

LETTERS OF DOCTOR RIDLEY,

LATE BISHOP OF LONDON :

WHO, AFTER LONG IMPRISONMENT, WAS SPITEFULLY AND CRUELLY
MARTYRED IN OXFORD, FOR THE CONSTANT CONFESSION OF
GOD'S TRUE RELIGION; IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
GOD, 1555, THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF OCTOBER.

LETTERS

OF

BISHOP RIDLEY.

REPRINTED FROM

COVERDALE'S "LETTERS OF THE MARTYRS"; THE WORKS
OF STRYPE; BURNET'S "HISTORY OF THE RE-
FORMATION"; THE "ACTS AND
MONUMENTS OF FOXE";

TOGETHER WITH OTHERS FROM

THE HARLEIAN COLLECTION OF MSS. IN THE BRITISH
MUSEUM, AND THE MSS. IN THE LIBRARY OF
EMMANUEL COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

LETTER I. (BURNET.)

*To the protector¹, concerning the visitation of the University
of Cambridge.*

Right honourable,

I wish your grace the holy and wholesome fear of God, because I am persuaded your grace's goodness to be such unfeignedly, that even wherein your grace's letters doth sore blame me, yet in the same the advertisement of the truth shall not displease your grace; and also perceiving that the cause of your grace's discontentation was wrong information, therefore I shall beseech your grace to give me leave to shew your grace, wherein it appeareth to me that your grace is wrong informed.

Your grace's letters blameth me, because I did not (at the first, before the visitation began, having knowledge of the matter) shew my mind. The truth is, before God, I never had, nor could get any fore-knowledge of the matter, of the uniting of the two colleges², before we had begun, and had

[¹ Edward Duke of Somerset. Ed.]

[² These two Colleges were Clare Hall, of which Dr Madew was Master, and Trinity Hall, of which Stephen Gardiner was Master. It was intended to unite these two, and to form out of them one college of civilians. Clare Hall, however, refused to submit; and as it was then full of Northern men, Ridley, who supported their refusal, was thought to have been induced to take this step by his partiality for his own countrymen. This visitation took place in May, 1549, at which time Robert Rugge was Chancellor. Ed.]

entered two days in the visitation; and that your grace may plainly thus well perceive.

A little before Easter I, being at Rochester, received letters from Mr Secretary Smith and the Dean of Paul's, to come to the visitation of the University, and to make a sermon at the beginning thereof; whereupon I sent immediately a servant up to London to the Dean of Paul's, desiring of him to have had some knowledge of things there to be done, because I thought it meet that my sermon should somewhat have savoured of the same.

From Mr Dean I received a letter, instructing me only, that the cause of the visitation was, to abolish statutes and ordinances, which maintained papistry, superstition, blindness and ignorance; and to establish and set forth, such as might further God's word and good learning; and else, the truth is, he would shew me nothing, but bade me be careless, and said, there were informations [instructions] how all things were for to be done; the which, I take God to witness, I did never see, nor could get knowledge what they were, before we were entered in the visitation two days, although I desired to have seen them in the beginning.

Now, when I *had* seen the instructions, the truth is, I thought, peradventure, the master and company would have surrendered up their college; but when their consent, after labour and travail taken therein two days, could not be obtained, and then we began secretly to consult (all the commissioners thinking it best that every man should say his mind plainly, that in execution there might appear but one way to be taken of all) there when it was seen to^a some, that without the consent of the present incumbents, by the king's absolute power, we might proceed to the uniting of the two colleges, I did in my course simply and plainly declare my conscience, and that there only, secretly, among ourselves alone, with all kind of softness, so that no man could be justly offended. Also I perceive, by your grace's letters, I have been noted of some for my barking there; and yet to bark, lest God should be offended, I cannot deny, but indeed it is a part of my profession; for God's word condemneth the dumb dogs that will not bark and give warning of God's displeasure.

^a seen to, i.e. thought by.

As for that that was suggested to your grace, that by my aforesaid barking I should dishonour the king's majesty, and dissuade others from the execution of the king's commission, God is my judge, I intended, according to my duty to God and the king, the maintenance and defence of his highness' royal honour and dignity. If that be true, that I believe is true, which the prophet saith, *Honor regis judicium diligit*; and as the commissioners must needs, and I am sure will all testify, that I dissuaded no man, but contrariwise exhorted every man (with the quiet of other) to satisfy their own conscience; desiring only, that if it should otherwise be seen unto them, that I might, either by my absence or silence, satisfy mine. The which my plainness when some otherwise than according to my expectation did take, I was moved thereupon (both for the good opinion I had, and yet have, of your grace's goodness, and also specially because your grace had commanded me so to do) to open my mind, by my private letters, freely unto your grace.

And thus I trust your grace perceiveth now, both that anon, after knowledge had, I did utter my conscience; and also that the matter was not opened unto me before the visitation was two days begun.

If in this I did amiss, that before the knowledge of the instructions I was ready to grant to the execution of the commission; truly I had rather herein acknowledge my fault, and submit myself to your grace's correction, than after knowledge had, then wittingly and willingly commit that thing whereunto my conscience doth not agree, for fear of God's displeasure.

It is a godly wish that is wished in your grace's letters, that flesh, and blood, and country, might not more weigh with some men than godliness and reason; but the truth is, country in this matter, whatsoever some men do suggest unto your grace, shall not move me; and that your grace shall well perceive, for I shall be as ready, as any other, first thence to expel some of my own country, if the report which is made of them can be tried true.

And as for that your grace saith of flesh and blood, that is, the favour or fear of mortal man: yea, marry, sir, that is a matter of weight indeed, and the truth is, (alas, my own

feebleness!) of that I am afraid. But I beseech your grace, yet once again, give me good leave, wherein here I fear my own frailty, to confess the truth. Before God, there is no man this day, (leaving the king's majesty for the honour only excepted) whose favour or displeasure I do either seek or fear, as your grace's favour or displeasure; for under God, both your grace's authority, and my bounden duty for your grace's benefits, bind me so to do. So that if the desire of any man's favour, or fear of displeasure, should weigh more with me than godliness and reason; truly, (if I may be bold to say the truth), I must needs say, that I am most in danger to offend herein, either for desire of your grace's favour, or for fear of your grace's displeasure. And yet I shall not cease (God willing) daily to pray God so to stay and strengthen my frailty with holy fear, that I do not commit the thing for favour or fear of any mortal man, whereby my conscience may threaten me with the loss of the favour of the living God, but that it may please him, of his gracious goodness, (howsoever the world goes) to blow this in the ears of my heart, *Deus dissipavit ossa eorum qui hominibus placuerint*¹; and this, *Horrendum est incidere in manus Dei viventis*²; and again, *Nolite timere eos qui occidunt corpus*³.

Wherefore I most humbly beseech your grace, for God's love, not to be offended with me, for renewing of this my suit unto your grace, which is that, whereunto my conscience cannot well agree, if any such thing chance in this visitation, I may, with your grace's favour, have license, either by mine absence or silence, or other like means, to keep my conscience quiet. I wish your grace, in God, honour and endless felicity. From Pembroke Hall in Cambridge, June 1, 1549⁴.

Your grace's humble and daily orator,

NICH. ROFFEN.

[¹ God hath scattered the bones of those who pleased men. Ed.]

[² It is a horrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Ed.]

[³ Fear not them which kill the body. Ed.]

[⁴ The Protector's reply to this letter will be found, Appendix V.]

LETTER II. (BURNET.)

A Letter of that true Pastor and worthy Martyr, DOCTOR RIDLEY; wherein you may see the singular zeal he had to the glory of God, and the furtherance of his Gospel. Written to MASTER CHEKE, in King Edward's days.

MASTER CHEKE, I wish you grace and peace. Sir, in God's cause, for God's sake, and in his name, I beseech you of your help and furtherance towards God's word. I did talk with you of late, what case I was in concerning my chaplains. I have gotten the good will and grant^a (to be with^{consent} me), of three preachers, men of good learning, and, as I am persuaded, of excellent virtue; which are able, both with life and learning, to set forth God's word in London, and in the whole diocese of the same, where is most need of all parts in England; for from thence goeth example, as you know, into all the rest of the king's majesty's whole realm. The men's names be these. Master Grindall, whom you know to be a man of virtue and learning. Master Bradford, a man by whom (as I am assuredly informed) God hath and doth work wonders, in setting forth of his word. The third is a preacher, the which, for detecting and confuting of the anabaptists and papists in Essex, both by his preaching and by his writing, is enforced now to bear Christ's cross. The two first be scholars in the university. The third is as poor as either of the other twain. Now there is fallen a prebend in Paul's called Cantrells^b, by the death of one Layton. This

[^a The Prebendary of Kentish-Town, Kentissetune, or Cantlers, and sometime Kentillers, alias Kentish-Town, hath the Tenth Stall on the right side of the choir; and the corps of his prebend lies in the parish of St Pancras, Middlesex.

Grindall does not appear from the list of prebendaries to have succeeded; for Richard Layton was appointed on the resignation of W. Kemp, May 9, 1523; William Layton was appointed on the death of Richard Layton, Oct. 17, 1544; and John Bradford (the martyr) was appointed on the death of Richard Layton by Bishop Ridley, Aug. 24, 1551; and he was succeeded after his martyrdom by John Feckenham, Jan. 25, 1553.

Edmund Grindall was appointed *Præcentor* of St Paul's by Bishop Ridley, Aug. 24, 1551, which he resigned in 1554.

John Rogers was made Prebendary of St Pancras, Aug. 24, 1551; burnt Feb. 4, 1555. See Newcourt's Repertorium of the Diocese of

prebend is an honest man's living, of thirty-four pounds and better in the king's books. I would with all my heart give it unto Master Grindall; and so I should have him continually with me, and in my diocese, to preach.

^b hindered.

But alas, sir, I am letted^b by the means (I fear me) of such as do not fear God. One Master William Thomas, one of the clerks to the council, hath in times past set the council upon me, to have me to grant that Layton might have alienated the said prebend unto him and his heirs for ever. God was mine aid and defender, that I did not consent unto his ungodly enterprise. Yet I was so then handled before the council, that I granted that whensoever it should fall, I should not give it, before I should make the king's majesty privy unto it and of acknowledge^c, before the collation of it. Now Layton is departed, and the prebend is fallen, and certain of the council (no doubt, by this ungodly man's means,) have written unto me to stay the collation.

^c of cognizance, acquainted.

And whereas he despaireth that ever I would assent that a preacher's living should be bestowed on him, he hath procured letters unto me, subscribed with certain of the council's hands, that now the king's majesty hath determined it unto the furniture^d of his highness' stable. Alas, sir, this is a heavy hearing. When papistry was taught, there was nothing too little for the teachers. When the bishop gave his benefices unto idiots, unlearned, ungodly, for kindred, for pleasure, for service, and other worldly respects, all was then well allowed. Now, where a poor living is to be given unto an excellent clerk, a man known and tried to have both discretion and also virtue, and such a one as, before God, I do not know a man (yet unplaced and unprovided for) more meet, to set forth God's word in all England; when a poor living (I say), which is founded for a preacher, is to be given unto such a man, that then an ungodly person shall procure in this sort letters to stop and let^e the same, alas, Master Cheke, this seemeth unto me to be a right heavy hearing. Is this the fruit of the Gospel? Speak, Master Cheke, speak, for God's sake, in God's cause, unto whomsoever you think may do any good withal. And if you will not speak, then I be-

^d maintenance.

^e hinder.

London, vol. i. pp. 27, 101, 169, 196. Grindall was made a Prebendary of *Westminster* in July, 1552. ED.]

seech you, let these my letters speak unto Master Gates, to Master Wroth, to Master Cecil, whom all I do take for men that do fear God.

It was said here constantly my Lord Chamberlain to have been departed. Sir, though the day be delayed, yet he hath no pardon of long life: and therefore I do beseech his good lordship, and so many as shall read these letters, if they fear God, to help that neither horse, neither yet dog, be suffered to devour the poor livings appointed and founded by godly ordinance to the ministers of God's word. The causes of conscience, which do move me to speak and write thus, are not only those which I declared once in the cause of this prebend before the king's majesty's council, which now I let pass; but also now the man Master Grindall, unto whom I would give this prebend, doth move me very much; for he is a man known to be both of virtue, honesty, discretion, wisdom, and learning. And besides all this, I have a better opinion of the king's majesty's honourable council, than (although some of them have subscribed, at this their clerk's crafty and ungodly suit, to such a letter) than, I say, they will let^f, and not suffer, after request made unto them, the living appointed and founded for a preacher, to be bestowed upon so honest and well a learned man.

^f hinder.

Wherefore for God's sake, I beseech you all, help that, with the favour of the council, I may have knowledge of the king's majesty's good pleasure, to give this preacher's living unto Master Grindall. Of late there have been letters directed from the king's majesty and his honourable council unto all the bishops, whereby we be charged and commanded, both in our own persons, and also to cause our preachers and ministers, especially to cry out against the insatiable serpent of covetousness, whereby is said to be such a greediness amongst the people, that each one goeth about to devour other; and to threaten them with God's grievous plagues, both now presently thrown upon them, and that shall be likewise in the world to come. Sir, what preachers shall I get to open and set forth such matters, and so as the king's majesty and the council do command them to be set forth, if either ungodly men, or unreasonable beasts, be suffered to pull away and devour the good and godly learned preachers'

livings? Thus I wish you, in God, ever well to face and to help Christ's cause, as you would have help of him at your most need.

From Fulham this present, the 23rd of July, 1551.

Yours in Christ,

NICHOLAS LONDON.

LETTER III. (BURNET.)

A Letter written by BISHOP RIDLEY to his well-beloved the Preachers within the Diocese of London setting forth the sins of those times.

AFTER hearty commendations,—having regard¹, especially at this time, to the wrath of God, who hath plagued us diversely, and now with extreme punishment of sudden death poured upon us, for causes best known unto his high and secret judgment; but as it may seem unto man, for our wicked living which daily increases, so that not only in our conversations the fear of God is, alas! far gone from before our eyes, but also the world is grown into that uncharitableness, that one, as it appears plainly, goes about to devour another, moved with insatiable covetousness, and contrary to God's word and will, and to the extreme peril and damnation of Christ's flock, bought so dearly with his precious blood, and to the utter destruction of this whole commonwealth, except God's anger be shortly appeased. Wherein, according to my bounden duty, I shall, God willing, in my own person, be diligent and labour; and I also exhort and require you, first in God's name, and by authority of him committed unto me in that behalf, and also in the king's majesty's name, from whom I have authority and special commandment thus to do—that as you are called to be setters forth of God's word, and to express the same in your lives, so now in your exhortations and sermons, most wholesomely and earnestly, tell unto men their sins, with God's punishments lately poured upon us for the same, now before our eyes; according to that word, "Tell unto my people

[¹ These words "having regard" seem to refer to the "letters" mentioned in the preceding letter. Ed.]

their wickednesses." And especially beat down and destroy, with all your power and ability, that greedy and devouring serpent of covetousness, which now so universally reigns. Call upon God for repentance, and excite to common prayer and amendment of life, with most earnest petitions, that hereby God's hand may be stayed, the world amended, and obedience of subjects and faithfulness of ministers declared accordingly. Thus I bid you heartily well to fare.

From London, July 25, 1551.

Yours in Christ,

NICHOLAS LONDON.

LETTER IV. (STRYPE.)

BISHOP RIDLEY to DOCTOR PARKER.

MR DOCTOR, I wish you grace and peace. Sir, I pray you refuse not to take a day at the Cross². I may have, if I would call without any choice, enow; but in some, alas! I desire more learning, in some a better judgment, in some more virtue and godly conversation, and in some more soberness and discretion; and he in whom all these do meet shall not do well, in my judgment, to refuse to serve God in that place. Of which number because I take you to be, therefore, (leaving at this time to charge you with answering for the contrary to the king and his council), I must charge you to take a day as you will answer the contrary to Almighty God at your own peril. If the day be thought not commodious for you, I shall appoint another for it. But if I should discharge you from that place,—for the time hereafter in good faith my conscience should accuse me, and tell me that I did rather go about to satisfy your request, (whom, the truth is, as your kindness hath bound me, I should be glad to gratify) than to set forth God's cause. Thus fare you well, from my house in London; and I pray you commend me to Mrs Parker, whom although I do not know, yet, for the fame of her virtue, in God I do love.

Yours in Christ,

25 July, 1551.

NICHOLAS LONDON.

[² Paul's Cross. Ed.]

LETTER V.

To SIR JOHN GATE and SIR W. CECIL, *from the Lansdowne MS. in the British Museum.*

DR RIDLEY, *Bishop of London*, to SIR JOHN GATE, *Vice-Chamberlain*, and SIR W. CECIL, *Secretary to Edw. VI. for their interest with the King, that he might have the nomination of the Person to be appointed to the Chantership of St Paul's, about to be vacant by MR GRINDALL'S translation to a Bishopric, Nov. 18, 1552.*

Right Honourable,

ALTHOUGH, if I would believe every tale, I might fear rather that ye are offended with me, than to think to obtain any pleasure at your hands, and so to be more afraid of your displeasure, than to hope to speed my request; yet nevertheless, because my conscience doth bear me witness, that neither in heart nor in deed *I have given, or minded to give either of your worships just occasion to be offended with me*, nor (God willing) never intend to do; therefore I will, by your leave, be bold with you, in God's cause, even to require you, as I have heretofore been wont to do; for I take this for a true saying: *frons tenera magna conscientia sustinetur*. It may please you to wit, that I understand by the constant rumour which is now spread about in London, that Mr Grindall is or shall be named to be a Bishop in the North parts, of whose preferment I ensure you I give God hearty thanks, that it hath pleased God to move the heart of the King's Majesty to choose such a man of such godly qualities unto such a room. Now, good Mr Vice-Chamberlain and Mr Secretary, ye know both how I did bestow of late three or four prebends, which did fall in my time, and what manner of men they be unto whom I gave them, Grindall, Bradford and Rogers, men known to be so necessary to be abroad in the commonwealth, that I can keep none of them with me in my house. Ye know, I am placed, where *I have daily need of learned men's counsel and conference*: wherefore I beseech you *for God's sake, be so good unto this See of London*, which is the *Spectacle of all England*, as to be petitioners for me in God's cause unto the King's Majesty, that seeing

[The passages in Italics in this letter are underlined in the original. Ed.]

his highness doth perceive, that I did *so well bestow* the Prebend, which Mr Grindall hath of my collation, it may please the same to grant me of his gracious clemency the collation of the same again, that I may therewith call some other like learned man, whom hereafter by God's grace his highness shall think meet likewise to promote, as Mr Grindall is now. If ye would know, unto whom I would this dignity of our church, called the chantership, should be given, surely unto any one of these, either unto Mr Bradford, whom in my conscience I judge more worthy to be a Bishop, than many [a one] of us that be Bishops already, to be a parish priest; or unto Mr Sampson, a preacher; or unto Mr Harvey, a divine and preacher; or unto Mr Grimbald, a preacher; or unto Dr Lancelot Ridley, a preacher: if it would please your goodness to be suitors for me, (nay, not for me, but for God's word's sake), unto the King's Majesty, that the collation may be given unto me for one of these, or any one of these, then I shall surely praise God in you, and think myself ever bound to render unto Almighty God for you entire and hearty thanks. Thus I wish you both, in God, well to fare. From my house in London, this 18th day of November, 1552.

Yours in Christ,

NIC. LONDON.

LETTER VI. (COVERDALE.)

An Answer to a Letter written unto him by WEST, sometime his Chaplain'.

I WISH your grace in God, and love of the truth; without the which truly established in men's hearts by the mighty

[¹ West had been chaplain to Bishop Ridley, but turned to popery in Queen Mary's reign, and, in the beginning of April 1555, he wrote to the bishop, earnestly and affectionately persuading him to consider the danger he was in, and exhorting him not "to stand against learning, or in vain glory," but to return to the church of Rome, for "he must either agree or die." This letter was written in answer: but though West was convinced by it he had done wrong, he wanted courage to renounce his preferments and the world. For some further particulars of West, see the letter of Ridley in reply to that of Grindall, dated from Frankfort, 6 May, 1555. Ed.]

hand of Almighty God, it is no more possible to stand by the truth in Christ in time of trouble, than it is for the wax to abide the heat of the fire. Sir, know you this, that I am (blessed be God!) persuaded that this world is but transitory, and (as St John saith) "the world passeth away and the lust thereof." I am persuaded Christ's words to be true—"Who-soever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven;" and I believe that no earthly creature shall be saved, whom the Redeemer and Saviour of the world shall before his Father deny. This the Lord grant that it may be so grafted, established, and fixed in my heart, that neither things present nor to come, high nor low, life nor death, be able to remove me thence! It is a goodly wish that you wish me, deeply to consider things pertaining unto God's glory: but if you had wished also that neither fear of death, nor hope of worldly prosperity, should let^a me to maintain God's word and his truth, which is his glory and true honour, it would have liked me well. You desire me, for God's sake, to remember myself. Indeed, Sir, now it is time so to do; for so far as I can perceive, it standeth me upon no less danger than of the loss both of body and soul; and, I trow, then it is time for a man to awake, if any thing will awake him. He that will not fear him that threateneth to cast both body and soul into everlasting fire, whom will he fear? With this fear, O Lord, fasten thou together our frail flesh, that we never swerve from thy laws. You say you have made much suit for me. Sir, God grant that you have not in suing for my worldly deliverance impaired and hindered the furtherance of God's word and his truth. You have known me long indeed, in the which time it hath chanced me (as you say) to dislike some things. It is true, I grant: for sudden changes without substantial and necessary cause, and the heady setting forth of extremities, I did never love. Confession unto the minister which is able to instruct, correct, comfort, and inform the weak, wounded, and ignorant conscience, indeed I ever thought might do much good in Christ's congregation, and so, I assure you, I think even at this day. My doctrine and my preaching, you say, you have heard often, and after your judgment have thought it godly, saving only for the sacra-

¹ John ii.
Matt. x.

^a hinder.

Luke xii.

ment; which thing although it was of me reverently handled, and a great deal better than of the rest (as you say), yet in the margin you write warily, and in this world wisely—"and yet methought all sounded not well." Sir, but that I see so many changes in this world and so much alteration, else at this your saying I would not a little marvel. I have taken you for my friend, and a man whom I fancied for plainness and faithfulness, as much (I assure you) as for your learning: and have you kept this so close in your heart from me unto this day? Sir, I consider more things than one, and will not say all that I think. But what need you to care what I think, for any thing that I shall be able to do unto you, either good or harm? You give me good lessons, to stand in nothing against my learning¹, and to beware of vain-glory. Truly, Sir, I herein like your counsel very well, and by God's grace I intend to follow it unto my life's end.

To write unto those whom you name, I cannot see what it will avail me. For this I would have you know, that I esteem nothing available for me, which also will not further the glory of God. And now, because I perceive you have an entire zeal and desire of my deliverance out of this captivity and worldly misery, if I should not bear you a good heart in God again, methink I were to blame. Sir, how nigh the day of my dissolution and departure out of this world is at hand, I cannot tell: the Lord's will be fulfilled, how soon soever it shall come. I know the Lord's words must be verified on me, that I shall appear before the incorrupt Judge, and be accountable to him of all my former life. And although the hope of his mercy is my sheet-anchor of eternal salvation, yet am I persuaded, that whosoever wittingly neglecteth and regardeth not to clear his conscience, he cannot have peace with God nor a lively faith in his mercy. Conscience therefore moveth me (considering you were one of my family and one of my household, of whom then I think I had a special cure, and of all them which were within my house; which indeed ought to have been an example of godliness to all the rest of my cure, not only of

[¹ To rely in no point upon my learning, or to insist on nothing contrary to my better knowledge. Ed.]

good life, but also in promoting of God's word to the uttermost of their power: but alas! now when the trial doth separate the chaff from the corn, how small a deal it is, God knoweth, which the wind doth not blow away! This conscience^b, I say, doth move me) to fear lest the lightness of my family shall be laid to my charge, for lack of more earnest and diligent instruction which should have been done. But blessed be God, which hath given me grace to see this my default, and to lament it from the bottom of my heart, before my departing hence. This conscience doth move me also now to require both you and my friend Doctor Harvey, to remember your promises made to me in times past, of the pure setting forth and preaching of God's word and his truth. These promises, although you shall not need to fear to be charged with them of me hereafter before the world, yet look for none other (I exhort you as my friends), but to be charged with them at God's hand. This conscience and the love that I bear unto you biddeth me now say unto you both in God's name, Fear God, and love not the world; for God is able to cast both body and soul into hell fire. "When his wrath shall suddenly be kindled, blessed are all they that put their trust in him." And the saying of St John is true: "All that is in the world, as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world; and the world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doth the will of God abideth for ever." If this gift of grace, which undoubtedly is necessarily required unto eternal salvation, were truly and unfeignedly grafted and firmly established in men's hearts; they would not be so light, so suddenly to shrink from the maintenance and confession of the truth, as is now, alas! seen so manifestly of so many in these days. But here, peradventure, you would know of me what is the truth. Sir, God's word is the truth, as St John saith, and that even the same that was heretofore. For albeit man doth vary and change as the moon, yet God's word is stable and abideth one for evermore: and of Christ it is truly said, Christ yesterday and to-day, the same is also for ever.

When I was in office, all that were esteemed learned in God's word, agreed this to be a truth in God's word written;

^a knowledge,
the knowing
this.

Psal. ii.

1 John ii.

John xvii.

Ecclus.
xxvii.
Heb. xiii.

that the common prayer of the church should be had in the common tongue. You know I have conferred with many, and I ensure^c you I never found man (so far as I do re-assure. member), neither old nor new, gospeller nor papist, of what judgment soever he was, in this thing to be of a contrary opinion. If then it were a truth of God's word, think you that the alteration of the world can make it an untruth? If it cannot, why then do so many men shrink from the confession and maintenance of this truth, received once of us all? For what is it, I pray you, else, to confess or deny Christ in this world, but to maintain the truth taught in God's word, or for any worldly respect to shrink from the same? This one thing have I brought for an ensample: other things be in like case, which now particularly I need not to rehearse. For he that will forsake wittingly, either for fear or gain of the world, any one open truth of God's word; if he be constrained, he will assuredly forsake God and all his truth, rather than he will endanger himself to lose or to leave that he loveth better in deed than he doth God and the truth of his word. I like very well your plain speaking, wherein you say, I must either agree or die; and I think that you mean of the bodily death, which is common both to good and bad. Sir, I know I must die, whether I agree or no. But what folly were it then to make such an agreement, by the which I could never escape this death, which is so common to all, and also incur the guilt of death and eternal damnation! Lord, grant that I may utterly abhor and detest this damnable agreement so long as I live. And because (I dare say) you wrote of friendship unto me this short earnest advertisement, and, I think, verily wishing me to live and not to die; therefore, bearing you in my heart no less love in God than you do me in the world, I say unto you in the word of the Lord (and that I say to you I say to all my friends and lovers in God), that if you do not confess and maintain, to your power and knowledge, that which is grounded upon God's word, but will, either for fear or gain of the world, shrink and play the *Apostata*, indeed you shall die the death: you know what I mean. And I beseech you all, my true friends and lovers in God, remember what I say; for this

^c *Apostata*
was he
which fled
from his
captain to
the enemy.

He was also so called that departed from the Christians to the Jews and Gentiles.

may be the last time peradventure that ever I shall write unto you.

From Bocardo in Oxford, the 8th day of April, 1554.

N. R.

LETTER VII. (COVERDALE.)

To the brethren remaining in captivity of the flesh, and dispersed abroad in sundry prisons, but knit together in unity of spirit and holy religion, in the bowels of the Lord Jesus.

GRACE, peace, and mercy be multiplied among you. What worthy thanks can we render unto the Lord for you, my brethren? namely, for the great consolation which through you we have received in the Lord; who (notwithstanding the rage of Satan, that goeth about by all manner of subtle means to beguile the world, and also busily laboureth to restore and set up his kingdom again, that of late began to decay and fall to ruin), ye remain yet still unmoveable as men surely grounded upon a strong rock. And now, albeit that Satan by his soldiers and wicked ministers daily (as we hear) draweth numbers unto him, so that it is said of him that he plucketh even the very stars out of heaven, whilst he driveth into some men the fear of death and loss of all their goods, and sheweth and offereth to other some the pleasant baits of the world, namely, riches, wealth and all kind of delights and pleasures, fair houses, great revenues, fat benefices, and what not? and all to the intent they should fall down and worship (not in the Lord, but in the dragon, the old serpent, which is the devil,) that great beast and his image, and should be enticed to commit fornication with the strumpet of Babylon, together with the kings of the earth, with the lesser beast, and with the false prophets, and so to rejoice and be pleasant with her, and to be drunken with the wine of her fornication; yet blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which hath given unto you a manly courage, and hath so strengthened you in the inward man by the power of his Spirit, that you can contemn as well all the

Apoc. xii.

Apoc. xviii.

terrors, as also the vain flattering allurements of the world, esteeming them as vanities, mere trifles, and things of nought: who hath also wrought, planted, and surely stablished in your hearts so stedfast a faith and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, joined with such constancy, that by no engines of antichrist, be they never so terrible or plausible, ye will suffer any other Jesus or any other Christ to be forced upon you, besides him whom the prophets have spoken of before, the Apostles have preached, and the holy martyrs of God have confessed and testified with the effusion of their blood. "In this faith stand ye fast, my brethren, and suffer not yourselves to be brought under the yoke of bondage and superstition any more." For ye know, brethren, how that our Saviour warned his beforehand, that such should come as would point unto the world another Christ, and would set him out with so many false miracles and with such deceivable and subtle practices, that even the very elect (if it were possible) should be thereby deceived; such strong delusion to come did our Saviour give warning of before. But continue ye faithful and constant, and be of good comfort: and remember that our grand Captain hath overcome the world; "for he that is in us is stronger than he that is in the world," and the Lord promiseth unto us, that for the elect's sake the days of wickedness shall be shortened. In the mean season abide ye, and endure with patience as ye have begun; endure, I say, and reserve yourselves unto better times, as one of the heathen poets said. Cease not to shew yourselves valiant soldiers of the Lord, and help to maintain the travailing^a faith of the Gospel. "Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye may receive the promises. For yet a very little while, and he that shall come will come and will not tarry; and the just shall live by faith: but if any withdraw himself, my soul shall have no pleasure in him, saith the Lord. But we are not they which do withdraw ourselves unto damnation, but believe unto the salvation of the soul." Let us not suffer these words of Christ to fall out of our hearts, by any manner of terrors or threatenings of the world: "Fear not them which kill the body." The rest ye know. For I write not unto you as to men which are ignorant of the truth, but which know the truth: and to this end only, that we, agree-

Gal. v.

1 John iv.

Virgil's
Æneid, l.

^a suffering.
Heb. x.

Matt. x.

ing together in one faith, may take comfort one of another, and be the more confirmed and strengthened thereby. We never had a better or a more just cause either to condemn our life, or shed our blood: we cannot take in hand the defence of a more certain, clear, and manifest truth. For it is not any ceremony for the which we contend; but it toucheth the very substance of our whole religion, yea, even Christ himself. Shall we, either^b can we, receive and acknowledge any other Christ, instead of him who is alone the everlasting Son of the everlasting Father, and is the brightness of the glory, and lively image of the substance, of the Father? in whom only dwelleth corporally the fulness of the Godhead, who is the only way, the truth, and the life? Let such wickedness, my brethren, let such horrible wickedness, be far from us. For although there be that are called gods, whether in heaven, either in earth, as there be many gods and many lords, yet unto us there is but one God, which is the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him: but every man hath not knowledge. "This is life eternal (saith St John,) that they know thee to be the only true God, and him whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ." If any therefore would force upon us any other God, besides him whom Paul and the Apostles have taught, let us not hear him, but let us fly from him and hold him accursed. Brethren, ye are not ignorant of the deep and profound subtleties of Satan; for he will not cease to range about you, seeking by all means possible whom he may devour: but play ye the men, and be of good comfort in the Lord. And albeit your enemies and the adversaries of the truth, armed with all worldly force and power that may be, do set upon you; yet be not ye faint-hearted, nor shrink not therefore: but trust unto your captain Christ, trust unto the Spirit of truth, and trust to the truth of your cause; which, as it may by the malice of Satan be darkened, so can it never be clean put out. For we have (high praise be given to God therefore!) most plainly, evidently, and clearly on our side all the prophets, all the apostles, and undoubtedly all the ancient ecclesiastical writers which have written until of late years past. Let us be hearty and of good courage therefore, and tho-

or.

John xvii.

roughly comfort ourselves in the Lord. "Be in no ways ^{Phil. i.} afraid of your adversaries; for that which is to them an occasion of perdition, is to you a sure token of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given, that not only ye should believe on him, but also suffer for his sake." And when ye are railed upon for the name of Christ, remember that by the voice of Peter, yea, and of Christ our Saviour also, ye are counted, with the prophets, with the apostles, and with the holy martyrs of Christ, "happy and blessed ^{1 Pet. iv.} therefore;" for the glory and Spirit of God resteth upon you. On their part our Saviour Christ is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. For what can they else do unto you by persecuting you, and working all cruelty and villainy against you, but make your crowns more glorious, yea, beautify and multiply the same, and heap upon themselves the horrible plagues and heavy wrath of God? And therefore, good brethren, though they rage never so fiercely against us, yet let us not wish evil unto them again; knowing that, while for Christ's cause they vex and persecute us, they are like madmen, most outrageous and cruel against themselves, heaping hot burning coals upon their own heads: but rather let us wish well unto them, "knowing that we are thereunto called ^{1 Pet. iii.} in Christ Jesu, that we should be heirs of the blessing." Let us pray therefore unto God, that he would drive out of their hearts this darkness of errors, and make the light of his truth to shine unto them; that they, acknowledging their blindness, may with all humble repentance be converted unto the Lord, and together with us confess him to be the only true God, which is the Father of lights, and his only Son Jesus Christ, worshipping him in spirit and verity. Amen.

The Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ comfort your hearts in the love of God and patience of Christ. Amen.

Your brother in the Lord (whose name the bearer shall signify unto you), ready always, by the grace of God, to live and die with you.

THE SAME IN LATIN.

(COVERDALE.)

Ad fratres in captivitate carnis, et per varios carceres dispersos, sed in unitate Spiritus atque sacrosanctæ religionis in visceribus Jesu Christi conglutinatos.

GRATIA vobis et pax ac misericordia multiplicetur. Quam gratiarum actionem pro vobis, fratres, reddere possumus Domino super omni consolatione quam de vobis concepimus in Domino? qui (Satana sæviante, et per omnia fallaciarum genera mundo imponere studente, et regnum suum, jampridem collabascere ruinamque minitari incipiens, erigere atque denuo instaurare sedulo satagente), tanquam in petra firmissime fundati, permanetis immobiles. Jamque licet Satan per suos satellites ac ministros multos, ut audivimus, quotidie pertrahat ad sese, ut stellas etiam e cælo prosternere dicatur, aliis nimirum metum mortis, aut amissionis commodorum hujus mundi, incutiendo; aliis pollicendo, aut ostentando illecebras hujus mundi, opes videlicet, atque omnis generis lautitias, ædes amplas, lata prædia, opima sacerdotia, ac quid non? uti prostrati adorent (non in Domino, sed in dracone, serpente antiquo qui est diabolus), magnam illam bestiam et imaginem ejus, utque cum regibus terræ, et minore bestia, et pseudo-prophetis, scortari velint cum Babylonica meretrice, et cum illa lætari atque luxuriari, et de vino prostitutionis ejus inebriari: benedictus tamen Deus et pater Domini nostri Jesu Christi, qui vobis dedit pectus masculum; quique fortitudine spiritus ita vos in interno homine corroboravit, ut isthæc omnia sive terriculamenta, sive hujus mundi illecebras, pro vanitatibus ac meris nugis nihilque tricis contemnere possitis; quique ita cordibus vestris tantam constantiam, fiduciam, ac amorem Domini nostri Jesu Christi persuasit, insevit, alteque impressit, ut nullis Antichristi machinis, quantumvis alioqui aut terribilibus aut plausibilibus, sinatis vobis alium Jesum aut alium Christum, præter eum quem prophetæ prædixerunt, apostoli annunciarunt, et sancti Dei martyres suo sanguine confessi sunt. In hac fide, fratres, state, et ne rursus jugo servitutis aut superstitionis implicemini. Nostis enim, fratres, quemadmodum Servator noster præmonuit suos futurum, ut venirent qui alium Christum

Apoc. xii.

Apoc. xviii.

Matt. xxiv.

mundo ostentarent, eumque tot miraculorum et fallaciarum dolis atque fraudibus commendarent, ut electi quoque, si fieri posset, seducerentur: tam fortem futuram esse prædixit illusionem Salvator. Sed durate, fratres, atque confidite, et meminertis mundum a nostro Agonotheta devictum esse. "Major enim est qui in nobis est, quam qui est in mundo:" ^{1 John iv.} et pollicetur nobis Dominus, ut propter electos dies malitiæ abbrevientur. Interea vos, quod facitis, fratres, durate; durate, inquam, et vosmet rebus, ut quidam gentilium poetarum ^{Virgil's Æneid l.} dixit, servate secundis: pergite præbere vos strenuos athletas Domini, et adjuvate decertantem evangelii fidem. "Patientia ^{Heb. x.} vobis opus est, ut cum voluntatem Domini peregeritis, reportetis promissionem. Adhuc enim pusillum temporis, et qui venturus est veniet, et non tardabit. Justus enim ex fide victurus est; et si se subduxerit, non probabitur animo meo, dicit Dominus. At nos non sumus qui subducimus nos in perditionem, sed ad fidem pertinemus in acquisitionem animæ." Non sinamus, fratres, ullis mundi tonitruis verba illa Christi nostris cordibus excidere: "ne terreamini ab illis qui ^{Matt. x.} occidunt corpus." Reliqua nôstis. Non enim scribo vobis ut ignorantibus veritatem, sed ut eam cognoscentibus, tantum ut per mutuam fidem consolationem communem capiamus confirmemusque. Nulla unquam melior aut major causa vel contemnendæ vitæ vel profundendi sanguinis. Nulla esse potest causa aut certioris veritatis, evidentiæ, aut claritatis. Non enim agitur controversia de ceremoniola aliqua, sed de substantia universæ religionis nostræ, adeoque de Christo ipso. Num alium Christum, pro eo qui solus est æterni Patris æternus filius, qui est splendor gloriæ et expressa imago substantiæ Patris, in quo uno plenitudo divinitatis corporaliter inhabitat, qui est solus via, veritas et vita, admittere agnoscereque volumus aut possumus? Absit, fratres, absit tanta procul impietas a nobis. "Nam quanquam etiam sint ^{1 Cor. viii.} qui dicantur dii, sive in cælo sive in terra, quemadmodum sunt dii multi et domini multi, nobis tamen unus est Deus, qui est Pater, ille ex quo omnia, et nos in illum, et unus Dominus Christus, per quem omnia, et nos per illum:" sed non in omnibus est scientia. "Hæc est (inquit Johannes) ^{John xvii.} vita æterna; ut cognoscant te solum verum Deum, et quem misisti Jesum Christum." Si quis igitur nobis alium Deum

obtrudere velit, præter eum quem Paulus et Apostoli docuerunt, non audiamus, sed ut anathema procul fugiamus. Profunditates Satanæ non ignoratis, fratres; non enim cessabit ille circumire vos, ut quærat quovis modo quem devoret. Sed viriliter agite, et confortemini in Domino: et licet hostes vestri et adversarii veritatis omnibus mundi præsiidiis muniti fuerint, et vos adoriantur, nolite tamen propterea animum despondere, sed confidite duci vestro Christo, confidite Spiritui veritatis et veritati causæ, vestræ, quæ, ut tenebris per nequitiam Satanæ obduci, ita extingui non potest. Stant enim a nobis (ingentes Deo gratiæ!) certissime, evidentissimeque, clarissimeque, omnes prophetæ, apostoli, et omnes proculdubio veteres ecclesiastici scriptores usque ad tempora neotericorum. Confidamus ergo, et plenam in Domino capiamus consolationem: “nec terreamini ab adversariis; quæ enim illis causa est perditionis, vobis autem salutis, et hoc a Deo; quia vobis donatum est non solum ut in eum credatis, verum etiam ut pro illo patiamini.” Et dum probris afficiamini nomine Christi, cogitate vos voce Petri, imo et Christi salvatoris, beatos esse cum prophetis, cum apostolis, cum martyribus Christi, “quoniam gloria et Spiritus Domini super vos requiescit. Juxta illos Servator noster maledictis afficitur, juxta vos glorificatur:” quid enim aliud, vos persequendo aut etiam crudeliora designando, vobis facere possunt, quam vestras vobis coronas insignire, ornare, et multiplicare, sibi vero plagas suas et iras Dei graves accumulare et aggravare? Ergo neutum quidem, cum maxime in nos debacchantur, male precemur illis, fratres; scientes quoniam dum nos ob Christum insectantur, in seipsos maxime sæviunt, “ardentesque in capita propria carbones congerunt:” sed bene precemur potius; “scientes nos in Christo vocatos esse ut benedictionem hæreditate possideamus.” Precemur ergo, ut Dominus à cordibus eorum errorum tenebras dispellat, et veritatis lucem illis faciat illucescere; ut, agnitis erroribus, supplices poenitudine ad Dominum convertantur, et nobiscum solum illum verum Deum qui est pater luminum, et ejus unicum filium Dominum Jesum Christum, agnoscant, atque in spiritu et veritate adorent. Amen.

Vester in Domino frater (quem tabellarius vobis denuntiabit), per Dei gratiam ad convivendum et commoriendum.

LETTER VIII. (COVERDALE.)

To the brethren which constantly cleave unto Christ, in suffering affliction with him, and for his sake.

GRACE and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, be multiplied unto you, Amen.—Although, brethren, we have of late heard nothing from you, neither have at this present any news to send you; yet we thought good something to write unto you, whereby ye might understand that we have good remembrance of you continually, as we doubt not but ye have of us also. When this messenger, coming unto us from you of late, had brought us good tidings of your great constancy, fortitude, and patience in the Lord, we were filled with much joy and gladness; giving thanks to God the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ, which hath caused his face so to shine upon you, and with the light of spiritual understanding hath so lightened your hearts, that now, being in captivity and bands for Christ's cause, ye have not ceased, as much as in you lieth, by words, but much more by deed and by your example, to stablish and confirm that thing which, when ye were at liberty in the world, ye laboured to publish and set abroad by the word and doctrine; that is to say, “holding fast the word of life, ye shine as lights in the world, in the midst of a wicked and crooked nation:” and that with so much the greater glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, and profit of your brethren, by how much Satan more cruelly now rageth, and busily laboureth to darken the light of the Gospel. Phil. ii.

And as for the darkness that Satan now bringeth upon the Church of England, who needeth to doubt thereof? Of late time, our Saviour Christ, his apostles, prophets, and teachers, spake in the temple to the people of England in the English tongue, so that they might be understood plainly and without any hardness^a of the godly, and such as sought for heavenly knowledge in matters which, of necessity of salvation, pertained to the obtaining of eternal life. But now those things which once were written of them for the edifying of the congregation, are read in a strange tongue without interpretation; manifestly against St

Phil. i.

1 Pet. iv.

Rom. xii.

1 Pet. iii.

^a difficulty.

Paul's commandment; so that there is no man able to understand them, which hath not learned that strange and unknown tongue. Of late days those heavenly mysteries, whereby Christ hath engrafted us into his body, and hath united us one to another, whereby being also regenerate and born anew unto God, he hath nourished, increased, and strengthened us, whereby moreover either he hath taught and set forth an order amongst them which are whole, or else to the sick in soul or body hath given, as it were, wholesome medicines and remedies—those, I say, were all plainly set forth to the people in their own language; so that, what great and exceeding good things every man had received of God, what duty every one owed to another by God's ordinance, what every one had professed in his vocation and was bound to observe, where remedy was to be had for the weak and feeble,—he to whom God hath given a desire and willing heart to understand those things, might soon perceive and understand: but now all these things are taught and set forth in such sort, that the people redeemed with Christ's blood, and for whose sakes they were by Christ himself ordained, can have no manner of understanding thereof at all. Of late (forasmuch as we know not how to pray as we ought), our Lord Jesus Christ in his prayer, whereof he would have no man ignorant, and also the Holy Ghost in the psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, which are set forth in the bible, did teach and instruct all the people of England in the English tongue, that they might ask such things as are according to the will of the Father, and might join their hearts and lips in prayer together: but now all these things are commanded to be hid and shut up from them in a strange tongue, whereby it must needs follow, that the people neither can tell how to pray, nor what to pray for; and how can they join their hearts and voices together, when they understand no more what the voice signifieth, than a brute beast? Finally, I here say, that the catechism which was lately set forth in the English tongue, is now in every pulpit condemned. Oh devilish malice, and most spitefully injurious to the salvation of mankind purchased by Jesus Christ! Indeed Satan could not long suffer that so great light should be spread abroad in the world; he saw well enough, that

nothing was able to overthrow his kingdom so much as if children, being godly instructed in religion, should learn to know Christ while they are yet young; whereby not only children, but the elder sort also, and aged folks, that before were not taught to know Christ in their childhood, should now, even with children and babes, be forced to learn to know him. Now therefore he roareth, now he rageth. But what else do they, brethren, which serve Satan, and become his ministers and slaves in maintaining of this impiety, but even the same which they did, to whom Christ our Saviour threateneth this curse in the Gospel? “Woe unto you which shut up the kingdom of heaven before men, and take away the key of knowledge from them; ye yourselves have not entered in, neither have ye suffered them that would enter to come in.” And from whence shall we say, brethren, that this horrible and mischievous darkness proceedeth, which is now brought into the world? from whence, I pray you, “but even from the smoke of the great furnace, the bottomless pit, so that the sun and the air are now darkened by the smoke of the pit?” Now, even now, out of doubt, brethren, the pit is opened amongst us, and the locusts begin to swarm, and Abaddon now reigneth. Ye therefore, my brethren, which pertain unto Christ, and have the seal of God marked on your foreheads, that is to wit, are sealed up with the earnest of the Spirit to be a peculiar people unto God, quit yourselves like men, and be strong; for he that is in us, is stronger than he which is in the world: and ye know, “that all that is born of God overcometh the world, and this is our victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” Let the world fret, let it rage never so much, be it never so cruel and bloody; yet be ye sure that no man can take us out of the Father's hands, for he is greater than all: “who hath not spared his own Son, but hath given him to death for us all; and therefore how shall he not with him give us all things also? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who shall then condemn? It is Christ that is dead, yea rather which is risen again, who is also at the right hand of God, and maketh request also for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecu-

Matt. xxiii.

Apoc. ix.

Apoc. vii.

1 John iv.

Rom. viii.

tion, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"—The rest ye know, brethren. We are certainly persuaded with St Paul, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that no kind of thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Which thing that it may come to pass, by the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the comfort both of you and of us all, as we for our parts will continually, God willing, pray for you; so, dear brethren in the Lord, with all earnest and hearty request, we beseech you, even in the bowels of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye will not cease to pray for us. Fare ye well, dear brethren. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all evermore, Amen.

Yours in the Lord,

NICHOLAS RIDLEY.

THE SAME IN LATIN.

(COVERDALE.)

Ad fratres qui Christum cum cruce amplectuntur.

GRATIA vobis et pax a Deo et Domino nostro Jesu Christo multiplicetur, Amen. Licet a vobis, fratres, nihil nuper accepimus, neque vobis aliquid novi nunc nuntiandum habemus, tamen ideo visum est nobis aliquid vobis scribere, ut intelligatis nos memoriam vestri bonam habere perpetuam, sicut vos de nobis habere minime dubitamus. Veniente nuper ad nos harum latore, et annuntiante nobis vestram omnium in Domino constantiam, fortitudinem et patientiam multam, repleti sumus consolatione et gaudio, gratias agentes Deo et Patri per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, qui ita illuminavit vultum suum super vos et lumine intelligentiæ spiritualis ita illustravit corda vestra, ut quod nuper (dum essetis in mundo liberi,) verbo et doctrina passim præstare satagistis, nunc propter Christum captivi, quantum licet, verbo, sed multo magis opere atque vestro exemplo, præstare non cessatis; hoc est, sermonem vitæ sustinentes, lucetis tanquam luminaria in mundo, in medio nationis pravæ et tortuosæ: idque tanto cum majore Domini nostri Jesu Christi gloria, fratrumque vestrorum emolumento et utilitate, quanto nunc Satan magis sævit, majoresque luci evangelicæ conatur inducere tenebras.

De tenebris autem, quas nunc ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Satan offundit, quis potest dubitare? Nuper Christus salvator, apostoli, prophetæ, et doctores ipsius, in templo loquebantur populo Anglicano Anglice, ita ut ab eis qui pii erant et rerum cœlestium studiosi, in iis quæ ad vitæ æternæ redemptionem de necessitate salutis pertinebant, clare et absque ænigmate facile intelligi poterant: nunc vero quæ ab illis olim in ædificationem ecclesiæ scripta sunt, leguntur in lingua peregrina, citra interpretationem, manifeste contra præceptum Pauli apostoli; ita ut a nemine prorsus, qui alienam et peregrinam illam linguam non didicerit, intelligi possint. Nuper sacrosancta illa mysteria cœlestia, quibus nos sibi Christus in sevit et suo corpori complantavit, atque nos inter nos mutuo colligavit, quibus natos Dei aluit, auxit, atque corroboravit; denique quibus aut ordinem inter sanos docuit, aut ægrotis vel anima vel corpore veluti salubria pharmaca tradidit—omnia populo clare in sua lingua tradebantur, ita ut quisque, quanta et quæ immensa a Deo accepisset, quid cuique ex Dei præscripto deberet, quid in sua quisque vocatione professus esset et observare teneretur, unde languenti remedium esset petendum, facile is cui Deus mentem et animum hæc intelligendi avidum dedit, quam facillime intelligere poterat: nunc vero omnia hæc ita traduntur, ut eorum omnium populus Christi sanguine redemptus, et cui hæc maxime a Christo instituta sunt, ne tantillum quidem intelligere possit. Nuper (quum quid orare debemus ut oportet nescimus) Dominus noster Jesus Christus in sua, quam omnibus tradi voluit, oratione, atque etiam Spiritus sanctus in psalmis, hymnis, et cantionibus spiritualibus, quæ in sacris bibliis reperiuntur, universum populum Anglicanum Anglice docuit, ut et quæ petenda essent juxta voluntatem Patris peterent, et corda cum labiis in oratione conjungerent: nunc vero omnia sub involuero linguæ peregrinæ jubentur claudi, unde necessario sequi oportet, populum neque quid oret neque quid orare debeat posse intelligere: et quomodo potest cor voci conjungere, quum, quid vox valeat, magis quam brutum intelligere nequeat? Postremo, audio passim in pulpitis nunc damnari catechesim illam editam nuper in sermone vulgari. O malitiam dæmoniacam, et humani generis per Christum saluti partæ plane invidam! Omnino Satan tantam lucem

vulgari per orbem diu sustinere non potuit: nihil æque in suo regno subvertendo efficere posse intellexit, quam si a teneris annis sacris imbuti pueri Christum didicissent; unde non tantum pueros, sed et senes atque ætate proveciores, qui ab infantia Christum prius non didicissent, una cum pueris Christum discere necesse erat. Ergo nunc exclamat et vociferatur. Sed quid faciunt aliud, fratres, qui Satanæ in hac impietate operam impendunt atque ministrant, quam illi quibus Christus servator noster in evangelio dirum illud interminatur et intonat? dicens: “Væ vobis qui clauditis regnum ante homines, qui tulistis clavem scientiæ: ipsi non introiistis, et introire volentes prohibuistis.” Et unde, fratres, dixerimus has tetras et exitiosas tenebras in mundum invectas exhalasse? Unde, quæso, quam ex fumo fornacis magni putei abyssi, ut jam obscuratus sit sol et aer ex fumo putei? Jam jam proculdubio, fratres, apud nos puteus apertus est, locustæ luxuriantur et Abaddon regnat. Ergo, fratres, qui estis Christi, qui signum Dei habetis in frontibus vestris, hoc est arra Spiritus obsignati estis in populum peculiarem Deo, viriliter agite et confortamini; major enim est qui est in nobis quam qui est in mundo. Scitis autem quod omne, quod natum est ex Deo, vincit mundum, et hæc est victoria quæ vincit mundum, fides nostra. Fremat, frendat, et insæviat quantumlibet mundus; scitote quod nemo potest nos tollere de manu Patris, quia major est omnibus: qui proprio filio suo non pepercit, sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum; et proinde qui fieri potest ut non cum illo omnia nobis donet? Quis intentabit crimina adversus electos Dei? Deus est qui justificat: quis ille qui condemnet? Christus est qui mortuus, immo et qui suscitatus est, qui et intercedit pro nobis. Quis nos separabit a dilectione Dei? Num afflictio? Num angustia? Num persecutio? Num fames? Num nuditas? Num periculum? Num gladius?—Reliqua nostis, fratres. Speramus plane cum Paulo, per gratiam Domini nostri Jesu Christi, quod nihil prorsus nos poterit separare a dilectione Dei, quæ est in Christo Jesu Domino nostro. Quod ut et vobis sit, et nobis omnibus contingat gratia et misericordia servatoris nostri Jesu Christi, et nos pro vobis (Deo volente) indesinenter orabimus, et vos pro nobis ne aliquando orare desinatis, etiam atque etiam in visceribus Jesu Christi, fratres in Do-

Matt. xxiii.

Apoc. ix.

Apoc. vii.

1 John iv.

Rom. viii.

mino charissimi, quantum possumus obnixè precamur. Bene valete, fratres charissimi. Gratia Domini nostri Jesu Christi sit semper cum omnibus vobis. Amen.

Vester in Domino, N. R.

LETTER IX. (COVERDALE.)

To my most dear Brother, and reverend fellow Elder in Christ, JOHN HOOPER, grace and peace.

MY dearly beloved brother and fellow elder, whom I reverence in the Lord, pardon me, I beseech you, that hitherto, since your captivity and mine, I have not saluted you by my letters: whereas, I do indeed confess, I have received from you (such was your gentleness,) two letters at sundry times, but yet at such times as I could not be suffered to write unto you again; or if I might have written, yet was I greatly in doubt, lest my letters should not safely come unto your hands. But now, my dear brother, forasmuch as I understand by your works, which I have yet but superficially seen, that we thoroughly agree and wholly consent together in those things which are the grounds and substantial points of our religion, against the which the world so furiously rageth in these our days, howsoever in time past in smaller matters and circumstances of religion, your wisdom and my simplicity (I confess) have in some points varied: now, I say, be you assured, that even with my whole heart, (God is my witness,) in the bowels of Christ, I love you, and in truth, for the truth's sake which abideth in us, and (as I am persuaded) shall by the grace of God abide with us for evermore. And because the world, as I perceive, brother, ceaseth not to play his pageant, and busily conspireth against Christ our Saviour, with all possible force and power, exalting high things against the knowledge of God, let us join hands together in Christ; and if we cannot overthrow, yet to our power, and as much as in us lieth, let us shake those high things, not with carnal, but with spiritual weapons; and withal, brother, let us prepare ourselves to the day of our dissolution; whereby after the short

time of this bodily affliction, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall triumph together with him in eternal glory.

I pray you, brother, salute in my name that reverend father, your fellow prisoner, Dr Crome; by whom, since the first day that I heard of his most godly and fatherly constancy in confessing the truth of the Gospel, I have conceived great consolation and joy in the Lord. For the integrity and uprightness, the gravity and innocency of that man all England, I think, hath known long ago. Blessed be God therefore, which in such abundance of iniquity and decay of all godliness hath given unto us, in this reverend old age, such a witness for the truth of his Gospel. Miserable and hard-hearted is he, whom the godliness and constant confession of so worthy, so grave, and innocent a man will not move to acknowledge and confess the truth of God. I do not now, brother, require you to write any thing to me again; for I stand much in fear lest your letters should be intercepted before they can come to my hands. Nevertheless know you, that it shall be to me great joy to hear of your constancy and fortitude in the Lord's quarrel. And albeit I have not hitherto written unto you, yet have I twice, as I could, sent unto you my mind touching the matter which in your letters you required to know, neither can I yet, brother, be otherwise persuaded. I see, methinks, so many perils whereby I am earnestly moved to counsel you not to hasten the publishing of your works, especially under the title of your own name. For I fear greatly, lest by this occasion, both your mouth should be stopped hereafter, and all things taken away from the rest of the prisoners; whereby otherwise, if it so please God, they may be able to do good to many. Farewell in the Lord, my most dear brother; and if there be any more in prison with you for Christ's cause, I beseech you, as you may, salute them in my name; to whose prayers I do most humbly and heartily commend myself and my fellow-prisoners, captives in the Lord: and yet once again and for ever in Christ, my most dear brother, farewell.

THE SAME IN LATIN.

(COVERDALE.)

*Charissimo fratri et venerabili in Christo compresbytero
Ioanni Hopero gratiam et pacem.*

DILECTE frater et venerabilis in Christo compresbyter, condonet mihi precor tua dilectio, quod hactenus a tua captivitate, tua simul et mea, tuam dilectionem meis literis non salutaverim, quando (ingenue fateor) mihi abs te (quæ tua erat humanitas) binæ literæ datæ fuerunt, diversis quidem temporibus, sed eis semper profecto in quibus aut mihi per iniquitatem temporis rescribere bene non licuit, aut, si rescripsissem, de literis ad te tuto perferendis multum dubitavi. Jam vero, charissime frater, quum ex illis tuis lucubrationibus, quas mihi non nisi obiter videre contigit, facile intelligo nos in iis quæ sunt nostræ religionis fundamenta et bases omnium (adversus quas mundus hodie tantopere insanit) probe convenire et in unum conspirare, utcumque in rebus minoribus et religionis appendicibus olim tua prudentia et mea simplicitas in aliquibus (fateor) uterque suum sensum habebat: jam, inquam, cognoscat tua dilectio, quod ex animo (Deus mihi testis est) in visceribus Christi te diligam, frater in veritate, propter veritatem quæ permanet in nobis, et, ut mihi persuasum habeo, per gratiam Dei permanebit nobiscum in æternum. Quoniam autem (uti video, frater) mundus causam suam agere non cessat, et contra Christum Servatorem quantum potest maximis muntionibus conspirat, et summas conatur erigere altitudines adversus cognitionem Dei, jungamus, frater, dex- 2 Cor. x.
tras in Christo, et pro nostro virili, quantumque in nobis situm erit, non armis carnalibus sed spiritualibus, si non possumus demoliri, saltem pulsemus illas altitudines: et simul nos jam, frater, præparemus ad diem dissolutionis nostræ, per quam cum Christo post momentaneam carnis istius nostræ afflictionem in æternum, gratia Domini Jesu Christi, simul cum illo triumphabimus in gloria sempiterna.

Obsecro, frater, saluta meo nomine venerandum illum tuum captivum et mihi vere venerabilem patrem D. Cromerum; de quo (mihi crede) ex primo die quo de ejus sanctissima et gravissima constantia in confessione veritatis evangelicæ audivi, semper maximam consolationem maximumque gaudium

concepi in Domino: integritatem enim ejus viri, gravitatem, et innocentiam, jam pridem universa pene (credo) novit Anglia. Benedictus igitur Deus, qui nobis in tanta abundantia iniquitatis, et in tanta ruina pietatis, talem nobis dedit in isthac veneranda canitie testem sui Evangelii veritati. Infelix quem tanti viri, tam gravis et innocentis, pietas et constans confessio nihil permovere possunt ad cognoscendam veritatem Dei. Non peto jam, frater, ut mihi quicquam rescribas, multum enim vereor ne literæ interceptantur: quanquam scias mihi de tua constantia et fortitudine in Domini causa audire semper fore gratissimum. Et ut tuæ fraternitati hactenus non rescripserim, bis tamen (ut potui) tibi significandum curavi quod a me in tuis literis cognoscere voluisti. Nec adhuc profecto, frater, possum animum meum mutare: tot enim mihi videre videor pericula, quæ me impellunt ut consulam, ne tuarum lucubrationum editionem festinare velis, saltem sub titulo nominis tui. Multum enim vereor ne hac occasione et tibi os obstruatur in posterum, et aliis quoque captivis omnia auferantur, quibus alioqui multis, Deo ita volente, poterunt prodesse. Bene vale in Domino, charissime frater, et si qui alii in vestris ædibus sunt vobiscum in causa Christi concaptivi, precor illis meo nomine salutem, uti possis, velis impartiri; et omnium vestrum precibus apud Dominum me atque meos concaptivos in Domino etiam atque etiam humillime commendo; et rursus atque in æternum in Christo bene vale, frater charissime.

LETTER X. (COVERDALE.)

To MASTER BRADFORD, *Prisoner in the King's Bench.*

WELL beloved in Christ our Saviour, we all with one heart wish you, with all those that love God in deed and truth, grace and health; and specially to our dearly beloved companions, which are in Christ's cause, and the cause both of their brethren and their own salvation, ready and willing to put their neck under the yoke of Christ's cross. How joyful it was to us to hear the report of Doctor Taylor, and of his godly confession, &c., I ensure^a you it is hard

^a assure.

for me to express. Blessed be God which was, and is, the giver of that and all godly strength and stomach in the time of adversity. As for the rumours that have and do go abroad, either of our relenting or massing, we trust that they which know God and their duty towards their brethren in Christ, will not be too light of credit to believe them. It is not the slanderer's evil tongue, but a man's own evil deed, that can with God defile a man; and therefore, by God's grace, you shall never have cause to do otherwise than you say you do, that is, not to doubt but that we will continue, &c. Like rumour as you have heard of our coming to London, hath been here spread of the coming of certain learned men prisoners hither from London; but as yet we know no certainty whether of these rumours is or shall be more true. Know you, that we have you in our daily remembrance, and wish you and all the rest of our aforesaid companions well in Christ. It should do us much comfort, if we might have knowledge of the state of the rest of our most dearly beloved, which in this troublesome time do stand in Christ's cause, and in the defence of the truth thereof. We are in good health, thanks be to God, and yet the manner of our treatment doth change as sour ale doth in summer. It is reported to us of our keepers, that the University beareth us heavily ^b hath ill will to us. A coal chanced to fall in the night out of the chimney, and burnt a hole in the floor, and no more harm was done, the bailiffs' servants sitting by the fire. Another night there chanced a drunken fellow to multiply words, and for the same he was set in Bocardo. Upon these things, as is reported, there is risen a rumour in the town and country about, that we would have broken the prison with such violence as, if the bailiffs had not played the pretty men, we should have made an escape. We had out of our prison a wall that we might have walked upon, and our servants had liberty to go abroad in the town or fields; but now both they and we are restrained of both. The Bishop of Worcester passed by us through Oxford, but he did not visit us. The same day began our restraint to be more, and the Book of the Communion was taken from us by the bailiffs at the mayor's commandment. No man is licensed to come unto us. Afore they might, that would, see us upon the wall; but that is so

^b Bocardo is a stinking and filthy prison for drunkards, whores, and harlots, and the vilest sort of people. M. C.

grudged at, and so evil reported, that we are now restrained, &c. Sir, blessed be God, with all our evil reports, grudgings, and restraints, we are merry in God; and all our care is, and shall be by God's grace, to please and serve him, of whom we look and hope, after this temporal and momentary miseries, to have eternal joy and perpetual felicity with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Peter, and Paul, and all the blessed company of the angels in heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord. As yet there was never learned man, or any scholar or other, that visited us since we came into Bocardo, which now in Oxford may be called a college of quondams; for as you know, we be no fewer here than three, and I dare say, every one well contented with his portion, which I do reckon to be our heavenly Father's gracious and fatherly good gift. Thus fare you well. We shall, with God's grace, one day meet together and be merry: the day assuredly approacheth apace. The Lord grant that it may shortly come; for before the day come, I fear the world will wax worse and worse. But then all our enemies shall be overthrown and trodden under foot, righteousness and truth then shall have the victory, and bear the bell away; whereof the Lord grant us to be partners, and all that sincerely love the truth. We all pray you, as you can, to cause all our commendations to be made to all such, as you know did visit us and you when we were in the Tower with their friendly remembrances and benefits. Mistress Wilkinson and Mistress Warcup have not forgotten us; but even since we came into Bocardo, with their charitable and friendly benevolence have comforted us: not that else we lack, (for God be blessed, which ever hitherto hath provided sufficiently for us,) but it is a great comfort and an occasion for us to bless God, when we see that he maketh them so friendly to tender us, whom some of us were never familiarly acquainted withal.

Yours in Christ, N. R.

LETTER XI. (COVERDALE.)

To ARCHBISHOP CRANMER and BISHOP LATIMER, *being separated from him, and prisoners in several^a places.* ^{* separate.}

THE cause of my brother's imprisonment is this, so far as I can perceive. There is a young man called Mr Grimbold, which was my chaplain, a preacher, and a man of much eloquence both in the English and also in the Latin. To this man, being desirous of all things which I had written and done since the beginning of mine imprisonment, my brother (as is said) hath sent copies, no more but^b of^c than. all things that I have done. First, a little treatise which Mr Latimer and I wrote in the Tower; where there is before my sayings, N. R. and before Mr Latimer, H. L.¹ Also another draught, which I drew out of the Evangelists and of St Paul, that the words of the Lord's Supper are figuratively to be understood; alleging out of the doctors only six, three of the Greek church, which are Origen, Chrysost. ad Cesa. monachum, and Theodoret; and three of the Latin church, Tertullian, Augustine, and Gelasius. He had of my brother also a copy of my Three Positions to the Three Questions here propounded to us at Oxford. Then also a copy of my disputation in the Schools, as I wrote it myself after the disputation. Item the letter, *Ad fratres in diversis carceribus*. All these things they have gotten of Grimbold, as my brother doth suppose; not that Grimbold hath betrayed him, but (as is supposed) one which my brother trusted to carry his letters unto Grimbold: for it will not sink into my head to think that Grimbold would ever play me such a Judas's part. Although these things are chanced far otherwise than I had thought they should, (for my mind was that they should not have come abroad until my body had been laid to rest in peace,) yet truly I suppose this is not thus chanced without God's gracious providence, which he hath over all his, and I trust that God of his goodness shall turn it to his own glory. For it shall evidently appear to the reader of these things which they have, that the cause why I do dissent from the Romish religion is not any study

[¹ "The conferences with Hugh Latimer." Ed.]

of vain glory or of singularity, but of conscience, of my bound duty towards God and towards Christ's church, and the salvation of mine own soul; for the which, by God's grace, I will willingly jeopard here to lose life, land, and goods, name and fame, and what else is or can be unto me pleasant in this world. My brother as yet, because they neither shewed any commission or authority whereby they did examine him, nor also anything of his letters (although they said they had them), as yet I say my brother hath confessed nothing. But I look for none other but he shall be forced to tell where he had the copies, and where they be, and I will be content that he shall say the truth, that he had them all of me; let them come and take them, and cast them into the fire, if God know they will promote his glory; they can do no more than he will suffer them. Because in the book of N. R. and H. L. it is said in the end, that H. L. hath caused his servant to write it; I would Austin¹ should have word, if any further search be, to keep him^e out of the way. God shall reward you both for my brother; you, my lord of Canterbury, for your meat and daily comfort, and you, father L. for your money and comfortable messages. I trust in God my brother, though he be young, yet will study to learn to bear Christ's cross patiently, as a young scholar in Christ's school. God increase his grace in us all. Amen.

LETTER XII. (COVERDALE.)

Letter from DOCTOR RIDLEY to the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY (Cranmer).

I WISH ye might have seen these mine answers before I had delivered them, that ye might have corrected them. But I trust, in the substance of the matter we do agree fully, both led by one Spirit of truth, and both walking after one rule of God's word. It is said, that Sergeant Morgan²,

[¹ Augustine Berneher. Ed.]

[² Sergeant Morgan, after the trial of Lady Jane Grey, is said to have had her figure continually before his eyes, and to have cried out incessantly, "Take away the Lady Jane." Ed.]

the chief justice of the Common Pleas, is gone mad. It is said also, that Justice Hales hath recanted, perverted by Doctor Moreman. Item, that Master Rogers, Doctor Crome, and Master Bradford, shall be had to Cambridge, and there be disputed with as we were here; and that the doctors of Oxford shall go likewise thither, as Cambridge men came hither. When you have read mine answers, send them again to Austin, except ye will put any thing to them. I trust, the day of our delivery out of all miseries, and of our entrance into perpetual rest, and unto perpetual joy and felicity, draweth nigh. The Lord strengthen us with his mighty Spirit of grace!

If you have not what to write with, you must make your man your friend. And this bearer deserveth to be rewarded, so he may and will do you pleasure. My man is trusty; but it grieveth both him and me, that when I send him with any thing to you, your man will not let him come up to see you, as he may to Master Latimer, and yours to me. I have a promise to see how my answers were written in the schools, but as yet I cannot come by it. Pray for me, I beseech you, and so shall I for you. The Lord have mercy of his church, and lighten the eyes of the magistrates, that God's extreme plagues light not on this realm of England!

TURN OR BURN.

LETTER XIII. (COVERDALE.)

To MASTER BRADFORD.

DEARLY beloved, I wish you grace, mercy, and peace. According to your mind I have run over all your papers³, and what I have done, (which is but small,) therein may appear. Sir, what shall best be done with these things, now you must consider: for if they come in sight at this time, undoubtedly they must to the fire with their father; and as for any safeguard that your custody can be unto them, I am sure you look not for it: for as you have been partner of the works,

This justice Morgan gave sentence against Lady Jane. M. C.

Disputations in Cambridge intended. M. C.

This was a treatise of the communion, with other things, which Mr Bradford sent to him to peruse and to give his judgement thereof. M. C.

[³ The treatise in question was first printed in 1574, and afterwards with a preface by Thos. Sampson, A. D. 1581. Ed.]

so, I am sure, you look for none other but to have and receive like wages, and to drink of the same cup. Blessed be God, that hath given you liberty in the mean season, that you may use your pen to his glory, and to the comfort (as I hear say) of many. I bless God daily in you and all your whole company, to whom I beseech you to commend me heartily. Now I love my countryman in deed and in truth, I mean Doctor Taylor, not now for my earthly country's sake, but for our heavenly Father's sake, whom (I heard say) he did so stoutly in time of peril confess; and yet also now for our country's sake, and for all our mother's sake, but I mean of the kingdom of heaven and of heavenly Jerusalem, and because of the Spirit which bringeth in him, in you, and in your company, such blessed fruits of holiness in the Lord's cause, of patience, and constancy. The Lord which hath begun this work in you all, perform and perfect this his own deed until his own day come. Amen.

As yet, I perceive you have not been baited¹; and the cause thereof God knoweth; which will let them do no more to his, than is his *pleased*^a will and good pleasure to suffer them to do for his own glory, and to the profit of them which be truly his. For the Father which doth guide them that be Christ's to Christ, is more mighty than all they, and no man is able to pull them out of the Father's hands. Except, I say, it please our Father, it please our Master Christ to suffer them, they shall not be able to stir one hair of your heads. My brother P.², the bearer hereof, would that we should say what we think good concerning your mind^b: that is, not for to answer, except ye might have somewhat indifferent judges. We are (as ye know) separated, and one of us cannot in any thing consult with another, and much strait watching of the bailiffs is about us, that there be no privy conference amongst us. And yet (as we hear) the scholars bear us more heavily^c than the townsmen. A wonderful thing! among so many, never yet

^ablessed.

^bpurpose.

^chave more ill will.

[¹ It was intended, though the design was never carried into execution, to carry Bradford, Hooper, Farrar, Taylor, and others, to Cambridge, to hold a public disputation there, as had been done with Ridley, Cranmer and Latimer at Oxford. See the preceding letter. Ed.]

[² Probably William Punt. Ed.]

scholar offered to any of us (so far as I know) any manner of favour, either for or in Christ's cause. Now, as concerning your demand of our counsel; for my part, I do not mislike that which I perceive ye are minded to do: for I look for none other but, if ye answer before the same commissioners that we did, ye shall be served and handled as we were, though ye were as well learned as ever was either Peter or Paul. And yet further, I think that occasion afterwards may be given you, and the consideration of the profit of your auditory may, perchance, move you to do otherwise. Finally, determinately to say what shall be best, I am not able: but I trust He, whose cause ye have in hand, shall put you in mind to do that which shall be most for his glory, the profit of his flock, and your own salvation. This letter must be common to you and Mr Hooper, in whom and in his prison-fellow, good father Crome, I bless God even from the bottom of my heart; for I doubt not but they both do to our Master Christ true, acceptable and honourable service, and profitable to his flock, the one with his pen, and the other with his fatherly example of patience and constancy and all manner of true godliness. But what shall I need to say to you, Let this be common among your brethren? among whom, I dare say, it is with you, as it is with us, to whom all things here are common: meat, money, and whatsoever one of us hath, that can or may do another good. Although I said the bailiffs and our hosts straitly watch us, that we have no conference or intelligence of anything abroad, yet hath God provided for every one of us in the stead of our servants faithful fellows which will be content to hear and see, and to do for us whatsoever they can. It is God's work surely, blessed be God for his unspeakable goodness. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen, Amen. As far as London is from Oxford, yet thence we have received of late both meat, money, and shirts; not only from such as are of our acquaintance, but of some whom this bearer can tell, with whom I had never to my knowledge any acquaintance. I know for whose sake they do it: to him, therefore, be all honour, glory, and due thanks. And yet; I pray you do so much as to shew them that we

have received their benevolence, and (God be blessed) have plenty of all such things. This I desire you to do, for I know they be of Mr Hooper's and your familiar acquaintance. ^{shaken in health, ill.} Mr Latimer was crazed^d, but I hear now, thanks be to God, that he amendeth again.

Yours in Christ,
N. R.

LETTER XIV. (COVERDALE.)

To MASTER BRADFORD.

BROTHER BRADFORD, I wish you and your company in Christ, yea, and all the holy brotherhood, that now with you in divers prisons suffereth and beareth patiently Christ's cross for the maintenance of his gospel, grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ. Sir, considering the state of this chivalry and warfare, wherein I doubt not but we be set to fight under Christ's banner and his cross against our ghostly enemy the devil, and the old serpent Satan, methink I perceive two things to be his most perilous and most dangerous engines which he hath to impugn Christ's verity, his Gospel, his faith: and the same two also to be the most massy posts and most mighty pillars, whereby he maintaineth and upholdeth his Satanical synagogue. These two, sir, are they in my judgment: the one his false doctrine and idolatrical use of the Lord's supper; and the other, the wicked and abominable usurpation of the primacy of the see of Rome. By these two Satan seemeth to me principally to maintain and uphold his kingdom: by these two, he driveth down mightily (alas! I fear me), the third part of the stars in heaven. These two poisonous rotten posts he hath so painted over with such a pretence and colour of religion, of unity in Christ's church, of the catholic faith, and such like, that the wily serpent is able to deceive, if it were possible, even the elect of God. Wherefore John said not without great cause, "If any know not Satan's subtilities and the dungeons thereof, I will wish him no other burden to be laden withal." Sir, because these be his principal and main posts whereupon standeth all his falsehood, craft, and

Apoc. viii.

Apoc. ii.

treachery; therefore, according to the poor power that God hath given me, I have bended mine artillery to shoot at the same. I know it to be little (God knoweth) that I can do; and of my shot I know they pass^a not. Yet will I not (God ^{regard.} willing) cease to do the best that I can, to shake those cankered and rotten posts. The Lord grant me good success, to the glory of his name, and the furtherance of Christ's Gospel. I have now already (I thank God) for this present time spent a good part of my powder in these scribblings, whereof this bearer shall give you knowledge. Good brother Bradford, let the wicked surmise and say what they list; know you for a certainty by God's grace, without all doubt, that in Christ's Gospel's cause, against and upon the foresaid God's enemies, I am fully determined to live and die. Farewell, dear brother; and I beseech you and all the rest of our brethren, to have good remembrance of the condemned heretics (as they call them) of Oxford in your prayers. The bearer shall certify you of our state. Farewell in the Lord.

From Bocardo.

Yours in Christ, N. R.

LETTER XV. (COVERDALE.)

To MASTER BRADFORD.

DEARLY beloved brother, blessed be God our heavenly Father for his manifold and innumerable mercies towards us; and blessed might he be that hath spared us long together, that each one of us may bless his mercy and clemency in other, unto this day, above the expectation and hope of any worldly appearance.

Whereas you write of the outrageous rule that Satan, our ghostly enemy, beareth abroad in the world, whereby he stirreth and raiseth so pestilent and heinous heresies, as some to deny the blessed Trinity, some the divinity of our Saviour Christ, some the divinity of the Holy Ghost, some the baptism of infants, some original sin, and to be infected with the errors of the Pelagians, and to re-baptize those that have been baptized with Christ's baptism already; alas, Sir, this doth declare this time and these days to be wicked indeed! But

what can we look for else of Satan here, and of his ministers, but to do the worst that they can, so far forth as God shall or will suffer them? And now, methink, he is less to be marvelled at at this time, if he bestir him by all manner of means, that the truth indeed do take no place. For he seeth now, blessed be God! that some go about in deed and in truth, not trifling, but with the loss of all that they are able to lose in this world, goods, lands, name, fame, and life also, to set forth God's word and his truth; and by God's grace shall do, and abide in the same unto the end: now therefore it is time to bestir him, I trow. And as for the diversity of errors, what careth he though one be never so contrary to another? He reckoneth all (and so he may) to be his, whosoever prevail, so that truth prevail not. Nevertheless, good brother, I suppose that the universal plague is most dangerous, which at this day is (alas!) fostered and masterfully holden up by wit, worldly policy, multitude of people, power, and all worldly means. As for other the devil's galtropes^a that he casteth in our ways by some of his busy-headed younkens, I trust they shall never be able to do the multitude so great harm. For, blessed be God! these heresies before time, when Satan by his servants hath been about to broach them, have by God's servants already been so sharply and truly confounded, that the multitude was never infected with them, or else, where they have been infected, they are healed again, that now the peril is not so great. And where you say, that if your request had been heard, things (you think) had been in better case than they be: know you that concerning the matter you mean, I have in Latin drawn out the places of the Scriptures, and upon the same have noted what I can for the time. Sir, in those matters I am so fearful, that I dare not speak farther, yea, almost none otherwise, than the very text doth as it were lead me by the hand. And where you exhort us to help, &c.; O Lord, what is else in this world that we now should list to do? I bless my Lord God, I never (as methinketh), had more nor better leisure to be occupied with my pen in such things as I can do, to set forth (when they may come to light) God's glory. And I bless my Lord God through Jesus Christ, my heart and my work are therein occupied, not so fully and perfectly as

^a a military engine for maiming cavalry.
M. C.

He meaneth here the matter of God's election, whereof he afterward wrote a godly and comfortable treatise, remaining yet in the hands of some, and hereafter shall come to light, if God so will.
M. C.

I would, but yet so as I bless God for the same. Farewell, dear brother; the messenger tarrieth, and I may not now be longer with you. The Lord, I trust verily, shall bring us thither, where we shall each one with other in Christ our Saviour rejoice and be merry everlastingly.

Your brother in Christ, N. R.

LETTER XVI. (COVERDALE.)

To MASTER BRADFORD.

DEARLY beloved brother Bradford, I had thought of late that I had written unto you your last farewell, (until we should have met in the kingdom of heaven,) by our dear brother Austin: and I sent it to meet you in Lancashire; whither, it was said here, you were appointed to be sent to suffer. But now, since they have changed their purpose, and prolonged^a your death, I understand it is no other thing than that once happened to Peter and Paul. The which, although they were of the first which were cast in prison, and as little shunned peril as any other did, yet God would not have them put to death with the first, because he had more service to be done by their ministry, which his gracious pleasure was they should do. So without doubt, dear brother, I am persuaded that the same is the cause of the delay of your martyrdom. Blessed be the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for your threefold confession. I have read all three with great comfort and joy, and thanksgiving unto God for his manifold gifts of grace, wherewith it is manifest to the godly reader that GOD did assist you mightily. And blessed be God again and again, which gave you so good a mind and remembrance of your oath once made against the bishop of Rome, lest you should be partaker of the common perjury which all men almost are now fallen into, in bringing in again that wicked usurped power of his. Which oath was made according to the prophet, "in judgment, in righteousness, and in truth;" and therefore cannot without perjury be revoked, let Satan roar and rage, and practise all the

Jer. iv.

cruelty he can. Oh, good Lord, that they are so busy with you about the church! It is no new thing, brother, that is happened unto you; for that was always the clamour of the wicked bishops and priests against God's true prophets:

Ezek. vii. "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord:" and they said, "The law shall not depart from the priest, nor wisdom from the elder:" and yet

^a singularly. in them whom they only^b esteemed for their priests and sages, there was neither God's law nor godly wisdom. It is a marvellous thing to hear what vain communication is spread abroad of you. It is said here, that you be pardoned your life; and when you were appointed to be banished and to go, (I cannot tell whither) you should say that you had rather here suffer, than go where you could not live after your conscience; and that this pardon should be begged for you by Bourne, the bishop of Bath, for that you saved his life¹. Again, some say, and among other mine host reported, that you are highly promoted, and are a great man with my lord chancellor. This I could not believe, but did deny it as a false lie: so surely was I always persuaded of your constancy. What God will do with us, he knoweth. In the mean time, wonderful it is to behold how the wisdom of GOD hath infatuated the policy of the world, and scattered the crafty devices of the worldly wise. For when the state of religion

^c furious. was once altered, and persecution began to wax whole^c, no man doubted but Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley, should have been the first to have been called to the stake. But the subtle policy of the world, setting us apart, first assaulted them by whose infirmity they thought to have more advantage; but God disappointed their subtle purpose. For whom the world esteemed weakest (praised be God), they have found most strong, sound and valiant, in Christ's cause, unto the death; to give such an onset as, I dare say, all the angels in heaven do no less rejoice to behold in them, than they did in the victorious constancy of Peter, Paul,

[¹ Immediately after the accession of Queen Mary, bishop Bourne was appointed to preach at Paul's Cross. In his sermon he spoke so much against the late King Edward VI. and the reformation, that a tumult was excited, and he would probably have suffered injury, had not Bradford stood forward and protected him. Ed.]

Esay, Elias, or Jeremy. "For greater love no man hath, John xv. than to bestow his life," &c. Good brother, have me and us all continually in your remembrance to God in your prayers, as, God willing, we shall not be in our prayers forgetful of you.

Your own in Christ, N. R.

LETTER XVII. (COVERDALE.)

To MASTER BRADFORD.

BROTHER BRADFORD, I wish you in Christ our Saviour grace, mercy and peace, and to all them which are with you or any where else captives in Christ; and to hear that ye be all in good health, and stand constantly in the confession of Christ's gospel, it doth heartily rejoice us. Know you likewise that we all here be (thanks be to God!) in good health and comfort, watching with our lamps alight (I trust in God), when it shall please our master, the bride- Matt. xxv. groom, to call us to wait upon him unto the marriage. Now, we suppose, the day doth approach apace, for we hear that the parliament is dissolved. The burgesses of Oxford are come home, and other news we hear not, but that the king is made protector to the prince to be born, and that the bishops have full authority, *ex officio*, to inquire of heresies. Before the parliament began, it was a rumour here, that certain from the convocation house was appointed, yea, ready to have come to Oxford, and then there was spied out one thing to lack, for want of a law to perform their intent. Now, seeing they can want no law, we cannot but look for them shortly: I trust to God's glory, let them come when they will; &c.

Brother Bradford, I marvel greatly of good Austin, where he is, for that I heard say he promised his master to have been here before this time; and he had from me that I would be loth to lose, yea, to want, when time shall be that it might do (nay, help me to do) my lord and my master Christ service: I mean my scribblings ²*de abominationibus*

[² Concerning the abominations of the Roman see and of the Roman pontiffs. Ed.]

sedis Romanæ et pontificum Romanorum. I have no copy of the same, and I look daily to be called in *'certamen cum antiquo serpente;* and so I told him and, I ween, you also, by whose means I was more moved to let him have them. I doubt not of his fidelity. I pray God he be in health and at liberty; for I have been and am careful^a for him. I have heard that Master Grimbold² hath gotten his liberty; if without any blemish of Christ's glory, I am right glad thereof. My brother-in-law is where he was, that is in Bocardo, the common gaol of the town. I have written here a letter to Master Hooper; I pray you cause it to be written to him again. Commend me to all your prison fellows and our brethren in Christ. If Austin were here, I would have had more to say. The Lord grant that all be with him well; who ever preserve you, and all that love our Saviour Christ in sincerity and truth. Amen.

^a anxious.

Yours, by God's grace, in our master Christ's cause, unto the stake; and thenceforth without all danger and peril for ever and ever. I am sure you have heard of our new apparel, and I doubt not but London will have their talk of it. Sir, know you that although this seemeth to us in our case much thanks-worthy, yet have we not that apparel that we look for: for this in time will wear; and that which we look for, rightly done on, will endure, and is called *stola immortalitatis*³.

N. R.

LETTER XVIII. (COVERDALE.)

To AUGUSTINE BERNEHER, then servant to MASTER LATIMER, and now a faithful minister in Christ's church; to whom, because he might not come to the prison to speak with him, he wrote as followeth.

BROTHER Austin, you are heartily welcome to Oxford again; you have made good speed indeed; and blessed be

[¹ Into conflict with the old serpent. Ed.]

[² "Master Grimbold." This man had been one of Ridley's chaplains, but turned to popery, and for some time acted as a spy among those who were in prison for religion. Ed.]

[³ The robe of immortality. Ed.]

God for his gracious goodness, that all is well with you. That our dearly beloved brethren in Christ are all in good comfort, hearty in Christ's cause, and stand stedfast in the confession of his true doctrine; it rejoiceth (I ensure^a assure. you) my heart in God to hear of it. This day was Doctor Croke, [the Grecian⁴,] with me [at dinner⁵,] and both he and Mistress Irish, mine hostess, told me that Master Hooper is hanged, drawn, and quartered for treason; but I did not believe them, for it is not the first tale that mine hostess hath told me of M. Hooper. And I trust the tidings that were here spread abroad since your departure, that Master Grimbold also should have been araigned and condemned for treason to be hanged and quartered, was not true: let me hear if there be any such thing. Not three days ago there was a privy warning given me from a man of God, one Liflely, a glover, that we prisoners here all three should be shortly and suddenly conveyed into three several colleges; for what purpose, and how to be ordered, God knoweth. At the which time, and at the earnest request of that forenamed man of God, I did deliver unto him some of the things I had in hand, to write out: what they be, you shall know of him. Beside the things which he hath, I have some things else, which (if it please God) I would wish might come to light, if perchance any thereby might receive the light to love the truth the better, and to abhor the falsehood of antichrist. I have written annotations *'in priorem librum Tonstalli plenius, in secundum vero parcius: optarem ut transcriberentur, ne fortassis una mecum fiant subito Vulcani cibus.* I have also many things, but as yet confusedly set together, of the abominable usurpation, pride, arrogancy, and wickedness of the see and bishop of Rome; and altogether in Latin⁷. If those things were written out, I would wish that Master Bradford would take them, and translate and

[⁴ MSS. Emm. Coll. Lib. Ed.]

[⁵ More fully on the first book of Tonstall, but more sparingly on the second. I should wish them to be transcribed, lest by chance together with myself they should suddenly become a prey to the flames. Ed.]

[⁷ This collection of Ridley's probably fell into the possession of Fox or Grindall, and furnished some of the materials for the earlier part of the Acts and Monuments. Ed.]

order them as he should think might best help to open the eyes of the simple, for to see the wickedness of the synagogue of Satan. But that at your last being here you cast cold water upon mine affection towards Grimbold, else methink I could appoint where he might occupy himself to his own profit in learning which he liketh, and to no small profit which might ensue to the church of Christ in England: as, if he would take in hand to interpret Laurentius Valla, which (as he knoweth) is a man of singular eloquence; his book I mean, which he made and wrote against that false feigned fable, forged of^b Constantinus Magnus, and his dotation and glorious exaltation of the see of Rome: and when he hath done that, let him translate a work of Æneas Silvius *de gestis Basiliensis Concilii*¹. In the which although there be many things that savoureth of the pan, and also he himself was afterward a bishop of Rome, yet, I dare say, the papists would glory but a little to see such books go forth in English. If you will know where to have these books or treatises, you may have them both together, and many like treatises, which painteth out the wickedness of the see of Rome, in a book set forth by a papist called Ortwinus Gratius, entitled *Fasciculus rerum expetendarum et fugiendarum*². In that book you shall have *confessionem fratrum Waldensium*, men of much more learning, godliness, soberness, and understanding in God's word, than I would have thought them to have been in that time, before I did read their works. If such things had been set forth in our English tongue heretofore, I suppose surely great good might have come to Christ's church thereby. To my good lady's grace, and to my lady Vane, what thanks can I give, but desire Almighty God to lighten, comfort, and strengthen them evermore in his ways? The other two whom you mention I know not: but the Lord knoweth them; to whom in them all and for all their kindness I give most hearty

[¹ Concerning the Acts of the Council of Basil. A translation of these Acts is given by Fox in his "Acts and Monuments." Ed.]

[² A bundle of such things as are to be sought after, and such things as are to be avoided. A well-known and valuable work published at Cologne, A.D. 1535, and to which was added an appendix published in London, A.D. 1690, by the Rev. — Browne. Ed.]

⁴ concerning.

thanks. Master Bradford desireth that thanks should be rendered unto you for your comfortable aid wherewith you comfort him: but you must tell him that he must bid you thank them for him, which are not bound to thank you for themselves; and if he do so, then, I ween, all we prisoners of Oxford shall so stop his mouth.

Brother Austin, you for our comfort do run up and down, and who beareth your charges God knoweth. I know you must needs in so doing take much pains. I pray you take this poor token³ of my good will towards your charges.

LETTER XIX. (COVERDALE.)

To DOCTOR WESTON; requiring performance of certain promises made unto him, but never fulfilled, according to the accustomed wily and unfaithful dealings of the papists.

MASTER Prolocutor, ye remember, I am sure, how you promised me openly in the schools, after my protestation, that I should see how my answers were there taken and written of the notaries, whom you appointed, (*me fateor neminem recusante*⁴;) to write what should be said; and to have had licence for us to have added unto them, or for to have altered them, as upon more deliberation should have seemed me best. Ye granted^a me also, at the delivery of⁴ promised mine answer unto your first proposition, a copy of the same. These promises be not performed. If your sudden departure be any part of the cause thereof, yet I pray you remember that they may be performed; for performance of promises is to be looked for at a righteous judge's hands.

What promises he made openly in the schools that were never performed, read before. M. C.

Now I send you here mine answers in writing to your second and third propositions, and do desire and require earnestly a copy of the same: and I shall, by God's grace, procure the pains of the writer to be paid for and satisfied accordingly. When I would have confirmed my sayings with authorities or reasons, you said there openly, that I should

[³ The MS. in the Library of Emm. Coll. Cambridge adds here, *3s. 4d.* Ed.]

[⁴ I confess, without objection to any one of them on my part. Ed.]

have had time and place to say and bring whatsoever I could another time. And the same your saying was then there confirmed of other of the commissioners. Yea, and I dare say the audience also thought then that I should have had another day to have brought and said what I could say, for the declaration and confirmation of mine assertions. Now that this was not done, but so suddenly sentence given before the cause was perfectly heard, I cannot but marvel at all; and the due reformation of all things which are amiss I commit unto Almighty God, my heavenly Father, which by his dear Son our Saviour Christ, (whom he hath made the universal judge of all flesh,) shall truly and righteously judge both you and me.

Master Prolocutor, I desire you, and in God's name require you, that you truly bring forth and shew all my three answers, written and subscribed with mine own hand, unto the higher house of the convocation, and specially unto my Lord Chancellor, my Lords of Durham, Ely, Norwich, Worcester, and Chichester, and also to shew and exhibit this my writing unto them, which in these few lines I write here unto you. And that I do make this request unto you by this my writing, know you that I did take witness of them by whom I did send you this writing, and of those which were then with them present, that is, of the bailiffs of Oxford, and of Master Irish, Alderman, then there called to be a witness.

By me, N. RIDLEY, April 23, 1554.

LETTER XX.

A Letter sent from DR RIDLEY, late Bishop of London (when lying in the Mayor's house of Oxford, called MR IRISH), unto one WILLIAM PUNT, who brought at that time writings from MR HOOPER and MR BRADFORD to DR RIDLEY, MR CRANMER, and MR LATIMER, to peruse, and for that he could not come to him, this letter was sent unto the said WILLIAM into the town. Anno 1554.

MSS. Bibl. Emm. Coll. apud Cantab.

BROTHER Punt, ye do know what hath bechanced unto my brother of late; and the truth is also, that this three or

four days I have been somewhat in a fervent heat, and felt in my body a disposition to an ague; but, thanked be God, it assuageth. I have looked for none other, nor yet do, but every hour for some to come to make a search. I have in haste read over the book, the three chapters. But mine advice is that they be not now published, lest they should be lost and no profit so might come by them; for I know no state of men, neither of high degree or low, lord, lawyer, priest, or layman (as the world is set now), whom I think would gladly receive them, specially of those that are learned in the Latin tongue; yea, and I fear that the setting (them) forth might be occasion to have the author of them more hardly to be handled, and so peradventure as he should be least able to do hereafter any more good either with his tongue or with his pen, which were a great pity. What this will come unto that they have gotten out by my brother-in-law's behaviour, I cannot tell; but it was not in my mind that any thing should have come abroad in my name, until our bodies had been laid at rest. Commend me to all the holy prisoners in Christ, and desire them to pray for me unto our gracious Father, that as by my brother's trouble he hath somewhat increased my cross, so he will of his gracious goodness increase his gifts of grace to his glory and the furtherance of his truth. Amen.

Yours,

NICHOLAS RIDLEY.

LETTER XXI. (COVERDALE.)

To MASTER BRADFORD.

OH, dear brother, seeing the time is now come when it pleaseth the heavenly Father, for Christ our Saviour his sake, to call upon you, and to bid you to come, happy are you that ever you were born, thus to be awake at the Lord's calling. *Euge, serve bone et fidelis, quia super pauca fuisti* Matt. xxv. 21. *fidelis, super multa te constituet, et intrabis in gaudium Domini*. O dear brother, what meaneth this, that you are

[Well done, good and faithful servant: because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, and thou shalt enter into the joy of thy Lord. ED.]

sent into your own native country? The wisdom and policy of the world may mean what they will; but I trust God will so order the matter finally by his fatherly providence, that some great occasion of God's gracious goodness shall be plenteously poured abroad amongst his, our dear brethren in that country, by this your martyrdom. Where the martyrs for Christ's sake shed their blood and lost their lives, oh what wondrous things hath Christ afterward wrought to his glory and confirmation of their doctrine! If it be not the place that sanctifieth the man, but the holy man doth by Christ sanctify the place, brother Bradford, then happy and holy shall be that place wherein thou shalt suffer, and shall be with thy ashes in Christ's cause sprinkled over withal. All thy country may rejoice of thee, that ever it brought forth such a one, which would render his life again in His cause of whom he had received it.

Brother Bradford, so long as I shall understand that thou art in thy journey, by God's grace I shall call upon our heavenly Father, for Christ's sake, to set thee safely home: and then, good brother, speak you and pray for the remnant that are for to suffer for Christ's sake, according to that thou then shalt know more clearly.

We do look now every day when we shall be called on, blessed be God! I ween, I am the weakest many ways of our company; and yet I thank our Lord God and heavenly Father by Christ, that since I heard of our dear brother Rogers' departing and stout confession of Christ and his truth even unto the death, my heart (blessed be God!) so rejoiced of it, that since that time, I say, I never felt any lumpish heaviness in my heart, as I grant I have felt sometimes before. O good brother, blessed be God in thee, and blessed be the time that ever I knew thee. Farewell, farewell.

Your brother in Christ, N. R.

Brother, farewell.
