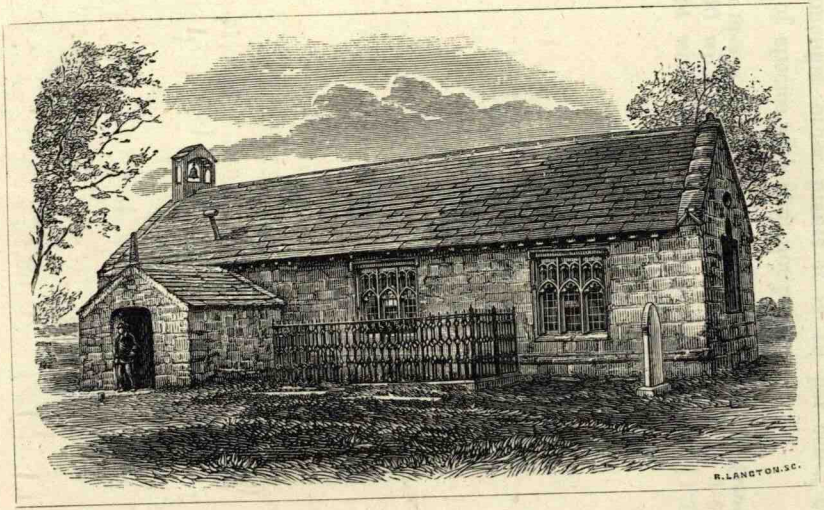

LANGHO CHAPEL.

BUILT *circa* 1557, WITH STONE FROM THE DISMANTLED ABBEY OF WHALLEY.

THE PAROCHIAL CHAPEL OF ST. LEONARD, LANGHO, IN BILLINGTON.

By William Alexander Abram, Esq.

(Read March 6th, 1873.)

This small and ancient Parochial Chapel stands upon a portion of Langho Green, near the western side of Billington township. The exterior of the fabric has not been materially altered since its erection, more than three hundred years ago. The sacred edifice is surrounded by a spacious graveyard. In plan the chapel is a parallelogram, measuring externally 62 feet by 29 feet 6 inches; having neither tower, chancel, nor side aisles. The architecture of the building is Gothic, of the perpendicular period. On the south side a porch, the outer arch much depressed, supplies the only entrance to the chapel. At the north side a small erection has recently been attached for use as a vestry. The side walls are not more than about eleven feet in elevation, and the pitch of the roof is also low. A wooden belcot at the west end protects the single bell. The local tradition is that this chapel was partially built with stones obtained by a demolition of some part of the dismantled abbey of Whalley, two miles off. This is not only intrinsically very likely, as the edifice was reared by persons who had acquired the fabrics and lands of the abbey a few years before; but the tradition is confirmed by the external aspect of the chapel itself. The accurately squared and dressed stones forming the walls are many of them of large size, and out of proportion to the dimensions of the edifice. At a few feet from the ground, on the south

side and west end, heavy moulded string courses are inserted, which have evidently been designed for a larger structure. An inspection of the walls further discloses several stones whose surfaces are sculptured with figures, tracery, shields, &c., which have no meaning in their present position. Above the east window are three of such sculptured stones, the centre one apparently having formed the ogee head of a decorated arch, and the other two bearing heads of saints in deep projection, now greatly battered and disfeatured. Let into the south wall are other stones with emblematic sculpture upon them. On one of these is a deeply-relieved heraldic shield; and upon another, a shield beneath tracery in low relief. A similar stone, with embossed shield and tracery, is seen in the west wall of the chapel. On a stone found recently beneath the pulpit during some alterations, and now lying on the ground beside the porch, are cut upon three sides heraldic emblems and crosses within quatrefoils. Still more conspicuous evidences of secondary use are found in the windows of the fabric, four out of six of which are good examples of perpendicular gothic lights, generally resembling some yet remaining *in situ* at Whalley Abbey. In the south wall of Langho Chapel are inserted two of these windows, each of three lights; the arch-heads of which are semi-circular, and cinq-foliated, divided by perpendicular mullions; the heads subarcuated and separated by subordinate mullions. Within the heads of several of the windows are fragmentary portions of coloured glass of evident antiquity, also, I suppose, from the abbey. The west window is of the same style as the side windows, but larger (about eight feet square) and of four lights. The window at the east end is a common square-mullioned one of three lights, the centre one circular-headed; and another window, without tracery, is placed in the north wall. The fabric seems to be in sound condition, externally.

The interior of the chapel is severely plain. The roof is ceiled, and its chief and visible supports are slightly-arched moulded beams, the ends of which rest on octagonal-shaped wooden corbels. The pulpit stands near the midst, planted against the north wall. A single aisle traverses the centre longitudinally, joining the entrance-passage from the south porch. The pews, high and straight-backed, are ranged on either side of this aisle. In the wall near the S.E. corner, remains inserted the ancient piscina, beneath a recessed and moulded pointed arch, trefoiled;—another relic of the abbey, perhaps, whose presence here suggests that although the chapel was built after the reconstruction of the National Church on reformed principles by Henry VIII, the sacramental rites of the Church of Rome were still in general practice at the time of its foundation. Indeed, as it is pretty certain the chapel was built in the reign of Queen Mary, during the temporary return of the State to Roman Catholicism, the presence of the piscina need occasion no surprise. The font, placed against the east wall, is modern. The chapel was entirely repewed after the events of 1688, to be recorded below; and most of the pews of that date remain, with the initials of their then proprietors, who included the principal landowners, the yeomen, and old resident families of tenantry in the township.

Some common authorities state that the church of Langho "existed" in 1650. It was in existence nearly a century prior to that date. It is said to have been built by Sir Thomas Holcroft, knight, the purchaser of the manor of Billington after the extinction of Whalley Monastery; and the year 1557 is conjectured as about the date. If Sir Thomas Holcroft was the founder, it could not have been later than that, for his death took place in 1558. I have an impression that the Braddyll and Assheton who at the same time acquired the Whalley demesne with the site and build-

ings of the abbey, joined with Holcroft in the work of rearing a chapel at Langho, being themselves likewise owners of estates in Billington. Else the materials of Whalley Abbey would scarcely have been used in the erection of the chapel; for only the owners of the abbey fabrics could authorise the removal of their materials. This surmise is strengthened by the circumstance, that the first time Langho Chapel is mentioned is in connection with a bequest by John Braddyll, the purchaser of half the abbey demesne in Whalley. He, by his Will dated May, 1578, made this bequest:—"To the "reparation of *Langall Chapell* ten shillings every year, to "be paid out of one lease, &c., of the tithe corn of Brockhole, "which lease I do give, &c., to Edward B., my son, and "John B., my godson, upon this condition, that they pay out "the said 10s. yearly at Christmas only, and see it bestowed "yearly during the year in the said lease, if the said chapell "so long do continue and have divine service in the same, "and if it do not so continue, then the said Edward and "John, &c., shall bestow the said ten shillings yearly upon "mending of the highways in Billington, between the Chowe "Milne and the said chapell."

The chapel was designed as a chapel of ease for the use of the inhabitants of this part of Billington, of Dinkley and Salesbury, resident from five to seven miles distant from their parish church of Blackburn. Whalley Church was nearer than Blackburn, and the inhabitants of these townships chiefly resorted to Whalley to christen and bury. The service of Langho Chapel appears to have long been very irregular. There was no endowment for a curate's maintenance, and without stipend no resident curate could be had. But the vicars of Blackburn, or some curate of the mother church, periodically ministered in the chapel. This state of things continued until the ecclesiastical subversion in 1646; after which, under the Presbyterian system, a minister was main-

tained here until the return to the old order of things. To the Parliamentary Commission of 1650 it was reported concerning Langho Church that there was no endowment, but that Mr. Churchlowe, the minister, had an allowance of £40 from the County Committee; that the Church was six miles distant from the Parish Church; and that the chapelry contained three hundred families, who desired to be made a separate parish, and to have a fixed salary for their minister. Mr. James Critchley, the minister above referred to, had been approved for Langho Chapel at a meeting of the second classis of the Lancashire Presbytery, held at Whalley, July 10th, 1649.

So things stood until, on the restoration of monarchy, the Presbytery of Lancashire lost the support of Parliament, and its nominees had to relinquish their ministries. The service of this chapel reverted to its former condition of neglect. But at length, in the year 1684, Sancroft, then Archbishop of Canterbury, as impropriate rector and patron of Blackburn, decided to make some donation out of the rectory estates for the augmentation of the livings of the seven chapels dependent on Blackburn Parish Church. Prior to doing so, he asked for information as to the state of the chapels. Part of the report was the following :—

Langho Chapell, 4 [*sic*] miles from Blackburn Church, 2 miles from any other chapell. No curate, because no maintenance. Onely one Mr. Braddell gave £10, the interest whereof repaires that ffabrick. Adjacent to it Billington and Wilpshire.

	£	s.	d.
Endowment.—Interest of Mr. Braddell's £10	0	10	0
Mrs. Fleetwood (lessee of the rectory lands in Blackburn) promiseth yearly	2	0	0
Billington promiseth to settle about	5	10	0

and hope for as much from Billington and Dinkley when Mr. Warren (lord of Salesbury, Wilpshire, and Dinkley) returneth from Cheshire.

During the same year (1684) the following further account of the chapel was furnished to Archbishop Sancroft through the vicar of Blackburn :—

Lango Chapell.—Billington has subscribed a certaine sum for perpetuity. (See the list under their hands.) Mr. Warren, the lord of

Wilpshire, &c., will not yet promise anythinge, nor his tenants neither, until Mr. Warren give leave. (*Mem.* Dr. Stephen, Rector of Stopford, to be desired to intercede with Mr. Warren, the Father, or with the Grandfather, both of the same place, to perswade Mr. Warren, the sonn, of Dinckley, to give something to the chappel, and suffer his tenants to do the like.) There is some former animosity or difference between Justice Bradyll and Mr. Warren, which occasions Mr. Warren's averseness; besides, Mr. Warren's wife is a violent ferme Papist. The generality of the Inhabitants of Billington in Lango resort to the Parish Church of Whalley (which is about a mile and ½ from Lango Chapel), to divine service and sermon, to christen and bury; for other offices they come to the Mother Church.

These documents I copy from the MS. records of the chapelry in the Coucher Books of the parish of Blackburn, by the courtesy of the Rev. Canon Birch, M.A., the vicar. Appended is the subscription list of the parishioners of Billington, for the augmentation of the living, referred to in the former document. The subscription was entered into in the year 1684. The list includes the names of all the chief proprietors and tenants in the township two centuries back, with the exception of Mr. Walmsley, the lord of the manor, a Roman Catholic, and perhaps some of his tenantry of the same faith:—

The free and voluntarie gift of the Inhabitants of Billington towards the augmentation and better maintenance of the Curate of Langoe Chappell is hereunder subscribed, the Moietie whereof to be paid when it shall please his Grace of Canterburie to bestow his charitable gift to that good intention, and the other Moietie within three months after, vizt.:—Sir Edmund Ashton, Bart., £20; Thomas Braddyll, Esq., £10; Mistress Pollard, £4; Lawrence Osbaldeston, £4; Edward Chew, £2; Thomas Bolton, £2; Gilbert Greenfield, £1; Robert Mitton, £1; Seath Wood, £1; William Chatborne, senr., 15s.; John Craven, 10s.; John Prockter, 10s.; John Whalley, 10s.; John Dobson, 5s.; Leonard Chew, 10s.; John Rydeing, 4s.; Widow Dewhurst, 5s.; John Dewhurst, 5s.; Thomas Bowers, 5s.; Widow Hargreaves, 6s. 8d.; Robert Ryley, 10s.; John Slater, 10s.; John Chew de Langoe, 10s.; George Bloar, 5s.; Richard Dobson, 5s.; Agnes Wood, 10s.; Robert Sudell, 10s.; William Clayton, 6s. 8d.; Richard Chew de Elkar, 10s.; Richard Chew de Whitwhams, 10s.; William Butler, 5s.; Tenants de Nabb, 2s.; Widow Thorp, 2s. 6d.; William Chatborne, junr., 10s.; John Grimshaw, 5s.; Richard Fish, 5s.; Roger Noblet, 2s. 6d.; Henry Whalley, 2s.; Widow Holker and Edward Blackburn, 5s.; Thomas Margerison, 4s.; John Halstead 2s. 6d.; John Duckworth, 2s. 6d.; *in toto*, £55 15s. 4d.

A year after, the subjoined memorandum was made of monies belonging to Langho Chapel:—"May the 7th, 1685.

"An account of money belonging to Langoe Chapel in the "parish of Blackburn. In the hands of Seth Wood, of "Billington, £3 19s. In the hands of James Blackburn, of "Billington, £3 5s. 3d. *In toto*, £7 4s. 3d."

We have now reached the period of a singular and somewhat memorable transaction concerning Langho Church--I refer to the attempted appropriation of the fabric by the Lord of the Manor, and the application of it to the service of the Roman Church. Of this proceeding brief accounts have been given by Dr. Whitaker, in the *History of Whalley*, and likewise by Canon Raines, in his excellent annotations to Gastrell's *Notitia Cestriensis*. But I think that the peculiarity of this case renders it interesting and useful that a more particular account of the occurrence should be presented; and I give below rescripts of several of the original documents referring to the transaction. With one exception,—the decree of Lord Chancellor Jeffreys, the text of which is given by Raines—these manuscripts have not hitherto been printed. To the favour of Canon Birch, Vicar of Blackburn, I owe the privilege of access to these papers in the parish records.

Bartholomew Walmesley, Esq., of Dunkenhalgh Hall, who succeeded his father, Richard Walmesley, Esq., in 1679, was a staunch Roman Catholic. He was a mere youth when he became heir to the large possessions of his house. The predilections of the second James for the Roman Church encouraged the members of that church to pursue, after his accession, aggressive projects for the restoration of Papal authority in this country. Mr. Bartholomew Walmesley was induced to take steps for the furtherance of Roman Catholicism in his manor of Billington. The chapel at Langho was at this time without a curate, and indifferently served; and relying upon the assumption that the fabric of the church, having been built by a former lord, was an appanage of the manor,—as well as upon the fact that he had for some years

held his manorial court in the chapel without opposition,— Mr. Walmesley now took formal possession of the chapel. He obtained the custody of the keys, and in the year 1687 he had the seats, communion table, &c., removed, and the altar, and other fittings necessary to adapt it for the Roman Catholic ritual, substituted. For a brief period, it is said, after this seizure, mass was celebrated within the chapel. The then Vicar of Blackburn, Rev. Francis Price, was, however, equal to the emergency, and took energetic measures to procure the restoration of the chapel to the Church of England. Before appealing to the higher powers, Vicar Price strove to obtain a settlement of the matter by private negociation, and made the following proposal to Mr. Walmesley in November, 1687 :—

Form of undertaking submitted to Mr. B. Walmesley, lord of Billington, by Francis Price, Vicar.

Whereas, Francis Price, the present Vicar of Blackburn, in the county of Lancaster, out of his mild disposition and love to peace, hath made it his humble request to me not to deprive him of the Chappel of Lango in the parish of Blackburne aforesaid, which he and his predecessors have so long enjoyed. And whereas many of my tenants in Billington in the said county will be destitute of a convenient place for their publick worship when they are prohibited the use of the said chappel, I do hereby declare that notwithstanding any pretensions I have to the said chappel, as Lord of Billington aforesaid, or any other wayes, I will not give any disturbance to the said Francis Price, or any other authorised by him to performe Divine Service in the said chappel in such manner as heretofore hath been accustomed, upon condition that [ ] pounds be tendered to me within three weeks after the date hereof, towards satisfaction for the charge I have lately been at in repairing the said chappel; and upon condition likewise that the said Francis Price and the Inhabitants of Billington and other neighbouring villages do upon all occasions acknowledge my respects and kindness to them. In testimony whereof I have subscribed my name this 24th day of November, 1687.

The sum tendered to Mr. Walmesley in consideration of his peaceable surrender of the chapel is not named in the draft here copied. The proposal was rejected by Mr. Walmesley, through his agent, Mr. Wm. Mony. Thereupon Vicar Price lost no time in preferring his petition to the Crown, for a mandamus for the restoration of the chapel. The petition

was forwarded to London in May, 1688. The copy at the vicarage I cite as follows :—

To the Kings most Excellent Majestie.—The humble Petition of Francis Price, Vicar of the Parish Church of Blackburne in the County of Lancaster.—Sheweth,—That the Chappel of Lango in the said Parish of Blackburne hath time out of mind been a Chappel of Ease belonging to the Mother Church of Blackburne, wherein Prayers, Preaching, Sacraments, and other Ecclesiastical Rites have been celebrated by the Vicars and Curates of the said Parish, as appears by many affidavits taken before a Master extraordinary in your Majesties High Court of Chancery. That the said Chappel hath from time to time been Repaired, both Walls and Roofe, and the Seats and Pews uniformly placed, and the Bell thereof bought at the only costs and charges of the adjacent and neighbouring Townes; And also Communion Plate and some other Endowments and Salaries given to it, according to the abilities of the Neighbourhood, and particular Seats in it assigned to ancient ffamilies and Estates.—Now so it is (may it please your sacred Majestie) That a Neighbouring Gentleman, one Mr. Bartholomew Walmsley, hath lately seized on the said Chappel of Lango, and so (pretending a right to it) has dispossessed your Petitioner of his just and undoubted Right in and to the said Chapell, which he is ready to make appear by and from ancient Records.—May it therefore please your most sacred Majestie, out of your Princely Inclination to Justice, and accustomed Compassion, either to Order Mr. Bartholomew Walmsley to make Restitution of the said Chappel, taken so unjustly from the Mother Church, or else to referr the leaving of the whole matter to any person whom your Majestie shall think most fit to Report the merits of the cause to your sacred Majestie.—And your Petitioner shall ever pray, &c.

This Petition was supported by a series of affidavits taken previously, as the Vicar states, before a Master in Chancery. Besides the affidavits, the records of the case include copies of allegations made by the defendant, and of the answers thereto of the petitioner. Subjoined is the draft of Mr. Bartholomew Walmesley's allegations respecting the chapel :—

[Endorsed]—*Mr. Walmesley's Aligations against Lango Chapell.*—About ye 4th year of ye Reigne of Queen Mary (1556-7), Sr. Thomas Holcroft became Lord of ye Mannor of Billington, and soon after began to erect a Chappell on Lango Greene, within his Mannor, which hee Intended for the ease of yt neighbourhood, that they might hear Masse there. But it appears that the people never resorted to it, for wee find that the very Chappell yard was immediately let in lease to one Wood, then assigned to Osbaldeston, then to Chew, all along under the Rent of 3s. 4d. constantly pd. to Sr. Thomas and his Assigns ever since. It is very probable yt ye change of Religion happening before the Chappell was finished might prevent Sr. Thomas his intention in getting it Consecrated; the house itselfe has alwaies been imployed as a Court house, except by chance some seldome times a Sermon was preached by one of

ye predecessors of ye now Vicar of Blackburne without any obligation. There is noe chappelry knowne by bounds and limits as in cases of other chappells, soe yt it seems to be a chappell only in Reputation. And it is plaine the people of Billington have time out of Mind repaired to other places to hear Sermons, &c., and never subscribed to ye Maintenance of a Curate, nor ever was there a curate in this place.

The replies of the Vicar to these allegations are our next documents. These are sufficiently minute and explicit in regard to all the points raised by the lord of the manor. There are duplicate copies of these replies and the affidavits accompanying in the Vicarial "Coucher Book" for the chapelry. The draft I copy is headed :—

Several Allegations, made by Bartholomew Walmsley, Esq., and his agents, against Francis Price, Vicar of Blackburne's title to the Chappel of Lango, answered.

Allegation 1.—That the said Chappel of Lango is erected on a common or wast called Lango-green in Billington, where the said Mr. Walmsley is Lord of a manour.—To which the said Vicar replies, That though the said Chappel of Lango be erected on a common or wast, yet there are certaine charterers, viz., Sir Edmund Ashton, Baronet, Thomas Braddyll, Esq., and others, who are lawfull and proportionable sharers in the said common or wast, and therefore the said chappel cannot solely belong to the said Mr. Walmsley.

Allegation 2.—That the said Chappel of Lango was never consecrated.—To which the Vicar replies, That the consecration of many chappels, and also churches, are not (or very difficultly) to be proved by Records or evidences thereof, any other way, but by long performance of Divine Service, and ministration of Sacraments and Sacramentalls there.

Allegation 3.—That Sacraments and Sacramentalls have seldom or never been performed in the said Chappel of Lango.—To which the said Vicar replies, That before the late unhappy times of confusion,—viz.: about 60 years since,—there was a constant hired curate there, who did read the prayers, preach, marry, christen, and administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper there; and that the predecessors of the present Vicar, namely, Mr. Morris, Mr. Bolton, and Mr. Clayton, have several times officiated at that chappel. And that the reason why the present Vicar did not imitate them in that particular was (1st) because he thought himself bound to preach constantly at the Mother Church of Blackburne, whither some hundreds of his Parishioners do constantly resort on the Lord's Day; and (2dly) because he thought it sufficient to send a Curate to officiate at that Chappel of Ease, so often as anything could be procured to pay the said curate for his paines. To the foresaid allegation the said Vicar further replies, That tho' of late years there has been no constant settled Curate there for want of maintenance, yet henceforward there is like to be no complaints of that nature, there being £50 a year lately given by two charitable Persons, and other annual Pensions promised by others, for the Augmentation of the

Salaries of the several Curates of that and other chappels in the said Parish of Blackburne, as Mr. Snowe of Lambeth can testify.

Allegation 4.—That a Rent of 3s. 4d. per annum has for many years together been paid by Mr. Chew, and others, to Mr. Walmsley and his ancestors.—To which the said Vicar replies, That the Business in controversy is, whether the Chappel of Lango be an appendant to the Mother Church of Blackburn, and not whether the adjacent yard belongeth to Mr. Walmsley. The said Vicar being indifferent to whom the right to the said yard belongeth, provided that those who resort to the said chappel may have free passage through the said yard according to ancient custome.

Allegation 5.—That the Ancestors of Mr. Walmsley have kept Courts in the said Chappel of Langho for many years together.—To which the Vicar replies, That the Vicars of Blackburne, or their curates, have more times a year for 80 years by past, performed Divine Offices in that Chappel without the least controll from any person whatsoever. And besides it's too notorious that severall other lords of manours in Lancashire do keep their courts in other chappels (so little regard have some of them to those Sacred Places). Yet none of them, besides Mr. Walmsley, do drawe argument from thence, that the said Chappels are their owne, no more than the Right worshipfull the Chancellor of Chester does, that the Mother Church of Blackburne is his, because he keeps his Court of Visitation in it twice a year.

Allegation 6.—That the keys of the said Chappel of Lango, in ye year 1684 (or thereabouts) were taken by Madam Walmsley from one Burton, a Schoolmaster, who taught scholars in that chappel.—To which the said Vicar replies, That those keys were taken from the said Schoolmaster without the consent or pre-knowledge of the Vicar of Blackburne, or of any of his curates, and were redelivered in lesse than 7 days time, upon complaint made to Mr. Braddyll, one of his late Majesties Justices of the peace, and that, excepting these few days, the said keys were never before October last in possession of Mr. Walmsley or any of his ancestors, but were constantly kept (if report say true) either by the Curate, or Schoolmaster of Lango, or else by some of the Inhabitants of the Chapelrie of Lango, for whose use and benefit the said chappel was erected.

Allegation 7. (Designed for the great prejudice of the Vicar of Blackburne).—Is an affidavit of one Blore of Billington, who affirms, that he invited the said Vicar to preach at Lango Chappel, and received this answer:—That he the said Vicar was not bound by any Law to supply that place and therefore refused to do it (or to that effect).—To which the said Vicar replies, That the Deponent Blore does not fairly state the case, for thus in truth it was:—In September last (or thereabouts) the said Deponent Blore came to the Vicar of Blackburne at his house in Blackburne, and desired him to permit one Mr. Ellis to preach at the Chappel of Lango, and to admit him to be Curate there. The Vicar replied, that he had heard a very ill character of Mr. Ellis, and therefore could not consent to admit him to be Curate there, 'till he the said Vicar was fully satisfyed that the said Mr. Ellis was a man of good Principles and conversation. Whereupon the said Deponent Blore fell into a Passion, and said to the Vicar:—"If you will not permit Mr. Ellis to supply that chappel, will you come and supply it yourself?"

This was all the Invitation he gave the said Vicar. To which the Vicar replied, That he knew no law that obliged him to leave the mother church, to officiate at a Chappel of Ease; yet did offer that whensoever the Inhabitants of the Chappelry of Lango did recommend any worthy clergyman to be Curate there, he the said Vicar would freely consent to his admission, and would use his endeavours to procure the approbation of the Lord Bishop of the Diocese. Which answer to Blore's affidavit the said Vicar asserts with as great seriousnesse as if he were under the obligation of an oath; and does most humbly submit both this and all the rest of his Answers to the forementioned Allegations, to the great wisdome of the Right Honourable the Lord High Chancellor of England, to whom the case between Bartholomew Walmsley, Esq., and the said Vicar is referred by the King's most Excellent Majesty; on whom God Almighty multiply his Blessings.

The next document is a copy of the Royal notification of reference of the cause to the Lord Chancellor. The Petition of Vicar Price was returned to the petitioner, from the Court at Whitehall, with the King's gracious decision written on the margin, as follows:—

At the Court at Whitehall, May 29th, 1688.—His Majestie is graciously pleased to referre this Petition to the right honble. the Lord Chancellor of England, to heare all partys concerned and to report the State of the case with his Lordships opinion what his Majesty may fitly do in the matter, whereupon his Majesty will declare his further pleasure.

(Signed) SUNDERLAND LD.

A manuscript which appears to be a draft of the Brief of the case submitted to Lord Chancellor Jeffreys is given below. It is endorsed:—"Price *v.* Walmsley. Upon a Petition before the Lord Chancellor, on Tuesday, 12th June, 3 of the clock":—

Ffranciscus Price, Viccar of Blackburne, agst. Bartholomew Walmesley, Esqr.—That within ye Parish of Blackburne are severall Chappells of Ease, and particularly Lango Chappell, where time out of minde Divine Service hath beene read, Ministration of Sacraments and other ceremoniall Rites performed by ye Viccars of Blackburne or their Curats, and ye sd. Chappell was fitted conveniences and ornaments for Divine Service, Comunion Table, plate, pulpitt, seats, and a Bell, at ye charge of ye Inhabitants of Billington and places adjacent.

That in ye yeare 1616, upon a Survey and by a Jury touching ye possessions belonging to ye ArchBp'prick of Canterbury, ye sd. Lango Chappell was found to bee a Chappell of Ease belonging to Blackburne *(Vide ye Record)*.

That ye Townshipps of Wilpshire-cum-Dinckley, Salbury, & Billington have time out of minde beene reported to bee within ye Chappelry of Lango, and ye Inhabitants thereof generally resorted thither, & yt ye

sd. Chappell of Lango hath beene reputed a Chappell of Ease within ye Parish and subject to ye Mother Church of Blackburne.

To prove all which read ye Affidavits of:—Wm. Sager, aged 75 yeares; Tho. Calvert, aged 88 yeares; Tho. Braddyll, aged 57 yeares; Nich. Holker, aged 82 yeares; Robert Craven, aged 71 yeares; Isabell Craven, aged 74 yeares; Anne Whalley, aged 68 yeares; Tho. Wilkinson, aged 80 yeares; Edwd. Houghton, aged 85 yeares; John Parker, aged 80 yeares; Tho. Clayton, aged 68 yeares; Wm. Calvert, aged 76 yeares; Edwd. Chew, aged 50 yeares; Theo. Aynsworth, aged 52 yeares; Edwd. Craven, aged 70 yeares; Eliz. Craven, aged 80 yeares; Richd. Slater, aged 74 yeares.

Note.—That ye Defendant pleading yt ye sd. Chappell of Lango is built upon a Common in Billington, & yt he is Lord of ye Mannor, & makinge some please of clayme to it, though in truth hee hath noe manner of right soe to doe, hath notwithstanding ye truth of ye case aforesd. dispossessed Mr. Price of ye same, & turned ye same *into a place to read Masse in*, upon which Mr. Price hath petitioned his Majesty, who hath referred ye same to ye Lord Chancellor to make his report herein.

The affidavits put in in support of the Vicar's plea are eighteen in number, but are mainly repetitions of the same facts respecting the former uses of the chapel. I give as an example the affidavit of Thomas Braddyll, Esq.:—

Thomas Braddyll of Portfield in the County of Lancaster, Esqr., aged ffifty seaven yeares or thereabouts, maketh oath that he severall tymes before the late Warres broke out in these kingdoms, did hear Mr. Bullock, Mr. Whittaker, and Mr. Midghall (ye known Curatts at Langoe) preach and read prayers and service in the Chapell of Lango within the parish of Blackborne in the said county, where was usually a very considerable auditory. And this deponent further said that the said Chapell was accounted and (always dureing this deponent's remembrance) esteemed to be a Chapell of Ease under Blackborne, and was uniformed and furnished with a pulpitt, Bell, Communion table, and seats, and severall gentlemen and others who had land lyeinge within Billington and other places neer the said Chapell had particuler seats therein which they claymed & used as they pleased. And in particuler this deponents father in his life tyme had and this dept. since his death claymed and used an antient seat in the said chapell, which he claymes in right of and as belonginge to his house called Brock-hall lying within Billington aforesaid. And this dept. also saith that (as he hath heard) one of his Ancestors gave ten pounds in trust that the interest thereof should goe & be bestowed towards the repairs of the said Chapell, which Interest is paid accordingly to certain persons entrusted for that purpose. And further this dept. saith that severall tymes at Billington Court there have been two persons elected to be wardens for the said Chapell, to take care of ye repairs thereof, who yearly made their accounts concerning the same.

THO. BRADDYLL.

Having heard the Petition of Vicar Price, and the ample

evidence in support of the Vicar's claim, as well as the pleas of the respondent, the Lord Chancellor announced his decree. It is dated June 16th, 1688, and the original copy of it, with the autograph of Jeffreys, is endorsed upon the back of the Petition itself. The terms of the decree were these:—

[*Decree*]—All Parties concerned attended me this day, with the Counsel. Upon hearing what could be alledged on the other side, we do hereby order, by and with the consent of all parties concerned, that possession of the said Chapel be forthwith delivered to the Petitioner Francis Price. And whereas the said Mr. Bartholomew Walmsley hath laid out several sums of money upon the repairs of said Chapel, I do by the like consent, order them to be referred to the Right Rev. Father in God the Lord Bishop of Chester, to order what sum of money shall be paid by the said Mr. Price and his Parish to Mr. Walmsley for the same.

(Signed) JEFFREYS C.

Below, on the same sheet, is a record of a further decision, by the Bishop of Chester, upon Mr. Bartholomew Walmesley's claim to compensation for his expenditure in altering the interior of the chapel. The Bishop rules that:—"In regard "Mr. Walmsley laid out this money about the repaires of "Lango Chappel after sufficient notice given that the Chappel "undoubtedly belonged to the Mother Church of Blackburn, "his Lordship the Bishop of Chester would allow nothing at "all for the said repaires."

The chapel of Langho having thus been restored to the custody of the Vicar of the Mother Church, an application was shortly afterwards made by the steward of Mr. Walmesley for permission to hold the annual court of the manor in the chapel, as had theretofore been the custom, that being the only available place for such a court in the township. The request does not seem to have been complied with. Some contention still continued between the Vicar of Blackburn and the lord of Billington with regard to the right of the lord to charge a rent for the land enclosed from the common to form the church-yard. About twenty years before, it had been testified by Mr. Edward Chew, of Billington, concerning a payment of 3s. 4d. made to the lord for the grass cut in the

chapel-yard, as follows:—"As for the chapel-yard, I could "never hear that it was leased, but only paid (by them that "was tenant there) 3s. 4d. to the Lord of the Manor of "Billington, and dressing the chappel within and maintaining "the gates and styles."

On Vicar Price's recovery of Langho chapel, its interior was refitted with pulpit, communion-table, and pews for Protestant worship; and the Vicar made provision for the more regular performance of Divine service here. The sum assigned to Langho under the Sancroft Trust was £5 per annum, now increased to about £14. In March, 1689, it is in writing that "Harwood and Langho, two Chappells, were supplyed by "Mr. Sherdley, a conformable minister; his maintenance "from both about £35 per annum or upward." By uniting the cure of the two neighbouring chapelries of Great Harwood and Langho, a stipend was obtained that, if small, sufficed in those times to procure the ministrations of a competent curate. Subsequently, the Vicar signed an agreement, dated the 15th October, 1690, with John Barlow, then curate of Church-kirk in Whalley parish, by which the latter was admitted into "the curateship of Harwood Magna and Langho." The conditions of appointment were that the said John Barlow should reside in one or other of the two chapelries; and with respect to the chapel of Langho, that he should "read prayers "and preach so many Sundays in the afternoon throughout "the whole year at the Chappel of Langho, as a proportionable "stipend can be procured from the Lord Archbishop, Mrs. "Fleetwood (Lessee of the Rectory lands of Blackburn), the "Inhabitants of the said Chapelry, and others, to satisfy the "said John Barlow for his pains." Mr. Barlow was to be entitled to the surplice-fees of Great Harwood; but "forasmuch as all the surplice fees within the chappelry of Langho "have all along belonged to the Vicar of Blackburne for the "time being (since they were alienated from the appropriator),

" the foresaid Vicar, Francis Price, together with the free " consent of the said John Barlow, doth make these following " determinations and allotments concerning the said surplice- " fees, viz., that the said John Barlow shall receive churching- " dues of all such women as shall be churched at Lango, " likewise burying-dues for all such persons as shall be " buried there; the said John Barlow shall alsoe receive full " marriage-dues (viz., 2s. 6d. upon a publication of Bannes, " and 5s. upon a License) of all couples as dwell within the " said chappelry of Lango, and are married at the said " chappell by the said John Barlow; and if it so happen that " any person inhabiting within the chappelry of Lango be " married at Lango to another person inhabiting out of the " said chapelry, within the proper precincts of the Mother " Church of Blackburne, then the said John Barlow shall pay " to the Vicar of the said Church for the time being one halfe " of the fees that shall be due for every such marriage," &c.

The chapelry records include the following note concerning the affairs of Langho Church in the year 1714 :—" In Lango " Chapel the offices of the Church were at that time performed " only every other Sunday, by reason of the smallness of the " salary. There are a great many Roman Catholics within " this chapelry, who, 'tis reported, go to Mass at Nicholas " Sherburn's at Stonyhurst." The Endowments then were :— " Out of the Archbishop's Lands at Thornley (Sancroft Trust) " £5; out of the Rectory of Blackburn £2 6s. 8d.; total " £7 6s. 8d." Bishop Gastrell's record, in his *Notitia* of the Diocese of Chester, made a little later, is to the same purport.

The maintenance for a curate at Langho was thus still insignificant. But in 1749, a grant was offered to the chapelry out of the Fund of Queen Anne's Bounty, upon condition of a corresponding subscription of the parishioners, for the permanent augmentation of the living. Dated July 3rd, 1749, is a manuscript record of the local " Subscriptions

"towards raising the Bounty for the Chappell of Langoe, as "collected by Robert Hayhurst and Dr. Chew, and paid to "the Rev. Mr. Wollin, Vicar of Blackburn." Among the chief donors are :—Sir Nathaniel Curzon, Bart., £20 ; Lady Betty Warren, £5 5s. ; Thos. Braddyll, Esq., £10 ; Robert Hayhurst, £5 ; James Chew, £5 ; Thomas Clayton (of Little Harwood), £5 ; Ralph Leeming, £1 1s. ; Lady Lever, £1 1s. ; Rev. Mr. Smalley, £3 3s. ; John Smalley, £2 10s. ; Mrs. Nightingale, £2 2s. ; Sir Ralph Asshston, Bart., £1 1s. ; Mr. Edward Chew, £1 1s., &c. The total then raised, including sums left by the late Wm. Hayhurst (£20), by Mr. Braddyll (£10), and money formerly collected (£24 10s. 6d.) was £127 3s. The next year (1750) a further sum of £91 10s. 6d. was subscribed, making up the total towards augmentation to £228 12s. The donors of this second list include :—Dr. Potter, £10 ; Lady Betty Warren, £5 5s. ; Lord Derby, £5 5s. ; Mr. Chetham, £5 5s. ; Mr. Johnson and Farmers of Rectory, £5 5s. ; Mr. Wollin (Vicar of Blackburn), £5 ; Mr. Joseph Wollin, £3 3s. ; Mr. Sudell, £2 2s. ; Mr. Baron, £1 1s. ; Mr. Chancellor Peploe £2 2s. ; Mr. Brooks, £1 1s. ; Sir Harry Houghton, £1 1s. ; Mrs. Livesey, £1 1s. ; Mr. James Whalley, £1 1s. ; Mr. John Whalley, £1 1s. ; Mr. Joseph Whalley, £1 1s. ; Mr. Falkner, £1 1s. ; Mr. Leland, £1 1s. ; the Vicar of Whalley, £1 1s. By these local benefactions the grant of £200 from Queen Anne's Bounty was secured, and a substantial addition made to the endowment of the benefice.

The annals of Langho chapelry, for the succeeding 120 years, have been as uneventful as those of most of our rural churches. On July 19th, 1823, the appended statement of the value of the curacy of Langho was rendered :—

Tithes of Withnell	£63	0	0
Interest of £200 Royal Bounty @ 2 %...	4	0	0
Interest of £600 Parlty. Grant @ 4 % ...	24	0	0
From the Estates in Thornley (abt.)	14	0	0
Surplice Fees—about	0	12	0
	£105	12	0

I conclude the sketch of this ancient chapel with a list of the Incumbents there, so far as known. Of several able and worthy clergymen, who in recent times have held the living of Langho in the early part of their career, I must name the Rev. John Rushton, D.D., who began his ministry at Langho, in 1822, and after most useful labours in humbler spheres, was eventually advanced to the important Vicariate of Blackburn parish, having previously filled the office of Archdeacon of Manchester. Dr. Rushton held the Vicarage of Blackburn fourteen years, and died there in February, 1868. His successor at Langho was the Rev. Robert Nowell Whitaker, M.A. (now Vicar of Whalley), a younger son of Dr. T. D. Whitaker, the distinguished antiquary.

List of Incumbents of the Perpetual Curacy of Langho.

Name.	Date.
— Decoy	*circ.* 1620-5
— Johnson . . .	„ 1630
Richard Bullock . .	„ 1631-32
— Woods	„ 1640-45
— Whitaker . . .	—
— Midghall . . .	—
James Critchlow . .	1649
— Sherdley . . .	*ext.* 1689
John Barlow . . .	1690-1707
Christ. Whitewell .	*circ.* 1736
Robert Smith . . .	1751
Joseph Thompson .	1754
Thomas Elleray . . .	1756-73
William Barton . .	1795-1802
George Wareing . .	1803-1813
Thos. Hy. Backhouse	1814-1822
John Rushton . .	1822-1825
Robt. N. Whitaker .	1828-1840
Chas. Arnold Chew .	1840
Thomas Dent . .	1841-1844
Jonathan Beilby .	1845
J. F. Coates (killed 1859)	1845-1859
Dudley Hart, M.A. .	1859-1868
Matthew Hedley, M.A. (Present Vicar.)	1868