

Radical Protestant churchmen in Kildwick – from Reformation to Restoration

Introduction

The history of the reformation of the Church in England is one of stops-and-starts; movements in one direction and then the other.

When Henry VIII broke with Rome his aim was simply to replace the pope as the head of the Catholic church in England, not to replace Catholicism itself. However, Henry's separation from Rome and the removal of Catholics from positions of influence, had the perhaps unforeseen result that his son Edward received a religious education that was heavily influenced by Protestant tutors.

After Henry's death in 1547, a process that may have eventually led to a fully reformed Protestant church was begun, but this came to an abrupt halt in 1557 when Edward VI died and the throne was occupied by Henry's elder daughter, Mary, who was a staunch Catholic.

Mary immediately returned the English church to Rome and many leading Protestants churchmen left England for the continent – the "Marian exiles"; these included Edmund Grindal, a chaplain to Edward VI (a future Archbishop of York, and later Canterbury) and Edwin Sandys (a future Archbishop of York). The six years of Mary's reign saw widespread persecution of Protestants.

In the reign of Mary's successor, Elizabeth, the English church again reverted to a form of Protestantism. The Act of Supremacy (1558) once again introduced the concept of the monarch as the head of the Church in England first assumed by Henry VIII, and the Act of Uniformity (also 1558) required the population to attend Sunday service in an Anglican church; it also introduced the new Book of Common Prayer.

The Elizabethan religious settlement presented Anglicanism as a middle-way between Catholicism and some of the more extreme Protestant views. Of course this middle-way posed problems for those whose religious views fell outside of its scope.

Catholicism was still widespread in the North of England and in 1569 the northern earls and thousands of their supporters staged a short-lived rebellion during which Mass was celebrated in Durham Cathedral. In 1570 Pope Pius V declared Elizabeth a heretic and excommunicate. This resulted in the suppression of Catholics in England at which point many protested their loyalty to the crown and adopted Anglicanism rather than remain in secret revolt and suffer the consequences.

On the other side of the religious divide, were radical Protestants who hoped to continue the process of reform from within the Anglican Church. They included a number of the Marian exiles who had returned to England – such as Edward Grindal. These Puritans, as they came to be known, believed that the reformation was a project left incomplete; their aim was a fully reformed and pure Church.

In this article we will take a look at several churchmen of the period 1580 to 1660 who were active in Kildwick; men whose biographies suggest that Kildwick may not have been typical of the Northern parishes of this period. Here, rather than attempting to cling to the old Catholic religion, the congregation seems to have provided support for reformers – including men who on more than one occasion fell foul of the Church authorities.

Rev. Alexander Horrocks (vicar 1571 to 1589) and John Wilson

Alexander Horrocks (in post 1571 to 1589) holds a unique place amongst the vicars of Kildwick. Taking full advantage of the repeal, in 1547, of the Six Articles of Faith imposed on the church by Henry VIII¹, Horrocks became the first married vicar of Kildwick and it is even likely that he and his wife Margaret had a number of children². Indeed, so much did Horrocks appear to enjoy this new privilege of the clergy that when Margaret died, in Kildwick in 1576, he married a second time (in 1582). His second wife being Anna, the daughter of Henry Curre.

When Edward Grindall was made Archbishop of York, in 1570, he wrote that the gentry were not "well-affected to godly religion and among the common people many superstitious practices remained."³ However, during a "visitation" in 1575 he found very little to complain about in Kildwick, suggesting that the church run by Alexander Horrocks satisfied his Protestant sensibilities.

However early in 1587, Horrocks fell foul of the church authorities and on January 9th Edmund Sandys, Grindall's successor as Archbishop, had him imprisoned in York Castle for about 10 days until he made a public recantation of his errors^{4,5}.

The Calendar of Manuscripts (ref 4) says:

At that time Mr. Horrocks was committed to the castle, and there continued about ten dayes for sufferinge the said Mr Wilson to preche in his charge: beinge licenced notwithstandinge by the archbishop to preache within three miles thereof, and prohibited by the vicare there, and yet nothinge said to him for the same, yet Mr Horrocks imprisoned for a lesse trespas and enjoyned to recantation. Mr. Wilson was committed to the castle also for preaching in Mr Horrocks charge, notwithstandinge it was the parishe wherin he was borne, was requested by the ordinary pastor, and also lycenced to preche within three miles therof.

Or, as the "Lives of the Puritans" has it⁶:

Mr. Horrocks, vicar of Kildwick, in the West-Riding of Yorkshire, was convened before the high commission at York, committed to York castle, and enjoined a public recantation, for suffering Mr. Wilson, another puritan minister, to preach in his church, though it was his native place. Mr. Wilson was also convened, and cast into prison.

John Wilson was well-known radical preacher and had been in trouble with the church authorities before⁷ and it could be argued that Horrocks was simply asking for trouble allowing him to climb into the pulpit:

John Wilson was born in the parish of Kildwick in Yorkshire, and was in all probability educated in this university [Cambridge], but we are unable to give the precise dates of his degrees, as there were several persons of the same name here at almost the same time...

Mr. Wilson was ordained deacon, and obtained a licence from the Archbishop of York to preach at Skipton. Complaints having been preferred against him, he was summoned before the high commission on a charge of nonconformity, and was obliged to find two sureties to be bound in £200 for his future appearance.

Sandys was generally well disposed to Puritans in general, but he drew the line at the⁸:

New orators... rising up from among us, foolish young men, who while they despise authority, and admit of no superior, are seeking the complete overthrow and rooting up of our whole ecclesiastical polity.

John Wilson would seem to have fallen into precisely this category. His examination in York is summarised as follows⁷:

On 9 Jan. 1587 he again appeared before the archbishop and other 43 commissioners at Bishopsthorpe, when he underwent an examination, wherein he shewed himself more than a match for his antagonists. However, he was sent to prison, where he remained a week, and was then brought up for his second examination. He was again remanded, but after another examination was released on signing a bond not to preach in the archbishop's province.

But, apart from allowing Wilson to preach, what were the “errors” that Horrocks had to recant? The record of the high commission is straightforward enough⁸:

[He had] not onely received the said Wilson, but also annymated him to preach within his parish church of Kildwick ... And besides that had disordered himself in not sayeing devyne service accordinge to the order set downe in the booke of common prayer ... [Horrocks was] bound in recognisance that henceforth he should receive none to preach within his church but such as shold be lawfully licensed and also to kepe the order sett downe in the booke of common prayer ... upon payne of lawe and sequestracion of the fruits of his vicarag

During his questioning, Wilson makes mention of one of the “Lord’s servants [who] is committed a close prisoner” with him. This, presumably, is Horrocks. Wilson’s testimony then goes on to suggest that Horrocks was imprisoned for encouraging “the people of God to meet together, and to edify and comfort one another with what they have learned... to confer upon the points of religion or the doctrines taught them out of the word of God, to sing psalms, and to pray together”, which he asserted was within the laws of the church. The Archbishop countered that Horrocks had “gathered night-assemblies, contrary to law”.

Certainly gatherings of parishioners to discuss the Bible outside of church were frowned upon by the authorities and it appears from other sources that gatherings held at night – in emulation of early Christian groups within the Roman Empire – were, for many years, held to be particularly dangerous practices. So in 1690⁹:

The Court was informed that certain persons, under pretence of being Dissenting Preachers, "had presumed to disturb and inveigh against the Church of England, and had kept night assemblies, and imposed oaths upon persons that they had received into their Church or Communion to oblige them not to depart from their principles."

And from as late as 1754, in a book disparaging both Catholics and Methodists¹⁰:

It is well known what severe laws have been made against night-assemblies under the pretence of religion, by civilised nations; as things scandalous in practice and dangerous to the State... Mr. Wesley had better prescribed a sleeping draught, or a good feather bed, than encouraged such irregular cabals; when darkness, watchings, and enthusiasms concurring, would naturally draw on those ominous dreams and mad consequences.

Whatever the true nature of his errors, Horrocks returned to Kildwick where he remained as vicar until his death in 1589. Wilson left Yorkshire and went to London, where he very soon was in trouble with the church authorities there.

Roger Breereley (curate 1623 to 1631)

Roger Breereley (or Brearley, Briarley, Brearlay, etc. – there is infinite variety in the spelling) was born in Rochdale in 1586.

By 1615 he was curate of Grindleton where he preached of the power of God's "spirit" to influence good men to a higher level of understanding including the Scriptures; he argued against the organized Church, and the sacraments; and promoted lay preaching and what he called "Spiritual-baptism"¹¹.

Breereley began his ministry as an orthodox Protestant, but later developed more mystical ideas and although he was not the founder, he was an early leader of the movement within the church called Grindletonians. The Grindletonians¹²:

... believed in the overwhelming power of the Holy Spirit in their religious experience, over and above the letter of the Scripture, and in particular the stated law of the Ten Commandments ... believing that Christ's atonement freed believers from the moral restraints of the law. Released from the taint of original sin, they believed they were reborn into Paradise in this life.

Breereley must have had the support of his congregation in Grindleton, where there was no resident vicar and the curate was hired by the congregation¹³.

In 1617 the church authorities drew up fifty charges against Roger Breereley *and his congregation*. Their supposed offences included beliefs such as that:

- A motion rising from the spirit is more to be rested in than the Word itself
- It is a sin to believe the Word ... without a motion of the spirit
- The child of God in the power of grace doth perform every duty so well, that to ask pardon for failing in matter or manner is a sin
- The Christian assured can never commit a gross sin
- A man having the spirit may read, pray or preach without any other calling whatsoever
- Neither the preacher nor they [the congregation] should pray for the King... They know not whether he be elected [i.e. saved by God's grace] or not

The high commission that examined Breereley in 1617 included, for the prosecution, J. Foote the vicar of Kildwick¹⁴. Witnesses for the defence included a William Currer, who was probably related to the Currer family of Kildwick¹⁵. Nothing was proved and the case was over by the 30th September 1617, with Breereley excused paying costs.

So, from this we can infer that Roger Breereley was well known in Kildwick before he became the curate at Kildwick in March 1623 and was, perhaps, helped to that position by members of the Currer family. (Rev. Foote, who spoke against Breereley in 1617, died in 1622.)

Between March 1623 and April 1631, Roger Breereley acted as curate for both Christopher White and John Gifford in Kildwick; both of these vicars held multiple livings and probably resided elsewhere. In this period, the pages of the parish registers are signed off "Ita testor ..." or " me teste, Rog. Brearleye, Cur."²

However, his work in Kildwick does not seem to have prevented him from continuing preaching elsewhere. On 22nd May 1627, Breereley was again in front of the high commission at which time he was ordered to cease preaching except at Kildwick. Just a week later he was ordered to give the names of those who attended his meetings and prohibited from preaching at Grindleton and elsewhere in the archbishopric other than Kildwick⁸.

In 1628 Breereley put his signature to the following statement in the Kildwick parish register:

The Articles agreed upon by the Church of England for the avoidinge of dissension and difference in pointes of religion were acknowledged and approved and publiquely reade in the p'sh Church of Kildwicke in Craven by John Gifford the 15th of June, 1628.

This refers to a declaration made by King Charles I and prefixed to the 39 Articles of the Church, demanding a literal interpretation of them, and threatening discipline for academics or churchmen teaching any personal interpretation or encouraging debate about them. In addition to Breereley, other Kildwick signatories to the Articles included Henry Currer.

Two children were born to Breereley and his wife Anna while they were in Kildwick. A daughter, Maria, in October 1627; and a son, Roger, in October 1630.

At about the time Brekeley's name disappears from the Kildwick parish register, he appears as the incumbent in Burnley – his name occurs in the Burnley registers from 1633 up until his burial on the 13th June 1637¹⁶.

His will named a Hugh Currey of Halifax as one of two guardians to his children. Again, it is likely that this person was related to the Currey family of Kildwick¹⁵.

John Webster (curate 1634 to 1637)

After Roger Brekeley left Kildwick, his place as curate was taken by John Webster whose name appears in the church records from 1634 to 1637.

Whether Webster was a Grindletonian before his arrival in Kildwick is unclear but, according to his own writings, he adopted Grindletonian views shortly after arriving in the parish. It was in Kildwick that he first became aware of "the sad experience of mine own dead, sinful, lost and damnable condition"¹⁷ – a process described by one author as a "the flock leading the shepherd"¹⁵.

An interesting indicator of the relationship between the two clerics Brekeley and Webster and the congregation in Kildwick is shown in a will dated February 1636, in which William Bawdwen of Stonegappe leaves the sum of £3 to "*Roger Breareley, vicar of Burneley*" and 20s to "*John Webster, curate of Kildwicke*"¹⁸.

Like Brekeley, Webster preached that salvation came from following the spirit of Christ rather than the forms and conventions of the Church. He maintained that "the light of God is within thee, if thou wouldst let it shine out"¹⁹. A message that was unlikely to find him many friends amongst his superiors in the Church.

In 1632 Richard Neile assumed the post of Archbishop of York. Neile was a staunch anti-Puritan, a member of king Charles I's privy council and founder of the "Durham Group" of Arminian clerics which included the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud²⁰. The Arminians, who were given strong support by king Charles, promoted a High Anglican church with religious practices and a form of worship that many saw as tending back towards Roman Catholicism.

It was hardly surprising that the views of John Webster would quickly come to the attentions of the church authorities. In 1635 he was arraigned before a church court, charged with Grindletonian heresy, and in 1637 he was deprived of his living²¹.

Webster's subsequent life, particularly during the Civil War and the Commonwealth, and his many writings, fall outside the scope of this article but there is one incident that occurred during his short time at Kildwick that cannot be excluded – namely how his actions prevented a resurgence of the Pendle Witch Trials.

The famous Pendle witch trials of 1612 led to the execution of 10 people, including members of the family of one of the principal accusers, Jennet Device. Just over 20 years later, further accusations of witchcraft were made against people in the Pendle area by an 11 year-old boy, Edmund Robinson.

In February 1634 Robinson testified before two magistrates that on the previous All Saints Day he had encountered a witches Sabbat on Pendle Hill and he gave the names of those who were present. Following this Robinson's father and another man began to make money, setting up Edmund as a "witch-finder" and extorting money from people who Edmund might otherwise "discover" ²².

What happened when the Robinsons ventured into Craven can be told in John Webster's own words, from an account published in 1677²³:

The boy, his Father and some others besides did make a practice to go from Church to Church that the Boy might reveal and discover Witches, pretending that there was a great number at the pretended meeting whose faces he could know, and by that means they got a good living, that in a short space the Father bought a Cow or two, when he had none before. And it came to pass that this said Boy was brought into the Church of Kildwick a large parish Church, where I (being then Curate there) was preaching in the afternoon, and was set upon a stall (he being but about ten or eleven years old) to look about him, which moved some little disturbance in the Congregation for a while. And after prayers I inquiring what the matter was, the people told me that it was the Boy that discovered Witches, upon which I went to the house where he was to stay all night, where I found him, and two very unlikely persons that did conduct him, and manage the business; I desired to have some discourse with the Boy in private, but that they utterly refused; then in the presence of a great many people, I took the Boy near me, and said: Good Boy tell me truly, and in earnest, did thou see and hear such strange things of the meeting of Witches, as is reported by many that thou dost relate, or did not some person teach thee to say such things of thy self? But the two men not giving the Boy leave to answer, did pluck him from me, and said he had been examined by two able Justices of the Peace, and they did never ask him such a question, to whom I replied, the persons accused had therefore the more wrong.

It wasn't only John Webster who had doubts.

Eventually, Edmund Robinson accused over 60 people. 17, including Jennet Device, were convicted and held awaiting sentence in Lancaster Castle when local judges requested guidance from Westminster. The Robinsons and several of the accused were taken to London where the truth emerged.

In July 1634, Edmund Robinson retracted his accusations saying that "all that tale is false and feigned, and has no truth at all, but only as he has heard tales and reports made by women, so he framed his tale out of his own invention" and, on another occasion, that "he had heard his neighbours talk of a witch feast that was kept at Mocking [i.e. Malkin] Tower in Pendle Forest about twenty years since".

Of the 17 that were held in Lancaster Castle, at least three died in custody.

THE
DISPLAYING
OF SUPPOSED
WITCHCRAFT.

Wherein is affirmed that there are many sorts of

Deceivers and Impostors,

AND

Divers persons under a passive *Delusion* of
MELANCHOLY and *FANCTY*.
But that there is a *Corporeal League* made betwixt the
DEVIL and the WITCH,

Or that he sucks on the *Witches Body*, has *Carnal Copulation*, or
that *Witches* are turned into *Cats, Dogs*, raise *Tempests*, or
the like, is utterly denied and disproved.



Wherein also is handled,

The Existence of Angels and Spirits, the truth of Apparitions, the Nature of
Astral and Sydereal Spirits, the force of Charms, and Philters;
with other abstruse matters.

By *John Webster*, Practitioner in Physick.

*Falsæ etenim opiniones Hominum præoccupantes, non solum surdos, sed & cecos faciunt, ita ut
videre nequeant, quæ aliis perspicua apparent. Galen. lib. 8. de Comp. Med.*

LONDON,

Printed by *J. M.* and are to be sold by the Bookfellers in *London. 1677.*

Above, the cover of John Webster's book, in which he provides his first-hand account of the Edmund Robinson affair and provided a critical and sceptical review of evidence for the existence of witches and the practice of witchcraft.

John Towne (minister 1646 to 1659; registrar 1653 to 1659)

During the English Civil war (1642 to 1651), the Parliamentary cause was as much anti-clerical as it was anti-Royalist, with many of the Parliamentarians, including Cromwell, openly espousing radical Puritan beliefs.

As the first Civil War proceeded (1642-46), questions of religion began to dominate proceedings in Parliament. Many of the recommendations of the specially-appointed Westminster Assembly were implemented, including the replacement of the Book of Common Prayer in January 1645 and the abolition of Episcopacy (government of the church by bishops) in October 1646²⁴. Archbishop Laud was executed by Parliament in 1645.

As part of these religious reforms a commission was set up to examine the beliefs of incumbent priests and those who did not satisfy the new Presbyterian tendencies were removed from their livings. One of these was Francis Little, who had been the vicar of Kildwick since 1631²⁵. His place was taken by John Towne.

Very little is known about John Towne, although he is thought to be the brother of the well known Grindletonian Robert Towne who was vicar of Haworth between 1648 and 1653 at which time he moved to Elland. It seems likely then that Kildwick remained a centre of radical protestant belief.

In 1653, an Act of Parliament required that the registration of births, marriages and deaths be performed by an elected civil Registrar, rather than by a cleric²⁶. In Kildwick, John Towne was himself elected Registrar² and his name appears in the Parish Register as "Minister and Registrar", rather than Vicar.

John Towne died at the end of May 1659, after which there appears to have been a hiatus of up to 10 months. Certainly a sufficiently long enough time passed for the inhabitants of Kildwick to approach Christ Church Oxford, which still holds the right to appoint vicars to Kildwick to this day, and petition them to appoint Edmund Garforth to the vacant post.

Edmund Garforth, who was already vicar of Haworth, appears to have held more orthodox beliefs than many of his predecessors at Kildwick.

A transcript of the letter, made by a member of Farnhill and Kildwick Local History Group, is included below.

To the

The humble petition of the inhabitants of the parish of Kildwick in Craven in the County of Yorkshire.

Humbly sheweth

That your petitioners upon their Adresse in the yeare of our Lord 1646 to a committee of this Parliament concerning plundered ministers obtayned an order for the placing of John Towne, Clarke, in the vicarage of Kildwicke afforesaid then under sequestration for delinquence of Mr Ffrancis Little, vicar, there.

And that the said elected Mr Towne hath ever since till the tyme of his death that was about Aprill last officiated there.

And that the said place hath since the death of Mr Towne bene vacant. And that your petition[er]s by the (excl...)ing laws of the late affirming governors weare rendered hop[e]less to be permitted to recom[m]end any to the place. In respect of a pretended law made under the late power whereby the presentation after the death of the last incumbent was reverted upon the patronage or will [of] Christ Church in Oxford, although Mr Little the delinquent who the last presented is still living.

But for this that your petitioners being encouraged by the Parliament's returne to the exercise of the[i]r power. And knowing that the pretended law is served to give to the said colaege (the)? relevent(?) ability to present is by your said returne made voyd. Att a publicke meeting amongst themselves unanimously agreed.

Humbly to pray that your honours would be pleased to admitt Mr Edmond Garforth Clarke (A person whose Abilitys, Life, Conversation, and Affection to this present power(?) is sufficiently Knowne to your petitioners and fully Certiffied by the annexed) to officiat[e] in the said place. And is ffully authorised to exercise there and received the profitts thereof as amply and fully as any of his predecessors have done.

The letter was signed by 54 parishioners. Prominent amongst these were Hugh Curren (of Kildwick Hall) and Roger Coates (of Kildwick Grange). These two men had been supporters of the Parliamentary cause and it is therefore perhaps not surprising to see them, with the restoration of the monarchy imminent, hastily attempting to associate themselves with a move to the religious (and political) centre-ground.

Edmund Garforth, was certainly in post at Kildwick by April 4th 1660, as on that day, the same day on which Charles Stuart issued the Declaration of Breda outlining his proposals for the restoration of the monarchy, he amended the Kildwick Parish Register so that John Towne's reference to himself as "Minister" was crossed-out and the word "Intruder" inserted.

But Garforth's triumph was short-lived.

In May 1660 the monarchy was restored and one of the first Acts of Parliament of the new regime concerned the reinstatement of clergy who had been ejected from their posts between 1643 and 1659. So it was that by the end of the year Kildwick saw its very own "restoration" when Francis Little again took up the post of vicar²⁵.

Appendix – An Establishment churchman from a Dissenter background – Benjamin Wainman, curate 1743

If in the period c.1580 to c.1660 the churchmen of Kildwick were as likely to have been radicals as they were establishment figures, after the Reformation the establishment was very much in the ascendant. Perhaps surprisingly this was largely the result of the greater toleration of Protestant dissenters. The Toleration Act of 1689 allowed dissenters to gather and worship without hindrance in their own licensed meeting houses. With the radicals gone, the established church became more conservative. So much so that in 1743 the curate at St. Andrew's felt he had to explain and almost apologise for the dissenting beliefs of other members of his family.

In 1743 Thomas Herring became Archbishop of York and, as was usual at the time, he sent out a questionnaire to each parish to find out about his new diocese. In Kildwick this was completed by Benjamin Wainman, who had become curate in May of that year.

The questionnaire had 11 questions, the first two of which were concerning dissenters and where they worshipped²⁷.

Q1: What Number of Families do you have in your Parish ? Of these, how many are Dissenters ? And of what Sort are they ?

I believe there are upwards of 760 Families in the Parish. Out of these there are, I am told, about 100 dissenting Families, chiefly Anabaptists.

Q2: Have you any Licens'd or other Meeting House in your Parish ? How Many ? Of what Sort ? How often do they Assemble ? In what Numbers ? Who teaches in them ?

There are 3 Licensd Meeting Houses in the Parish, two Anabaptist ones, and one Quaker. The Anabaptists meeting every fortnight in number about 200 people. The Quakers meet every Sunday only. The Anabaptist Teachers are David Crossley & Wm. Jackson. One David Hall is the Quaker Speaker. There are about 50 Quakers assembled at a time.

In a note at the end of the questionnaire, Wainman sought to explain how he came to know so much about the dissenters in the parish.

My Father & Brother are both dissenting ministers in your Graces diocess. My Father is a person of great moderation & might have been preferred by Archbishop Sharp. His Grace sent his service to him, & ordered one to tell him that w'd he go over to the Church, he w'd provide for him.

Thus far I thought proper to inform your Grace.

He also had an idea of how to counteract the growing popularity of the Dissenters.

Would it not make much for the glory of god & the security of our establishment, was your Grace to use your authority (as far as you c'd) & cause that there should be preaching twice where there are dissenters ?

Having written his note, Wainman must have thought that further explanation of his position was called for and so wrote a letter to the Archbishop.

My Lord,

In pursuance of your desire to us all freely to communicate our thoughts to you, I hope you will excuse the Liberty I take in giving you the following information. Allow me then to tell your Grace, that I was educated amongst the dissenters, & believe I am the only Conformist, you Grace has in the Diocese.

I had my Academical Learning with Dr. Doddridge of Northampton. After staying 4 years there, I came home to my Father's house at Bingley. Here I studied the Controversy that has depended betwixt the Church of England, & the Dissenters, ever since the reformation. Hereupon I determined in favour of the Church of England, & did not rest until I was admitted as a member of that Church by Episcopal ordination.

Before my Conformity I was examined amongst the dissenting ministers, preach't as a Candidate their way, & had the offer of two Places amongst them before I was 20 years old. Nay I may add without vanity that had I continued amongst them, I should before now have had as good a place as they are capable of giving.

Ever since my Conformity, I do assure your Grace, in real truth that they have persecuted me with their utmost hatred. Nay I am told that they are resolv'd to plague me by all the ways they can. As they have nothing to object to against my Conduct or Learning, I thought it might be proper to inform your Grace about this their behaviour. And as I have no friend save one, out of whose [text missing ?] at present it is to do any thing for me, I beg leave to entreat your Grace to take my case & circumstances into consideration.

A competency in Life is all I desire, & I look upon a Vicarage or a Curacy worth 60 pds p annum to be so. To gain this, I am willing to undergo any examination, you think proper, willing to preach before your Grace, or do any other performance. And if a certificate of my moral Character be required, I can get it attested both by the Clergy, & a great number of the neighbouring Gentlemen.

But I fear I have transgress'd my duty, & ask pardon for my rashness. Nay I should not have writt after this manner, did I not labour under very heavy difficulties, & did I not imagine it to be the design of the dissenters both to bury me in silence, & if possible to bring me to Poverty.

May God continue your Graces Health & Life. And that his providence may watch around you for good, & guide you in all your ways, for his glory & honour, & the good of his Church, is the earnest wish, & sincere constant Prayr of your Grace's most obedient & humble Servant in haste

B. Wainman Curate of Kildwick near Skipton

Whether the Archbishop took up Wainman's case and moved him or whether the Dissenters forced him out of his position is not known, but the last entry in the Kildwick Parish Register bearing his name is in October 1743 – just 5 months after he took up the post².

In 1745 a Benjamin Wainman became curate of Ilkley²⁸; and between 1762 and 1771 the same name appears as curate and later minister in the registers of Pickhill, near Thirsk²⁹. The final appearance of the name suggests that Wainman may have returned to the local area in the second half of the 1770s. If so, his condition was not a happy one.

The following is a footnote to the baptismal entry of Harriet, daughter of Capt. John Pigot and his wife Mary, at Skipton; 17 February 1778³⁰.

Captain Pigot was then a Boarder at the Vicarage and the Rev John Parry Vicar (but Insain) on which Account Benjamin Wainman an Idle Desolute disorderly Melancholy Man was by reason of a party disagreement between the Assignees of the Vicar, and the Churchwardens with other principal Inhabitants of this town, the said Wainman was kept as curate by the Assignees, till the death of the said vicar which happened on the sixteenth of this instant. By reason of which this child of the above Captain Pigots was Baptised by Mr. Saml. Phillips a Presbyterian Minister. Many other unlawfull as well as disagreeable Circumstances happened at this time in the church.

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