



Pray God prosper the Work of your Hands, & grant you may see it decently finished, & well supplied. Your own and the Inhabitants Subscription seem to be a good Fund to begin upon. I doubt not but your Neighbours will all help. Tho' Fenny is so far off, & we have so many Calls in this large Diocese (towards every one of which I give my Mite) you must let me come in among the Rest of your Friends for a few Bricks, or a Peice of Timber.

The old chapel seems to have had Parochial Rights; as Burial, (by the Skulls found there) & Wills & so probably Baptism, & perhaps the other Sacrament; which, you know, all Chapels of Ease had not.

You declared your Mind so fully to Dr. W.\* about this Affair, when you gave him the Living, that one would think, he should now make no Scruple of generously coming into all Measures of rebuilding & making it usefull: unless his narrow Soul be afraid of hurting his Pocket—& being in a better Capacity to do Good to the souls of his Parishioners; the Care of whom, was so solemnly at Institution committed to him.

The Workmen about this Chapel will, I dare say, divert you more than any other undertaking of what kind soever: tho' you must not pretend to get above Ground 'till after the Winter is over.

I can't tell what Pretences of unavoidable necessity, by Reason of Weakness of Limbs, Lowness of Voice, or some such Cause might be alledged & urged in Excuse of Dr. W's Irregularity in sitting & preaching in a Chair: but sure it could be no Fault for you to desire the Ch: wden to present the Dilapidations of the Rectory House: nor need the Ch wden been ashamed to own it, or the accused Person to reap any Benefit by it. 'Tis your Duty, as every good Patron's, to see that the Chancel, Manses, Barns, &c: upon their respective Rectories, be kept in good & decent Repair. The Patron is, in this Respect, a Trustee for his Church, as well as the Ordinary—& has a Right to promote

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\* See Vol. VIII., p. 394, for reference to Dr. Wells, Rector of Bletchley.

the office, and prosecute his Clerk, if he be faulty, & tardy therein: That Part therefore of Proceedings I can't account for. I am still willing to hope, that Bp. Gibson intermeddles not at all now in your Affair; (if he ever did;) for he has enough, I believe, to do within his own Jurisdiction, & among the Courtiers. I have not had one Line from him all this Summer, since I saw him as I came thro' London from Oxford, in the latter end of April.

I think in one of your former, you were at a Loss for Kelloe & Latham Improvements in Epatu Dunelm. I believe you may depend upon the former's being appropriate to Shirburn Hospital, & the latter to Staindrop College.

Pray, good Friend, take Care of your own bad Cold, & favour yourself as much this winter, as is consistent with freeing your Mind from a lonely melancholy House. A Call to London; Converse among our Friends at the Miter: any Thing but Law and Lawyers, which & who, are so uncertain, that I dread it myself now for my Br. tho' his Cause is, as far as I can inform myself, certainly good; & is of that Consequence to his settlement in the World, as to deserve struggling for: & last year I paid a 50£ Legacy, which Sir Nath: Lloyd gave me under his Hand I was not obliged to, rather than dance thro' a Chancery Suit.

You were too sanguine in expecting that your Friend T. T. should be Dean here: it is what would have been more acceptable, & more advantageous to me, than any of the 2<sup>d</sup>. Rate or middling Bishopricks: it being consistent with every Thing I had else. And indeed, Bp. Trimnell, after he was nominated to Winchester, the last Time he was in my Study, after he had, over a Bottle of Champaign, opened himself very freely about the Designation: for the great Promotions in the Church, most of which have happened accordingly, of his own Accord, said, "And, Mr. Chancellor, you are not, nor shall be forgotten; the Deanery of Norwich is thought of for you." And when I went up to London, in the December following, about the Arch-deaconry, it seemed to be a Scheme settled: so that

last year, about this Time, when Dean Pr: was very ill, I writ up to the Bp. of London about it; who came very heartily into it, & advised me to write to Lord T. & Mr. W. as I did. (the only Preferment I ever solicited; nor had that, if it had not been first mentioned to me:) But I had a Letter by the next Post from Mr. W. himself (Lord T. being beyond Sea) that that Dignity was before determined for a particular Friend of L<sup>d</sup>. T. but with mighty strong Assurances, that I should be early thought of for something better. This is what I mention not; scarce to any one; as looking upon it as Court Holy Water: nor expecting any Thought will be of me, 'till all the Eaton, & King's College People are served. Tho' I have no Reason to think them my Enemies, yet they have others they have more Esteem for. So that now, upon this last Illness of the Dean, I wrote about it only as common News, being told, as I went to Oxford, who would be the successor: one Dr. Cole, who was Fellow of Kings—went Chaplain with L<sup>d</sup>. T. to the Gertruydenburgh Treaty, & while he was Ambassador at the Hague—has since been Minister of Wisbich—& within these 2 or 3 years minister of L<sup>d</sup>. Townsend's own Town of Rainham—a good Sort of Man; but an Invalid; or at least hipp'd.

Dean Pr: has left his Son a 1000£ & almost. But living nor dying gave one Groat to Ch: Ch:— He was in some Respects pretty well in his Life Time—but has left nothing, as I hear of yet, in his Will to any charitable use.

Adieu most heartily T. T.

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*(Letter from Dr. Benson on his being nominated  
Bishop.)*

The following original Letter was lent to me by Mr. Gibberd of Whaddon: It is sealed with the Bps. Arms on red wax, viz.: Qrty 1 & 4 on a Cheveron 3 Crosses patè for Benson. 2<sup>d</sup>. an Eagle displayed. 3<sup>d</sup>. on 2

Bars, 3 Crosses patè fichè. Post Mark is 26. De: wrote in a very good plain Hand:—

*To Browne Willis Esqr. at Whaddon Hall near Fenny-Stratford, Bucks.*

*London. Dec: 26. 1734.*

DEAR SIR,

I shall strangely surprize you, tho' not so much as myself was surpris'd with the News, when I acquaint you, that I am, after all, to be a Bishop. My Br: Secker & I were but on Tuesday Morning with Sir R. Walpole, to return our Thanks, the one for being, the other for not being a Bishop: & he repeated to me the Promise, he had, in a Letter, before sent me an Account of, that his Majesty would give me the first Deanery I desired. Before 3 o'clock that afternoon I was sent for, & acquainted, that Dr. Mawson had desired to be excused taking the Bishoprick: that I was nominated to the Bishoprick of Gloucester; & the Person who delivered me the Message, said, he had engaged I should accep<sup>t</sup> it: which accordingly I have since done. I shall only say, that as this has, in so extraordinary, & I trust, Providential a Manner, come to me, I trust the same good Providence will enable me to do the Duty of it. I know my own Inability; & the only Thing I can say of myself, is, that I have a Heart sincerely and zealously disposed to do all the Good in the Station, which I may be capable of doing.

You may remember that I did in my last desire, that you would send Word in your next, what Age Cousin Jack is. The B. of London's Advice is, that I should resign Blechley a Day or two before the Confirmation, which would give the Crown a Title to it; & that then your six months, & the B. of Lincoln's six months, (to whom he would have you write, & whom I am persuaded in this Case you may safely trust) will serve to keep the Living vacant 'till your Son comes of Age: and then there will be a year's Profits lying to furnish his House & buy himself Books. Or if you should determine rather to fill it up, I will answer for Mr. Clarke, that he shall resign it again.

The B. of London desired his Service to you, and

said, you might trust him that your Living should not fall into the Hands of the Crown. The Bp. has been so kind in this Affair, & expressed so hearty a zeal, to oblige & serve you, that I think you should write a short Letter to him, to thank him, upon this Account; tho' you may blame him at the same Time for the too great Kindness & Friendship he has shewed to me, in being determined to bring me on the Bench.

Pray make my Compliments to all your Family, & believe me most sincerely to be, Dear Sir,

Your most affectionate obliged obedient  
Kinsman and Servant

M. BENSON.

*(Original Letters by Bp. Benson, of Gloucester).*

The 2 following Letters were given to me many years ago by Mr. Browne Willis:—

*To the rev: Mr. Willis Rector of Blechley near Fenny Stratford, Bucks.*

*Free, M. Gloucester—Post Mark. Ja: 20.—Seal of red wax, Azure, 2 Keys en Saltire, wards in Cheif, impaling, on a Cheveron 3 Crosses patée. Ensigned by a Mitre.*

*St. James's Street Jan: 20, 1735-6.*

DEAR SIR,

It is with great Satisfaction that I give you Joy of being in Possession of the Rectory of Blechley, & I may, I am persuaded, give the Parish Joy upon this occasion. They will have the Happiness of having you constantly resident among them; & you, by this Means, will have opportunity of doing a great Deal more Good than I was able to do among them.

As your good Father was so kind as to put the Living into my Hands, 'til you were of Age to take it, I thought it my Duty to endeavour to discharge the Trust he reposed in me in the best manner I was capable of. And your Behaviour will, I am sure, be such, as to give him the greatest comfort, when he sees the Care you take of your charge, & when he hears the Example his Son sets to the other clergy in the neighbourhood.

I hope, & design to wait upon you at Blechley; but it is not in my Power to fix the Time yet of doing it. My Service waits upon Mr. Smith, if he is with you; & I desire you to remember me to all other Friends.

You have my earnest Prayers that God will bless you in the important work you have now taken into your Hands: with best wishes of all Kinds to you, I am, your most affectionate

Kinsman & faithful Servant

M. GLOUCESTER.

You must take Care to assert your Right to the Mortuaries, which have become due since my Resignation of the Living: otherwise, if you neglect this at first, you will lose them always.

*To Browne Willis Esqr. at Whaddon Hall near Fenny Stratford, Bucks.*

*Free M. Gloucester. Post Mark. Gloucester 24 No:—  
Same Seal as above.*

*Gloicester. Nov. 22. 1746.*

DEAR SIR,

I have been so long detained on the Road, partly by my Friends, & partly by the Floods, in my Journey, that I did not reach this Place 'til this Day, when I received both your Letters, which not coming to Durham 'til after I was gone from thence, were sent after me to this Place. I have franked that which was enclosed for Dr. Hunter, & sent it back by this Post to Durham.

It was a great Disappointment to my Nephew, & a great Concern to my Brother, that he was hindred from being able to wait upon you at Whaddon & to be present at Fenny Stratford on St. Martin's Day. But by his Brother's falling ill of the Small-pox, it was rendered impossible. I have by a Letter I have just received, an Account, that his Brother is likely to do well, after having lain for a long time in the greatest Danger.

I desire you to make my Compliments to the three young Ladies, & I ever am, Dear Sir, your most faithful obliged Servant & affectionate Kinsman

M. GLOUCESTER.

*(Account of Mr. Willis's bestowing the Living of  
Blecheley, 1753, on Rev. W. Cole).*

The following letter as it mentions me in it, I shall give two or 3 notes upon before I transcribe it. When Mr. Willis, by the Death of his son Eliot Willis, had the Rectory of Blecheley to dispose of, he had various Applications, as it is a very good Living, for it: particularly from his 2 sons in Law, who had married 2 of his Daughters, with neither of whom he was upon any Terms of Regard; & consequently in no good Disposition to give it to either of them; & those who knew more of him than I did at that Time, were well satisfied he never intended it. Yet upon a pressing Invitation for me to come to Whaddon, with another Friend Mr. Masters we arrived there the same week his son died, neither of us knowing that his Son was ill; or indeed that he had a Son; at which Time he not very handsomely beg'd that I would hint, as from my own Observation, to the Curate of Whaddon, his Son in Law Mr. Eyre's Parish, that it would be proper for him, Mr. Eyre to come & apply for the vacant Living, as I had heard he was rather disposed to give it to him. Accordingly I executed my Comission, & saw what the Curate wrote; which actually brought Mr. Eyre to Whaddon in a few Days. The Day after this Transaction, his Daughter Mrs. Harvey came there to sollicite for her Husband, with 2 of her children. Her I had never seen before, nor ever her Husband; nor Mrs. Eyre to this Day; Mr. Eyre I had seen with Mr. Willis at Cambridge on a visit to me 2 or 3 years before; but had no Acquaintance with him: & therefore I was quite at large in Respect to any of them: any further than the aforesaid Letter, which I exactly followed Mr. Willis's Plan in, & repeated only what was dictated to me: so that when Mrs. Harvey & her 5 or 6 young children appeared for her Husband, who had a small Living in Bedfordshire, about 10 miles from Whaddon, the Balance, in Point of Reason, greatly preponderated in her Favour, against Mr. Eyre, who was very rich, had a great Living & no children: so that, upon Mrs. Harvey's Request, I could not resist begging Mr. Willis to go to dine with her at Holcote



the same Day I & my Friend Mr. Masters went for Cambridge. The true State of the Case was, the old Gentleman indulged in being solicited, at the same Time he had a secret Pleasure & Satisfaction in seeing both in submission, a Situation not very common, & was fully determined to be revenged of them both, by tantalizing them a little, & not to gratify them at last. This appeared by his going to Holcote & conniving Mr. Eyre's coming to Whaddon; to whom he proposed as a Condition of his giving him Blecheley to hold for a Minor about 15 years, his resigning Brightwalton in Berkshire, where he had an elegant House & as good a Living: which shewed that he could not be in Earnest. His objection to Mr. Harvey was, not that he was a Pluralist, or made his Daughter a bad Husband or was sottish; but that he was too great a Sportsman: however, on the Death of his uncle Sir Villiers Charnock, he will come in for an Estate of about 1500£ per Annum. That Mr. Willis wanted Solicitation is evident in my Respect: for by various Letters I had from him I could perceive he wanted me to ask for it: when he found that would not do, he made a Journey to Cambridge, & not finding me at College, got Mr. Masters to write to me in the same Stile, I had experienced at Whaddon in Mr. Eyre's Case who sent over a Servant to me at Hadenham in the Ilse of Ely, where I had been at one of my Farms, with the above Notice, & that Mr. Willis would be with me next Day. I was determined never to ask for a Benefice at all: especially for one where there were two in the Family who had so good a Plea for it: so not a Word passed about it during the two Days he staid with me, except that he had almost determined to give it to an old clergyman in Oxfordshire: yet I knew all the Time he wanted me to sollicite for it. About a month after I had various Letters from him & some of his Family to assure me that he thought of no one else: & when he could hold it vacant no longer, & I had full Assurances from him that he would not give it to his Sons in Law, & began to be out of Humour with me for not coming up to London to him to receive it from him. I went there to him: when to my great Surprise, the first Thing he told me, was, that he expected Mr. Eyre's

determinate Answer. To which I made no other Reply, than that I thought that had been long before concluded. After this he mentioned a Bond of 2000£ for Security of Resignation, & went privately, without my ever conceiving he could have such a Thought, to a Brother in Law of mine in the City Mr. Hector Mawdsley, requiring him to give a Bond also of 2000£ for my constant Residence, which he was also not to let me know any Thing of till I was presented: but on his refusing to do it without acquainting me of it, & I finding upon this & other Behaviour, that I was likely to exchange a very easy & agreeable way of Life for one that probably would be very troublesome & uneasy to me, I determined to refuse it; & dining with him at Dr. Vernon's in Bloomsbury, the Day after, I told him, that I was much obliged to him for his thinking of me at all; but the Conditions he expected were such as made it impossible for me to receive his Living: & after a great Deal of Expostulation of one Sort or another, he gave it to me in an ungracious Manner, which might have been done in a very obliging one. I met Dean Lyttleton within a few Days after, who told me that he had a very singular Conversation with my Patron upon my Subject the Day before: for that he had very roundly spoke to him of me in this Manner. Good Mr. Willis, let me beg it of you as a Favour not to treat Mr. Cole, who is my old Acquaintance & Friend, as you have usually done the Clergy with whom you are concerned: upon which the Dean told me, that Mr. Willis flew out in a passionate way, on being accosted so cavalierly, & made this Reply; Mr. Dean, you use me very roughly in saying that I have ill-used all the Clergy I have been connected with: pray did I ever quarrel with Bp. Benson? What Answer was made to this I don't know: I only remember the Dean told me, that Mr. Willis said to him, that he should expect nothing further from me, than to go about with him to collect for Buckingham Spire. Which was more than he ever said to me, & which would not have been entirely to my Taste. However, I know that he expected that I should run over the whole County with him, & not only methodize his Papers & MSS,

but add to them what he had omitted from the year 1735: for this he told Dr. Ducarel, who represented to him the unreasonableness of the Thing, & at the same Time asked him, whether he looked upon Mr. Cole in the Light of an Amanuensis; this Dr. Ducarel told me again: & this I well remember, that the very next morning, his Servant came to me, after my coming to Blecheley, with one of his 4<sup>to</sup>. MSS, which was to be left with me: so little Respite was I to have after my Journey: however, as I did not know the Design then, I only thought it was sent to me for my Amusement: so he took no further Notice of it, than to transcribe, after some Time, & with Leave so to do, the Account of my Parish, which was in that volume. But was I to put down all the unreasonable Expectations, & odd Conceits, that were expected to be complied with, I should never have done Writing, & not get to the Letter which occasioned this Digression.