

**REMAINS, HISTORICAL AND LITERARY,
CONNECTED WITH THE PALATINE COUNTIES
OF LANCASTER AND CHESTER, VOL. 17. -
NEW SERIES; THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH &
MANOR OF MICHIGAN IN THE COUNTY OF
LANCASTER. PART III; PP.461-683**

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GEORGE T. O. BRIDGEMAN

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THE
History of the Church & Manor of Wigan

IN THE
COUNTY OF LANCASTER.

BY THE HONOURABLE AND REVEREND
GEORGE T. O. BRIDGEMAN,
*Rector of Wigan, Honorary Canon of Liverpool, and
Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen.*
(AUTHOR OF "A HISTORY OF THE PRINCES OF SOUTH WALES," ETC.)

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PART III.
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History of the Church and Manor of Wigan.

PART III.

ON the deprivation of bishop Bridgeman a nonconformist minister was put into possession of the church and parsonage of Wigan.

JAMES BRADSHAW, the presbyterian rector who succeeded Bridgeman, entered upon the cure about 1643. He was the son of John Bradshaw, of Darcy Lever, near Bolton-le-Moors, a gentleman of good family, by Alice, daughter of Robert Lever, of Darcy Lever, his first wife.¹ Mr. John Bradshaw, the father, died in 1662,² and was succeeded at Darcy Lever Hall by his son James, the subject of this memoir.

James Bradshaw was born at Darcy Lever³ about the year 1612.⁴ Dr. Calamy informs us that his father sent his three sons to Oxford, where they were brought up to the three learned professions,—of law, divinity, and physic.⁵

The above-mentioned James Bradshaw was educated at Brazenose College, Oxford, and while rector of Wigan he lived at the

¹ Dugdale's *Visitation of Lancashire*, Chetham Soc., vol. lxxxiv. p. 51. Arms of Bradshaw of Darcy Lever, as entered in Dugdale's *Visitation* by Mr. James Bradshaw, 11th March, 1664: *Argent, between two bendlets, three escallops, sable.*

² *Ibid.*

³ Calamy's *Nonconformist's Memorial*, vol. i. p. 337. This James Bradshaw has often been confused with another James Bradshaw, who was born at Hacking, in the parish of Bolton, was educated at Christ Church, Oxford, and afterwards became minister of Hindley, in the parish of Wigan, from which he was ejected after the Restoration (Calamy's *Nonconf. Mem.*, vol. ii. p. 364).

⁴ Dugdale's *Vis.*

⁵ Calamy's *Nonconf. Mem.*, vol. i. p. 337.

hall or parsonage house.¹ In 1644 he made himself notorious by encouraging the siege of Lathom House in a series of violent sermons. Preaching from Jeremiah xv. 14, he compared Lathom's seven towers to the seven heads of the beast, and the noble and courageous lady of Lathom to the scarlet whore and the whore of Babylon.²

The unhappy condition to which the inhabitants of Wigan were reduced in Bradshaw's time is graphically described in the following statement preserved in the *Civil War Tracts of Lancashire*:

"A true representation of the present sad and lamentable condition of the county of Lancaster, and particularly of the towns of Wigan, Ashton, and the parts adjacent.

The hand of God is evidently seen stretched out upon the county, chastening it with a three-corded scourge of sword, pestilence, and famine, all at once afflicting it. They have borne the heat and burden of a first and second war in an especial manner above other parts of the nation. Through them the two great bodies of the late Scotch and English armies passed, and in their very bowels was that great fighting, bloodshed, and breaking. In this county hath the plague of pestilence been raging these three years and upwards, occasioned chiefly by the wars. There is a very great scarcity and dearth of all provisions, especially of all sorts of grain, particularly that kind by which that country is most sustained, which is full six-fold the price that of late years it hath been. All trade, by which they have been much supported, is utterly decayed; it would melt any good heart to see the numerous swarms of begging poor, and the many families that pine away at home, not having faces to beg; very many now craving alms at other men's doors, who were used to give others alms at their doors;—to see paleness, nay death, appear in the cheeks of the poor, and often to hear of some found dead in their houses, or highways, for want of bread.

But particularly the towns of Wigan and Ashton, with the neighbouring parts, lying at present under the sore stroke of God in the pestilence, in one whereof are full two thousand poor who, for three months and

¹ Calamy's *Nonconf. Mem.*, vol. i. p. 337.

² *Chronicle of the First Siege of Lathom House.*

upwards have been restrained, no relief to be had for them in the ordinary course of law, there being none at present to act as justices of the peace; the collections in our congregations (their only supply hitherto) being generally very slack and slender, those wanting ability to help who have hearts to pity them. Most men's estates being much drained by the wars, and now almost exhausted by the present scarcity and many other burdens incumbent upon them, there is no bonds to keep in the infected hunger-starved poor, whose breaking out jeopardeth all the neighbourhood; some of them, already being at the point to perish through famine, have fetched in and eaten carrion and other unwholesome food, to the destroying of themselves and increasing of the infection; and, the more to invoke pity and mercy, it may be considered that this fatal contagion had its rise evidently from the wounded soldiers of our army left there for cure.

All which is certified to some of the reverend ministers of the city of London, by the mayor, minister, and other persons of credit, inhabitants in, or well wishers to, and well acquainted with, the town of Wigan, together with four godly and faithful ministers of Lancashire, by providence in this city at present.

Now if God shall stir up the hearts of any or more congregations in and about the city of London (the premises considered) to yield their charitable contribution to the necessities of these afflicted and distressed parts and places, it will be carefully sought after, and thankfully received by Mr. James Wainwright, Mr. Thomas Markland, Mr. James Winstanley, and Mr. John Leaver, or some of them, and faithfully disposed according to Christian discretion, by Major-General Ashton, William Ashurst, Peter Brokes, Esquires, Mr. Jolly, mayor of Wigan, together with Mr. Richard Heyricke, Mr. Charles Herle, Mr. Alexander Horrockes, and Mr. James Hyet, ministers of the gospel, or some of them.

Ambrose Jolly, Mayor	} of the town } of Wigan.
James Bradshaw, Minister	
John Standish, } Ralph Markland, } Bailiffs	
James Hyet,	} Ministers of } Lancashire."
Richard Hollingworth,	
Isaac Ambrose,	
John Tilsley,	

This statement is dated May 24, 1649.