God's Service there) to write to His Lo^p † in these very words.

“Jt is some trouble to me that J cannot in pson tender my Duty to your Lo^p as J hoped to have done: as for other ends, so especially to have discoursed with your Lo^p about that Jnnovation (J hear of) in our Cathedral Service at Lichfield, of singing a Psalme in Rithm instead of the Anthem after Sermon. J can say it gives much offence in these parts to many both of the Gentry & Clergy, who have been informed of it. J make no Question, if it be done by your Lo^p's Order, you had some Prudential motive thervnto: But if that be it, wherof I am told, That the Townes-people might therby be allowed to Stay vntill the conclusion of the Service; The exercise of Ecclesiastical Discipline would be (methinks) a more Regular way, & perhaps more effectuell too, if Our Deane would, as his Duty is, take care of it. J hope your Lo^p will not be offended that I have revealed my thoughts in y^s matter.”

* Of Lichfield.

† The Bp. of Lichfield.

To this his Lo^p was pleased to answer, as is contained in this inclosed part of His Lo^p's owne Lette. Our Church work &c : (see p. 84).

And his Lo^p having sent a Co^mission to me to call together the Principal Clergy to advance moneys for His Ma^{ties} service upon y^e late Act of Parliam^t (w^{ch} J shall promote with all diligence), J made bold (desiring His Lo^p's farther directions in the aforesaid Busines) to adde these words.

“J shal make what speed J can to Lichfield, after J have pformed what your Lo^p may iustly expect from mee in this County; And then I shall begg Your Lo^{ps} Patience & Leave, that I may say somewhat to the last part of your Lo^p's Letter, for my Satisfaction, though not for my Conviction. For though J may not in every thing judge or opine with my superiors; yet have J learned to Acquiesce, in submitting (to) their better Judgments, & obeying all their Lawfull Co^mands. This Lesson, if the Schismatically-disposed at Lichfeild, would have learned: there would have been little need (in my poore judgm^t) of gratifying them with the Late Alteration in our Cathedral Service. But I will say no more till I see yo^r Lo^{pp} nor would I have said any thing at all: but that J have been told, the Ordering of Divine Service in our Cathedral doth somewhat concern me, by the Place I hold in that Church. And now, my good Lord, I beseech you, for Christ his sake, not to bee offended at mee for what I have (it may be) too boldly scribed to your Lo^p.”

This is y^e whole concerning this matter, which I submit, my most Honoured Lord, to Your Grace's Censure; And J humbly Begg Your Grace's Counsell & direction. This Innovation in God's service in a Cathedrall (especially considering the nature of the Thing, & temper of y^e psons, for whose sake it is done, & the time & place) in my iudgment, ought not to bee. And yet my Reverence to a B^p is such, that I dread to oppose; not for want of Courage, but out of a True sense of Duty. But it is not difficult to fore-see How nauseous Church-musick and Co^mon prayer will again

become, if Hopkins & Sternhold's Rithms may justle out our Anthem, & a long Pulpit-prayer seduce the Devotions of the coñon people.

J am very sensible my good Lord, what a great Trouble J give you^r Grace by this tedious Scribe: But with hope J humbly begg pardon, &, praying for your Grace's good Health, subscribe, as J really am,

Most Rev^d. ffather,
your Grace's
most humble & most dutifull
Serv^t & Creature
Thom Browne.

Wirksworth

Apr. 18.

1666.

This, the foregoing letter, is endorsed on the back:

"Archdeacon of Derby—Browne Ap 18. 1666.

Conc. a Coñon + sung aft. serm in y^e Cathedr. & a long praier before it. The Dean neglects Discipline."

Addressed:

"To the most Reverend Father in God Gilbert L^o:
Arch-B^p of Canterbury His Grace at His Grace's Palace
of Lambeth

These,
most humbly p'sent.

Lambeth London.

Page 16.—[A letter from the Bishop of Lichfield to Archb^p Sheldon.]

Most reuerend Father, and my verie good Lord,

J haue been a truant for a fortnight in Bedfordshire, to see my lately married daughter at her own house, w^{ch} was a kindness, though a troublesome one to my old age, due to a child that allwaies deserued wel.

Upon my return to Lichfield, J betoke mee to examin what monies my instruments had gathered in my absence, from the

Clergy, for the loan to set out his Ma^{ties} roial nauie (w^{ch} the Lord prosper). And this is the account w^{ch} J can giue to your Grace. The Diuines of Staffordshire haue subscribed about 320^l, but they keep not touch for dayes of payment. They are poore & dull. They of Derbyshire are wel put on by M^r. Brown, my comissioner, their subscription is 340^l, *præter, propter*. None of them richer then *Dr. Boilston*, and none more vnwilling to let goe anie thing. He is vnsound. The Clergy of my part of Warwickshire haue subscribed 214^l. J am compelled to send out apparitors to bring it in. But for my share in Shropshire J know not what to say. The Archdeacon on the 4th of May sent mee word he would lend an 100^l (w^{ch} he may wel do) since that time J haue sent letters, and messengers after them vnto him, & can obtain no answere from him. He hath a rich Clergy to deal with: J know not how he will speed: but certainly the worse, because he is so tardy. J expect a thousand pounds will be advanced: if it bee more, the more will be my comfort. This information is due unto your Grace, with my thrice euery day deuoted praiers for your health, safetie, and long continuance, the fruition whereof will bee a larger comfort to

Your Graces most deuoted beadsman
and obliged suffragan

Joh: Lich: & Couen:

Lichfield
Jun: ult^o.
1666.

Addressed:

To the most Reuerend Father in God
Gilbert Lord Archbishop of Canterbury

His grace

at the Palace of Lambeth
these most humbly
present.