

REMOVAL OF A MINISTER

to the Committee for Plundered Ministers at West Riding

18 March 1646

In all humility, we whose names are here underwritten certify to your honours that Christopher Dickinson,¹ pretended minister of the parish church of Penistone, whereof we all parishioners, is a man of scandalous life and conversation in these ensuing particulars.

1. Firstly, that during the enemy's command in these parts he was chaplain to Colonel Fitz-Herbert² of Norbury, a noted malignant, and in actual service against the cause of King and Parliament, and both before and after was a frequenter of the enemy's garrisons.
2. Secondly, that upon removal of Sir Francis Wortley's³ garrison from Penistone, and during the times of trouble, he intruded himself into the ministry at Penistone aforesaid, under pretence of a title from one Mr. Copley, who very honestly, in discharge of his conscience, gave liberty to us to choose for ourselves a minister; but in regard of the then distractions, we were forced to admit of the said Dickinson, albeit we then certified him that if it should please God to mend the times, we purposed not to content ourselves with him. Neither yet has he ever had any lawful calling to, or settlement in, the said vicarage, further than as aforesaid, to any of our knowledges. Nevertheless we have hitherto had no means to remove him, albeit we had made choice of one Mr. Walker, a godly and painful minister, of whom, by reason of his being there, we were disappointed.
3. Thirdly, that during all the time of his being here, which is near hand three years, he has preached, though sometimes twice a day, yet either altogether or, for the most part, other men's works; and one thing 4 or 5 times, or oftener, repeated on so many several days, without any progress at all, only tiring the time with tautologies and vain interactions, to the wearying of the hearers and dishonour of the Great God, Whose name ought not to be taken in vain.
4. Fourthly, that he is a common frequenter of alehouses and of idle company, and has been several times drunk since his coming to Penistone; and that before his coming thither, and after his entrance into the ministry, he kept a common tipling house.
5. Fifthly, that about November last, having publicly in the parish church of Penistone given notice of a solemn thanksgiving to be celebrated the week following, with promise to officiate himself, the next day save one he went on foot to Barnsley, a market town 5 miles distant, and there spent the said day of solemnity, and 2 days more, in tipling and drinking, amongst base lewd company and, when he was half-drunk, for want of money sold his gloves.
6. Sixthly, that in January 1645 he was drunk on the fast-day, and not able to keep it, whereupon we were forced to provide one Mr. George Didsbury to perform the office of that day.
7. Seventhly, that being half-drunk, he fought with and abused the schoolmaster and sexton of the said town of Penistone, without any occasion given by them; and that he has had sundry quarrels with other men of worse esteem.
8. Eighthly, that upon these and other, the like mis-carriages, we being desirous to remove such a scandal out of the church, some of us, whose names are here subscribed, about November last, covenanted with him under our hands, to avoid further trouble, to allow him £40 and the benefit of the vicarage till the first day of May next; and he to take the first opportunity to remove. But, suspecting the moneys would not come so

¹ Christopher Dickinson, rector of Penistone (1642–1649)

² Sir John Fitz-Herbert (–1649), royalist Colonel of Dragoons

³ Sir Francis, Baronet Wortley of York (–1652), royalist Colonel of Infantry

soon as he expected and being hopeless of any other place, he gave out in words that he would not go away, whereupon sundry of us, whose names are subscribed, met again at Penistone 27 February last, where, after some conference of the matters aforesaid had with the said Mr. Dickinson, we covenanted with him to pay him the £40 above specified 18 March then next following. Whereupon he promised to perform any covenant we should tender him for his removal, so it were not to repay the money again; in pursuance whereof, this instant day, being 18 March, we have tendered him the money according to our agreement, which, notwithstanding, he has refused to accept of.

That to uphold himself in these his wicked courses, he has endeavoured to get the hands of his neighbors to certain certificates of his good abearance in his place since his coming to Penistone; which, as we are informed, he has done from divers malignant spirits, both in this parish and other places adjacent, to the present state of reformation, and also from sundry other illiterate men, some of whose names are here subscribed, whom he has deceived by counterfeiting some of our hands that made the agreement with him and here subscribed also, as in other cases formerly has done, without either consent or notice of to the parties. All which we humbly present to your honours' consideration as mere naked truths, every of which particulars will be justified, if need should require, by the others of divers evidible witnesses.

“Yorkshire Diaries and Autobiographies in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” *Publications of the Surtees Society* 65 (London: Spottiswoode, 1875):19–21.