

**Letter to Bishop Wilberforce from 128 Deddington 'Memorialists'
appealing for the Reverend James Brogden to be employed elsewhere**

"To the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Oxford.

"The Memorial of the undersigned Inhabitants of the Parish of Deddington,

"Sheweth,

"That your Memorialists have heard with alarm, that in consequence of arrangements which have been made with some of his creditors, the Rev. James Brogden purposes to resume the pastoral charge of this parish.

"That the Rev. J. Brogden entered on his residence, in Deddington, in the early part of the year 1848. At the commencement of the year 1850, he left under pecuniary difficulties. The Rev. Dr. Wilson, of Worton, gratuitously undertook the care of the parish. The living was sequestered.

"That in August, 1853, when it became known that arrangements were being made by Mr. Brogden for his return, a correspondence took place, and a Memorial was presented on behalf of the parish to the late Dean of Ely (who had been collecting money for Mr. Brogden's family), for the purpose of preventing, if possible, his coming back to Deddington.

"That in spite of the efforts which were made with this object, he did return: the living was sequestered for the second time, and the parish was left to his ministrations with the following results.

"The parishioners began to desert their parish church, until the congregation dwindled down to a very small number, and the communicants fell off to a smaller number than was ever remembered here, being on one occasion only two.

"The service in the church was at one period entirely neglected by Mr. Brogden; the bells chimed at the usual hour, and the few who attended, found, on going to the church, that in consequence of the Vicar having gone to London on that day (Sunday), there would be no service.

"The week day National Schools, together with the Boys' Sunday School, were entirely closed.

"In the year 1856, the living was sequestered for the third time, and Mr. Brogden again left Deddington; and saving the short residence of the Rev. Charles H. Travers, the parish was left without any resident pastor.

"In 1857, the Rev. John H. Burgess was appointed by your Lordship. Under his ministration, the congregations on Sunday, vary, including the school children, from three to six hundred; and those of the week day evening services, from thirty to one hundred. The Sunday Schools are now attended by one hundred and eighty children; the week day schools by two hundred and seventy-six children.

"The number of communicants are about one hundred and sixty.

"The local charities, which consist of the clothing club, the coal fund, the lying-in charity, and the schools, are now all well supported, and in an efficient state; but we fear they would materially suffer by the Vicar's return.

"During the last year, the raising of £2,000 has been contemplated, £1,320 of which has been already promised, in order completely to restore our parish church. This has been commenced and energetically carried on; but we feel assured it must be entirely stopped, and the work left in a most unfinished state, should the Rev. J. Brogden return.

"Your Lordship's memorialists regret extremely, that so many of their fellow-townsmen should have been so long suffering from the heavy debts which Mr. Brogden incurred during his residence amongst them, and they sincerely hope that some safe arrangement can be made to insure those debts being liquidated: but at the same time they would assure your Lordship, that the sympathy which they feel for them, extends itself still further when they remember the spiritual wants of a largely populated parish such as this.

"When these facts are laid before your Lordship, and the present satisfactory and well-cared-for condition of this parish is contrasted with its state while it was, at two separate times, under the charge of the Rev. J. Brogden, we think it unnecessary to urge more strongly the great necessity which exists of striving to the utmost to avoid the recurrence of so lamentable a state of things. We therefore entreat your Lordship to co-operate with us in this important matter which, both temporally and spiritually, affects so large a number of persons."

The 128 who signed this may be thus classed:- gentlemen and professional men, 5; farmers, 12; tradesmen and mechanics, 64; pensioners, &c., 3; labourers, 44. The number also contains the treasurer and eight members of the National School committee; the members of the church choir; the clerk, sexton, and organ-blower.

That the Vicar of Sandford means what he writes, when he expresses a hope that the Vicar of Deddington's return "may lead to the entire restoration of unity and harmony," &c., he may have full credit given him for. But either of these hundred and twenty-eight of my fellow parishioners I have no doubt, as well as myself, would suggest that "unity and harmony" would be far more likely to prevail in Deddington if our present painstaking ministers remain among us, and Mr. Curme will find our Vicar a residence at Sandford; and as he has now begun to patronise him, will employ him in that quiet little village for his own talented assistant.

I remain, Sir,

ONE NOT LIKELY TO BECOME A CONVERT TO THE
CHURCH OF ROME, OR A FAVOURER
OF THE CHURCH OF GENEVA.

Deddington, April 16.